

PUNNATHURNADU: EXPLORING A PRE-MODERN STATE IN COLONIAL MALABAR

*Thesis submitted to the
University of Calicut
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HISTORY

Submitted by

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2024

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in the thesis entitled “**Punnathurnadu: Exploring A Pre-Modern State in Colonial Malabar**” is based on the original work done by me under the guidance of **Dr. Muhammed Maheen A.**, Professor, Department of History , University of Calicut and has not been included in any other thesis submitted previously for the award of any degree. The contents of the thesis are undergone plagiarism check using iThenticate software at C.H.M.K. Library, University of Calicut, and the similarity index found within the permissible limit. I also declare that the thesis is free from AI generated contents.

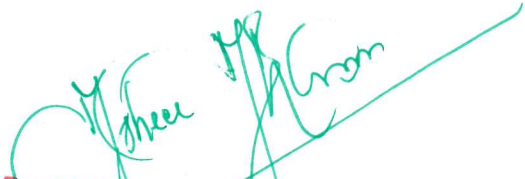


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CERTIFICATE

This is to Certify that the thesis entitled '**Punnathurnadu: Exploring A Pre-Modern State in Colonial Malabar**' is a bonafide record of research work done by Jibi Jose P., submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History and that the thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Fellowship or other titles and the thesis is a record of independent and original work on the part of the candidate under my guidance.

The thesis is revised as per the modifications and recommendations reported by the adjudicators and resubmitted. Soft copy attached is the same as that of the resubmitted revised copy.

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No research in History is possible without the library, the centre of learning resources. I take this time to express my gratitude to all the library staff of the C.H.M.K. Library and History Department Library of University of Calicut, K.C.H.R. Library Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala Sahithya Academy Thrissur, Appan Thampuram Smaraka Library Ayyanthole, Devaswam Library Guruvayur, Vallathol Vidhyapeethom Library Sukapuram, National Library Chittattukara and Municipal

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I feel a deep sense of gratitude for my parents, who formed part of my vision and taught me good things that really matter in life. Their infallible love and support have always been my strength. I am also very much grateful to all my family members for their constant inspiration and encouragement.

During the preparation of my thesis I have received support from a number of persons who were not mentioned in here. So now I take this as an opportunity to express my thanks to one and all for their encouragement.

Jibi Jose P.

Punnathurnadu: Exploring A Pre-Modern State in Colonial Malabar

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Abstract

The formation of Punnathurnadu can be traced from early historic Iron Age Phase to the pre-modern times and later. The Thalappilli (Kakkad) royal family was the part of the lineage of Kakkad Bhattathiri. Later this family was divided into two branches were Eliyangattu and Ainikoor. Punnathur had originated from the Eliyangattu royal family. The Punnathur kotta was the palace of the local ruler, Punnathur *Raja*, which was located in Kottapadi about three kilometers away from Guruvayur. In the 15th century itself, the Punnathur branch separated from the collateral branches and joined the faction of Zamorins.

Objectives of the study: The study aims: to investigate the process of the evolution of Punnathurnadu from the early historical period and to locate the places under their jurisdiction; for analyzing the historical past by studying the remains of megalithic burials; to trace the historical developments of agriculture and trade of the region which contributed to the formation of the Punnathurnadu to a large extent; to examine the social formation during the early period of this region; to study the production relations of the region, which is associated with the economic conditions of the natives and the transportation facilities and routes that were available in this locality.

Relevance and Scope of the Study: This study helps to understand the process of formation of a micro region. The available source materials are testifying the historical continuity of the region from the Iron Age to the Medieval times. The early settlements were developed in association with the agro-pastoral economy. The extension of food production units resulted in the formation of nadu in later times. The prosperity and the growing economy further led to the growth of a pre-modern state with centralised administration. The administration was carried out by the feudal vassal of the Zamorins with the title 'Goda Sankara'. The Punnathur rajas ruled the nadu more than four centuries (from 14th to 17th cy AD) and had registered an indelible mark on the socio-cultural legacy on the said region.

Methodology: The methods used in this study is multidisciplinary, interpretative and analytical.

Hypothesis: The study focuses on the formation and evolution of Punnathurnadu: as a pre-modern state and areas under its jurisdiction. *Naduvazhis* were the land owners of the particular region. They emerged within the agrarian unit and played a significant role in the

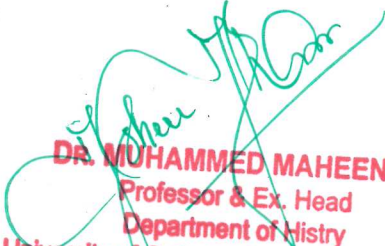
of the particular region. They emerged within the agrarian unit and played a significant role in the consolidation of agricultural process. *Naduvazhis* maintained a good relationship with the Brahmins and temples. Brahmins ideologically support the rights of *naduvazhis*. The *naduvazhi* system declined in the modern age. Normally place names originate due to political elements. At the same time some places may have derived their name due to geographical peculiarities, livelihood, legends, beliefs and so on a particular locality.

Structure of this Study: The current investigation is structured into five distinct chapters, accompanied by an introduction and a conclusion. The geography and topography of Punnathurnadu are examined in the first chapter. The second chapter, Punnathurnadu: Development and Significance, describes the several marketing hubs that were located throughout the region. Using data from toponymical analysis as well as additional archaeological and literary sources, the third chapter, The Local History in the Construction of Punnathurnadu, discusses the area in various stages. Chapter four, "Socio-economic conditions of Punnathurnadu", provides a detailed account of the region's patterns of settlement and the rise of social stratification. The religious customs and secular lifestyle of the people of Punnathurnadu are revealed in the fifth chapter.

Conclusion: The *swaroopams* and their kings of the Pre-modern period cannot be compared with the modern concept of state. They had traditionally enjoyed both political and judicial powers, after colonization, they became merely puppet rulers in the hands of foreign powers. They were allowed by the colonizers to continue their ceremonial privileges alone and later the Rajas became a privypurse of the Colonial administrators. With regard to the Guruvayur temple, the Punnathur Rajas had sufficient power to voice their opinions, both as rulers and devotees.

Religious friendship and cultural unity have enriched this land. It is an indisputable fact that the local history of this region played a decisive role in the formation of nationalism.

Keywords: Punnathurnadu, local history, pre-modern history, colonization, Zamorins.


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പുന്നത്തൂർനാട്: കൊളോണിയൽ മലബാറിലെ ഒരു പ്രീ-മോഡേൺ സംസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ പര്യവേക്ഷണം

ജിബി ജോസ് പി.
ഗവേഷക

പ്രൊഫ. (ഡോ.) മുഹമ്മദ് മഹീൻ എ.
ഗവേഷണ മാർഗ്ഗദർശി

പുന്നത്തൂർനാടിന്റെ രൂപീകരണം ചരിത്രപരമായ ഇരുമ്പുയുഗത്തിന്റെ ആദ്യഘട്ടം മുതൽ ആധുനികകാലത്തിനു മുമ്പും പിന്നീടും കണ്ടെത്താനാകും. തലപ്പിള്ളി (കക്കാട്) രാജകുടുംബം കക്കാട് ഭട്ടതിരിയുടെ പരമ്പരയിലെ ഭാഗമായിരുന്നു. പിന്നീട് ഈ കുടുംബം എലിയങ്ങാട്, ഐനിക്കൂർ എന്നിങ്ങനെ രണ്ടായി പിരിഞ്ഞു. എലിയങ്ങാട് രാജകുടുംബത്തിൽ നിന്നാണ് പുന്നത്തൂർ ജനിച്ചത്. ഗുരുവായൂരിൽ നിന്ന് ഏകദേശം മൂന്ന് കിലോമീറ്റർ അകലെ കോട്ടപ്പടിയിൽ സ്ഥിതി ചെയ്യുന്ന പ്രാദേശിക ഭരണാധികാരിയായ പുന്നത്തൂർ രാജയുടെ കൊട്ടാരമായിരുന്നു പുന്നത്തൂർ കോട്ട. 15-ാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിൽ തന്നെ പുന്നത്തൂർ ശാഖ ഈ ശാഖകളിൽ നിന്ന് വേർപെട്ട് സാമൂതിരിയുടെ വിഭാഗത്തിൽ ചേർന്നു.

പഠനത്തിന്റെ ലക്ഷ്യങ്ങൾ: പഠനം ലക്ഷ്യമിടുന്നത്: ആദ്യകാല ചരിത്ര കാലഘട്ടം മുതൽ പുന്നത്തൂർനാടിന്റെ പരിണാമ പ്രക്രിയയെക്കുറിച്ച് അന്വേഷിക്കാനും അവരുടെ അധികാരപരിധിയിലുള്ള സ്ഥലങ്ങൾ കണ്ടെത്താനും; മെഗാലിത്തിക് ശ്മശാനങ്ങളുടെ അവശിഷ്ടങ്ങൾ പഠിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ചരിത്രപരമായ ഭൂതകാലത്തെ വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുന്നതിന്; പുന്നത്തൂർനാടിന്റെ രൂപീകരണത്തിന് വലിയ തോതിൽ സംഭാവന നൽകിയ പ്രദേശത്തിന്റെ കാർഷിക-വ്യാപാരത്തിന്റെ ചരിത്രപരമായ സംഭവവികാസങ്ങൾ കണ്ടെത്തുന്നതിന്; ഈ പ്രദേശത്തിന്റെ ആദ്യകാലഘട്ടത്തിലെ സാമൂഹിക രൂപീകരണം പരിശോധിക്കാൻ; പ്രദേശത്തിന്റെ ഉൽപ്പാദന ബന്ധങ്ങൾ പഠിക്കാൻ, തദ്ദേശവാസികളുടെ സാമ്പത്തിക സാഹചര്യങ്ങൾ, ഈ പ്രദേശത്ത് ലഭ്യമായ ഗതാഗത സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ, റൂട്ടുകൾ എന്നിവയുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നു.

പഠനത്തിന്റെ പ്രസക്തിയും വ്യാപ്തിയും: ഒരു മൈക്രോ റീജിയന്റെ രൂപീകരണ പ്രക്രിയ മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ ഈ പഠനം സഹായിക്കുന്നു. ലഭ്യമായ ഉറവിട സാമഗ്രികൾ ഇരുമ്പ് യുഗം മുതൽ മധ്യകാലഘട്ടം വരെയുള്ള പ്രദേശത്തിന്റെ ചരിത്രപരമായ തുടർച്ചയെ സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. കാർഷിക-പാസ്റ്ററൽ സമ്പദ്‌വ്യവസ്ഥയുമായി ചേർന്നാണ് ആദ്യകാല വാസസ്ഥലങ്ങൾ വികസിപ്പിച്ചെടുത്തത്. ഭക്ഷ്യോത്പാദന യൂണിറ്റുകളുടെ വിപുലീകരണം പിൽക്കാലത്ത് നാടിന്റെ രൂപീകരണത്തിന് കാരണമായി. അഭിവൃദ്ധിയും വളരുന്ന സമ്പദ്‌വ്യവസ്ഥയും കേന്ദ്രീകൃത ഭരണത്തോടു കൂടിയ ഒരു പ്രീ-ആധുനിക സംസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ വളർച്ചയിലേക്ക് നയിച്ചു. 'ഗോദാശങ്കര' എന്ന സ്ഥാനപ്പേരുള്ള സാമൂതിരിയുടെ ഫ്യൂഡൽ സാമന്തനായിരുന്നു ഭരണം. പുന്നത്തൂർ രാജാക്കന്മാർ നാല് നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലധികം (എഡി 14 മുതൽ 17 വരെ) നാട് ഭരിക്കുകയും പ്രസ്തുത പ്രദേശത്തെ സാമൂഹിക-സാംസ്കാരിക പൈതൃകത്തിൽ മായാത്ത അടയാളം രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുകയും ചെയ്തു.

രീതിശാസ്ത്രം: ഈ പഠനത്തിൽ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന രീതികൾ വിവിധ-വൈവിധ്യത (multi-disciplinary), വ്യാഖ്യാനം, വിശകലനം എന്നിവയാണ്.

അനുമതി: പഠനം പുന്നത്തൂർനാടിന്റെ രൂപീകരണത്തിലും പരിണാമത്തിലും ശ്രദ്ധ കേന്ദ്രീകരിക്കുന്നു: ആധുനികത്തിനു മുമ്പുള്ള സംസ്ഥാനം എന്ന നിലയിലും അതിന്റെ അധികാരപരിധിയിലുള്ള പ്രദേശങ്ങളിലും. നാട്ടുവാഴികളായിരുന്നു പ്രത്യേക പ്രദേശത്തിന്റെ ഭൂവുടമകൾ. അവർ കാർഷിക യൂണിറ്റുകളിൽ ഉയർന്നുവരുകയും കാർഷിക പ്രക്രിയയുടെ


ഏകീകരണത്തിൽ ഒരു പ്രധാന പങ്ക് വഹിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. നാടുവാഴികൾ ബ്രാഹ്മണരുമായും ക്ഷേത്രങ്ങളുമായും നല്ല ബന്ധം കാത്തുസൂക്ഷിച്ചു. ബ്രാഹ്മണർ നാടുവാഴികളുടെ അവകാശങ്ങളെ പ്രത്യയശാസ്ത്രപരമായി പിന്തുണയ്ക്കുന്നു. ആധുനികയുഗത്തിൽ നാടുവാഴി സമ്പ്രദായം ക്ഷയിച്ചു. സാധാരണയായി സ്ഥലനാമങ്ങൾ രാഷ്ട്രീയ ഘടകങ്ങൾ മൂലമാണ് ഉണ്ടാകുന്നത്. അതേ സമയം ചില സ്ഥലങ്ങൾക്ക് ഭൂമിശാസ്ത്രപരമായ പ്രത്യേകതകൾ, ഉപജീവനമാർഗം, ഐതിഹ്യങ്ങൾ, വിശ്വാസങ്ങൾ അങ്ങനെ ഒരു പ്രത്യേക പ്രദേശത്തിന്റെ പേരു വന്നിരിക്കാം.

പഠനത്തിന്റെ ഘടന: നിലവിലെ അന്വേഷണം അഞ്ച് വ്യത്യസ്ത അധ്യായങ്ങളായി ക്രമീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു, ഒപ്പം ഒരു ആമുഖവും ഒരു നിഗമനവും. പുനത്തുർനാടിന്റെ ഭൂമിശാസ്ത്രവും ഭൂപ്രകൃതിയും ഒന്നാം അധ്യായത്തിൽ പരിശോധിക്കുന്നു. രണ്ടാം അധ്യായമായ പുനത്തുർനാട്: വികസനവും പ്രാധാന്യവും, പ്രദേശത്തുടനീളമുള്ള നിരവധി വിപണന കേന്ദ്രങ്ങളെ വിവരിക്കുന്നു. സ്ഥലനാമപരമായ വിശകലനത്തിൽ നിന്നുള്ള ഡാറ്റയും അധിക പുരാവസ്തു, സാഹിത്യ സ്രോതസ്സുകളും ഉപയോഗിച്ച്, മൂന്നാം അധ്യായമായ പുനത്തുർനാടിന്റെ നിർമ്മാണത്തിലെ പ്രാദേശിക ചരിത്രം, വിവിധ ഘട്ടങ്ങളിൽ പ്രദേശത്തെ ചർച്ച ചെയ്യുന്നു. അധ്യായം നാല്, “പുനത്തുർനാടിന്റെ സാമൂഹിക-സാമ്പത്തിക സാഹചര്യങ്ങൾ”, പ്രദേശത്തിന്റെ സെറ്റിൽമെന്റിന്റെ പാറ്റേണുകളെക്കുറിച്ചും സാമൂഹിക വർഗ്ഗീകരണത്തിന്റെ ഉയർച്ചയെക്കുറിച്ചും വിശദമായ വിവരണം നൽകുന്നു. പുനത്തുർനാടുകാരുടെ മതപരമായ ആചാരങ്ങളും മതേതര ജീവിതശൈലിയും അഞ്ചാം അധ്യായത്തിൽ വെളിവാക്കുന്നു.

ഉപസംഹാരം: ആധുനിക കാലഘട്ടത്തിലെ സ്വരൂപങ്ങളെയും അവരുടെ രാജാക്കന്മാരെയും ആധുനിക ഭരണകൂട സങ്കല്പവുമായി താരതമ്യം ചെയ്യാൻ കഴിയില്ല. അവർ പരമ്പരാഗതമായി രാഷ്ട്രീയവും ജൂഡീഷ്യൽ അധികാരങ്ങളും ആസ്വദിച്ചിരുന്നു, കോളനിവൽക്കരണത്തിനുശേഷം അവർ വിദേശ ശക്തികളുടെ കൈകളിലെ പാവ ഭരണാധികാരികളായി മാറി. അവരുടെ ആചാരപരമായ പ്രത്യേകാവകാശങ്ങൾ ഒറ്റയ്ക്ക് തുടരാൻ കോളനിക്കാർ അവരെ അനുവദിച്ചു, പിന്നീട് കൊളോണിയൽ ഭരണാധികാരികൾ രാജാക്കന്മാർക്ക് അവരുടെ ചെലവിനായി പൊതുജനാവിൽനിന്നും പണം അനുവദിച്ചു. ഗുരുവായൂർ ക്ഷേത്രത്തെ സംബന്ധിച്ചിടത്തോളം, പുനത്തുർ രാജാക്കന്മാർക്ക് ഭരണാധികാരികൾ എന്ന നിലയിലും ഭക്തർ എന്ന നിലയിലും അവരുടെ അഭിപ്രായങ്ങൾ പറയാൻ മതിയായ ശക്തി ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു.

മതമൈത്രിയും സാംസ്കാരിക കൂട്ടായ്മയും ഈ നാടിനെ സമ്പുഷ്ടമാക്കി. ഈ നാടിന്റെ പ്രാദേശിക ചരിത്രം ദേശഭാവനയുടെ രൂപീകരണത്തിന് ഒരു നിർണ്ണായക പങ്ക് വഹിച്ചു എന്നത് അവിതർക്കിതമായ വസ്തുതയാണ്.

കീവേർഡ്സ്: പുനത്തുർനാട്, പ്രാദേശികചരിത്രം, പ്രീ-മോഡേൺ ഹിസ്റ്ററി, കോളനിവൽക്കരണം, സാമൂതിരിമാർ.


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INTRODUCTION

Local history is an emerging area in historical research in Kerala. Though locality was subjected to the micro level studies by the Annals historians in 1930's in Europe, such an approach was relatively late in the case of Kerala. As studies of the wider scope naturally exclude diverse and minute aspects of each locality, only intensive micro level studies can offer an inclusive historical approach.¹ There are numerous writings in the regional languages of India, which are useful to some extent though the source of regional histories do not amount to history as such. The local history perspective is interested more in the basic units of economic production that came into being spontaneously, as a response to the needs and potentials of a particular locality. The understanding of geography helps one to explain and evaluate the extensive spread of natural and man-made processes that mould the material foundation for the development of social and economic life.

The region of Malabar had been subjected to radical changes in society and relations of production and was very sensitive to the said changes. There developed a number of production localities where the settler cultivators and the labourer populace settled down. Politically, it was a period of decline of kingdoms, which led to the genesis of regional powers. *Nadu* formation was a concomitant development that progressed with the expansion of cultivation in multi culture laterite region and cultivation in alluvial areas. The country was divided into petty, feudal fiefdoms, which were constantly at war with each other. The organization was also compared and contrasted with the *naduvazhis* to show their overlordship in the political power-structure of the period.² The term *nadu* is treated with the *Rashtra* or *Rajya*. They are significant political unit. The rulers of the important *nadus*, known as *natudaiyavars*

¹ M. P. Mujeeb Rehman, Voices from a Remote Locality, in M.P. Mujeebu Rehman (ed.) *The locale speaks, Papers in local History*, Perambra, 2009, p. 7.

² K. V. Krishna Iyer, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, University of Calicut, 1938, p. 272.

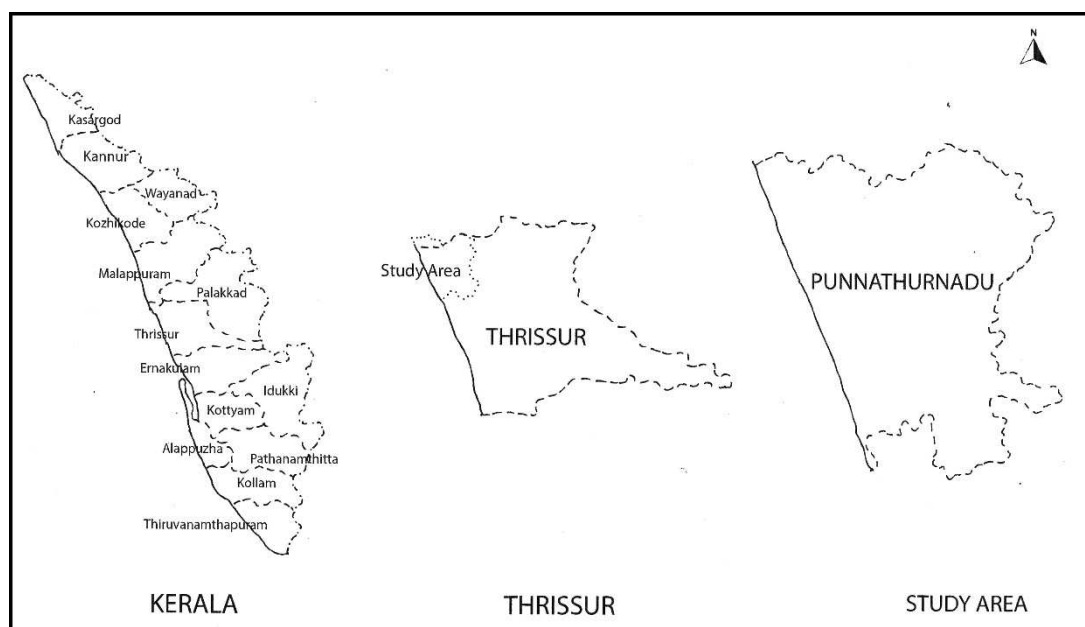
are found to have used meaningful royal titles. The present study entitled *Punnathurnadu: Exploring a pre-modern state in colonial Malabar*, is an attempt to study to trace the formation of *nadu* in pre- colonial period.

The Region of Punnathurnadu

The formation of Punnathurnadu can be traced from early historic Iron Age Phase to the pre-modern times and later. Umbrella stones and hat stones at Ariyannur, Chiramanangad and Eyyal had witnessed the formation of early settlements, in Punnathurnadu. The Thalappilly (Kakkad) royal family was the part of the lineage of Kakkad Bhattathiri. Later this family was divided into two branches were Eliyangattu and Ainikoor. Punnathur had originated from the Eliyangattu royal family. A large portion of the present day Chavakkad taluk along with neighbouring regions like Kunnamkulam, Kakkad and Chittilappilly collectively constitute Punnathurnadu. The Punnathurkotta was the palace of the local ruler, Punnathur *Raja*, which was located in Kottapadi about three kilometers away from Guruvayur. In the 15th century itself, the Punnathur branch separated from the collateral branches and joined the faction of Zamorins.

Figure 1

Location of the Study Area



*Not to scale

Trade and commerce constitute a vital aspect of the economic system. The location of this *nadu* was highly conducive to the development of a trading centre. Agricultural commodities, coir, areca nut, coconut, pepper and fish were the main trading items. It had achieved remarkable progress in the realms of internal and external trade. Chettuvai was the seaport in Punnathurnadu. The special geographical features of the coastal area were quite favourable for the development of an extensive net work of water ways in Punnathurnadu.

Indigenous literary works and accounts narrated by foreign travelers have been of immense use in reconstructing the form and functions of the trading centres and identifying markets. The agricultural tracts acted as the hinterlands which supplied the necessary materials for the facilitation of trade. The towns of Kuttungal and Kunnamkulam were important trade centres. The road runs all along the riverbank, close to the river and it signifies the early pattern of trade routes. Since the early history is shrouded in obscurity, it is proposed to move from the known present to the unknown past for tracing out the history of Punnathurnadu.

Religion, geography and ethnicity form the basis of cultural identities in Punnathurnadu. Hindus, Christians and Muslims shared several elements of regional culture. These cultures constantly refer to their respective classical tradition. According to the changing contexts of life, it informs and inspires a variety of socio-cultural and political moments at regular intervals.

Objectives of the study, methodology and statement of problem are explained in this introduction chapter followed by a literature review.

Objectives of the study

- (1) To investigate the process of the evolution of Punnathurnadu from the early historical period and to locate the places under their jurisdiction.
- (2) For analyzing the historical past by studying the remains of megalithic burials.
- (3) To trace the historical developments of agriculture and trade of the region, that contributed to the formation of Punnathurnadu to a large extent.

- (4) To examine the social formation during the early period of this region.
- (5) To study the production relations of the region, that is associated with the economic conditions of the natives and the transportation facilities and routes that were available in this locality.

Relevance and Scope of the Study

This study helps to understand the process of formation of a micro region. It also helps to understand the general pattern of regional formation of Kerala. The available source materials are testifying the historical continuity of the region from the Iron Age to the Medieval times. The early settlements were developed in association with the agro-pastoral economy. The extension of food production units resulted in the formation of nadu in later times. The production and distribution of agrarian products in due course resulted in the evolution of a Polity which could control the agrarian economy during this period. The prosperity and the growing economy further led to the growth of a pre-modern state with centralised administration. The administration was carried out by the feudal vassal of the Zamorins with the title 'Goda Sankara'. The Punnathur rajas ruled the nadu more than four centuries (from 14th to 17th cy AD) and had registered an indelible mark on the socio-cultural legacy on the said region. It also unreels the significance of Guruvayur Satyagraha in the socio-religious history of modern Kerala.

Limitations

Documents pertaining to Medieval Kerala history is scarce, also the case of Punnathurnadu. So, the study of Medieval Kerala is beset with problems. Narratives and travelogues dealing with the ancient and Medieval Kerala are not much dependable. The works of William Logan or C.A. Innes are neither purely historical nor comprehensive.

Methodology

Methodologically, in contrast to the history of mega narratives, local history affords the possibility of micro history. The method applied in the study is

multidisciplinary, interpretative and analytical. The study includes various aspects like archaeology, anthropology, geography, literature and cultural studies. A study relates to production and distribution will be different from that of the macro historian. Though they make use of statistics and figures for analyzing these processes, they also use both quantitative and qualitative information. By quantitative, indicates tables, charts and maps. Qualitative information used in this study mainly focused mainly on interviews. All indications of human connection with the environment were considered in the field research done for this study. For such documentation an extensive area has been covered on foot and all signs of geographical and cultural features of the region have been duly observed. This kind of survey aids in reconstructing the past of the microunit under investigation and in understanding the people's continuation and cessation of existence. The field investigation produced priceless historical fragments demonstrating the micro-level evolution of human life.

Settlement registers of the taluks of Ponnani and Talappilly have been extensively used for the preparation of the field work of this study. As they are registers maintained by the colonial administrators for assessment, of revenue collection, they cover the entire landscape, both the areas under production as well as non-productive waste lands. The names of the various places indicate the nature of settlements, production pattern, topography and other details.

The study of cultural pattern and social organization analyzes the cultural and social progress of Punnathurnadu through ages. Punnathurnadu is rich with many ancient and medieval monuments as explained in this study. A historical approach has been used to study each caste and settlement of this region.

Hypothesis

Since the present study suffers from innumerable primary sources, some of the findings and gap filling is done by inference arrived through observation and hypotheses. The study focuses on the formation and evolution of Punnathurnadu: as a pre-modern state and areas under its jurisdiction. The *naduvazhi* system was prevailed in Kerala in olden days. *Naduvazhis* were the land owners of the particular region. They emerged within the agrarian unit and played a significant role in the

consolidation of agricultural process. This is a clear indication of the formation of an agrarian, feudal society in early Medieval Kerala.

Naduvazhis gave priority for the growth of indigenous production and intra-relations of each *nadu* were entirely different from one another. They granted autonomy to the seaport area and encouraged trading relations in their locality. *Naduvazhis* maintained a good relationship with the Brahmins and temples. Brahmins ideologically support the rights of *naduvazhis*. As the part of the arrangement, *naduvazhis* provide their military support for the protection of temples. The development of temples was based on the co-operation and land grant system of *naduvazhis*. Stratification of the society was visible in *nadus*. This system declined in the modern age. Normally place names originate due to political elements. At the same time some places may have derived their name due to geographical peculiarities, livelihood, legends, beliefs and so on a particular locality.

The Period of the Study

The standardised periodisation like ancient, Medieval and modern, is not applicable in the process of *nadu* formation. The more suitable method for the study is to trace out the region as an agrarian production land unit that corresponds to the development of human habitat and later to the development of surplus production and its distribution. This period had observed the formation of lineage in the patriarchal succession pattern, which gradually shifted to the matrilineal line. The traditional customs and practices of the society were the central features of the Medieval time in the *nadu* under study. The present study traces out the process of the formation of Punnathurnadu from the early historical period. However, this study also reflects some facts related to modern episode like Guruvayur Satyagraha and festivals. During the colonial period, Punnathurnadu became more prominent in the socio-political scenario of South Malabar, as a seat of trade and power politics.

Sources for the Study

The source materials have furnished a hazy picture of geographical extension and settlement distribution of the *nadu*. It requires more extensive field survey and

such other micro level analysis. Both primary and secondary sources are used in this study. The textual materials are corroborated with sources collected from the primary context. It is also reflected in the ancient literatures in our languages, such as Sandesa kavyas, the memories, oral compositions, written by foreign travelers, archaeological remains and archival records contain much material about geography and local history.

Francis Buchanan's travelogue *A Journey from Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar* describes places like Kakkad, Kunnamkulam, Chettuvai and Chavakkad. The roles of the chiefs Punnathur and Talappilli have also been mentioned in this book. It also mentioned bazaars, weights and measures, paddy, coconut, vegetables, toddy, and so on.

The official letters from W.G. Farmer to the Punnathur Raja and secret reports kept at the mosques, temples and churches were perused in this study. Places of historical importance in Punnathurnadu were visited and monuments and inscriptions were examined. Historians like Velayudhan Panikkassery, K.K.N. Kurup, K. Gopalankutty, writers like Jose Chittilappally, C.L. Johnson, Kasim Mannalamkunnu, peasants like Payyapat Ayyappan, Tolur Velayudhan, P.K. Vasu, political leaders like P.K. Rajan (Block Member, Mullassery Grama Panchayath), Babu Aloor (Counsellor, Guruvayur Municipality), Azeez Mannalamkunnu (Ward Member, Punnayur Grama Panchayath), merchants like M.J. Chacko Chittattukara, V. Shemeer Kunnamkulam, E. Prabhakaran Chittilappally, etc. were interviewed.

Archival Records

Archival sources helped to understand the places, culture and physical geography of the region. The government records that were recorded since the days of the foreign powers are available on its entirety. The important works among them include: *The Administrative Atlas of Kerala*, *The Descriptive Memoir- Malabar*, administrative records like Revenue Settlement Registers and Record of Punnathur estate. The Revenue Settlement Registers of Ponnani taluk is collection of records preserved in regional archives Kozhikode, which provides information about the

Desams of Punnathurnadu, which is a part of Ponnani taluk.³ The Settlement Register of Talappilly taluk and Thrissur taluk preserved in regional archives Ernakulam gives details about Kunnamkulam and Chittilappilly *desams* which was also added to Punnathurnadu.⁴ The Village Settlement Register of the British period is taken as a marker for drawing the boundary of Punnathurnadu.

The *Administration Report-Punnathur estate* is a valuable record utilized for this study. The names of the wards, their age and qualifications, number of villages in the estate, holdings and cultivations are understood from this record.⁵ Revenue documents prepared under Haider and Tippu Sultan and the Inam Register in Regional Archives Kozhikkode, serve as a source of information regarding the rent-free lands donated to various temples and mosque in Malabar. *The Joint Commissioners report on Malabar* is a good source of information about the crops cultivated in Punnathurnadu and revenue collection system of the region under British rule.⁶

Archaeological Exploration

Archaeological evidences are one of the important sources used in the present study. Many archaeological sites in Punnathurnadu are observed and studied for the purpose of this study. The megalithic sites of Kandanassery and Ariyannur were visited and information was obtained. The rock-cut caves in places like Porkkalam, Eyyal, Chowannur, Kattakampal and Kakkad were also observed. The *Kutakkals* excavated at Porkkalam and Cheramangad were closely observed. Most *topikkallus* were seen at Ariyannur and Cheramangad. They are the foremost evidences for proving the early permanent human settlements in the region. The *Vikasana Rekhakal* published by various Panchayats of Chavakkad taluk, maps, souvenirs, and articles related to the local history of Punnathurnadu are also found useful in this study. Apart

³ *Survey and Settlement Registers of Ponnani Taluk*, Desam No. 372-389, 398-411 and 424, RAK, 1905.

⁴ *Survey and Settlement Registers of Thalappilly Taluk*, Desam No. 10, RAE, 1905; *Survey and Settlement Registers of Thrissur Taluk*, Desam No. 10, RAE, 1905.

⁵ Administration Report Punnathur, Proceedings No. 92, RAK, 1910.

⁶ J Rejikumar (ed.) *Joint Commissioner's Report on Malabar 1792-1793*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2010.

from these sources, interviews and allied field work were also conducted for the study. We visited Punnathur *Kovilakam*, the house of *Elaya Raja* at Kottapadi, Chettuvai Fort, various temples, mosques and churches in Punnathurnadu for this work.

Granthavaris

The *Granthavaris* are regarded as one of the primary sources for knowledge about Medieval society. A collection of palm leaves called the *Vanneri Granthavari* holds data about land and property.

For a study on the Malabar region, secondary materials are more than adequate. The study has drawn upon a variety of published and unpublished documents that were sourced from different libraries and archives.

The book, *Locality & Culture in Kerala History: The case of Tirurangadi*, written by K N Ganesh, attempts to examine the significance of Tirurangadi, as well as its boundaries, geographical quirks, climate, agricultural practices, patterns of habitation, trade relationships, effects of the Malabar rebellion, and current state. Kerala's cultural and economic history was examined critically by him in his another work, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*. This book have two parts: the history of the environment and the geographical details are given in the first part and Kerala's economic development and social structure is explained in the second part.

V. S. Bindu's *Nattuvazhi – Keraleeyarkku Nashtappetta Grameena Gruhathurathwam* illuminates the rural landscape that Keralites have since lost sight of. Her research included an examination of the former ponds and kavus, the educational system, festivals, traditional games, joint family hierarchy, village market, and communication systems.

In *Kannadi Nokkumbol: Kerala Samskarappolimakal*, C. R. Rajagopalan provides an explanation of Kerala's cultural legacy. He talks about the loss of several traditions, including those related to crafts, farming, murals, medicines, and the vanishing rural way of life.

Vattaparambil Peethambaran's *Nattarivukalude Ullarakalileku* informs the reader about the extensive body of indigenous knowledge. On the socio-cultural component of local knowledge, he goes into further detail.

M. V. Vishnu Namboothiri's *Folklorum Janasamskara Padanvum* provides an explanation of folk culture from the standpoint of folklore studies. This approach, which encompasses a region's folk culture and historical backdrop, is recognised and valued in the postmodern era.

In *Malanattilathi*, Joseph Scariya weaves together elements of myth, culture, and history. He investigates the extensive and varied collection of oral histories in great detail.

Raghavan Payyanad's book *Folklore* examines oral traditions such as folk music, folk arts, and other narratives that have developed into distinct categories. Each group is recognised, examined, and researched independently in this study. He explores beliefs, practices, oral folklore, and other folk art forms after starting with folk music.

It is quite correct to praise William Logan's *Manual on Malabar* for establishing a new tradition in Kerala historiography. Before this book, myths, legends, and other fantasy tales were all included under the general umbrella word "history."

The focus of M R Raghava Varier and Rajan Gurukkal's *Kerala Charithram* centred on Kerala's social and cultural history.

The Joint Commissioner's Report on Malabar 1792-93, published by archives department in the year 2010, provided a summary of Malabar's political and historical landscape. Clear information about the country and its people can be extracted with the aid of this report.

Further details about the history of Mappila Muslims may be found in Roland E. Miller's *Mappila Muslims of Kerala: A study in Islamic Tendencies*. An account of

the cultural activities of Muslims in Malabar can be found in S M Mohammed Koya's Mappilas of Malabar.

From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British Rule in Malabar 1790–1805, written by Margret Frenz, examines the situation specifically in Malabar while also offering a wider perspective on the change from pre-colonial to colonial India. The text is divided into six sections that address a wide range of topics, including Malabar's Colonial administration and Pre-colonial societal development. In addition to examining the colonial interactions within the context of the contact zone, this study investigates the period of transition between indigenous and colonial administrative practices. The author is excited to present Nicholas B. Dirks' 'little kingdom' concept for understanding Malabar's history in his work *The Hollow Crown: Ethno History of an Indian Kingdom*. In order to examine the pyramidal structure of the pre-colonial South Indian State, Dirks used the tiny kingdom and great kingdom modes.

Drawing from letters written by a European traveller, Padmanabha Menon's *History of Kerala* offers a comprehensive overview of Kerala's past while offering a detailed commentary on social, political, and economic issues within their historical context.

Numerous studies on *nadu* in the state of Cera have been carried out in Kerala. Elamkulam Kunjam Pillai, in his *Studies in Kerala History*, conveys that *nadus* were the regional kingdoms ruled over by the local vassals of the Cera kings. The *nadus* were divided into *desams* under *desavazhis* for administrative convenience. Thirteen *nadus* during the Cera period were listed by Elamkulam. The areas of the Cera kingdom were referred to as *nadus* in M. G. S. Narayanan's *Perumals of Kerala*, and the *nadu* rulers were referred to as *Nattudayavar*. He asserts that the *Nattudayavars* were the feudatories of the Perumals.

In addition to the books already mentioned, Kesavan Veluthat's *The Political Structure of Early Medieval South India*, Burton Stein's *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, M.R. Raghava Varier's *Madhyakala Keralam: Swaropaneethiyude Charithra Padangal*, Y. Subharayalu's *The Political Geography of Cola Country, State and Society in Pre-modern South India* edited by R.

Champakalakshmi, Kesavan Veluthat and T.R. Venugopal, and other recent works on the evolution of *nadus* in Kerala include K P Rajesh's *Historical Geography of Kolattunadu: A Study of Regional Formation in North Kerala*, Greeshmalatha's *Historical Geography of Valluvanadu*, N.M. Nampootiri's *A Study of Place Names in Calicut District*, and K N Ganesh's *State Formation of Kerala-a Critical overview and reflection on pre-modern Kerala*, etc. provide ample scope for the present study. These studies support the claim that *nadus* are a collection of rural villages and they also covered the process by which *nadus* came to be recognised as a distinct geopolitical entity.

The issue of state formation was not addressed by R S Sharma when he released his seminal work, *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India*. Nonetheless, a comprehension of the disintegration of a tribal community and the emergence of a distinct society is set forth. His book *Origin of the State in India (D.D. Kosambi Memorial Lectures, 1987)* is the only one that addresses the issue of state creation; the theoretical and empirical foundation for this work is established in *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India*, his earlier work.

The contribution of South India to the subcontinent's history is outlined in Nilakanta Sastri's *A History of South India, from Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar*. The detailed narrative follows the evolution of governmental and administrative frameworks while providing a broad overview of social and economic issues, as well as literature, philosophy, religion, art, and architecture. Similar issues were covered in a book on *Local Government in Ancient India* by R K Mookerji. *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India* by Burton Stein is regarded as a trustworthy analysis of the social structure and culture of the region. This study is a classic investigation of the Coromandel region's formation states.

According to Kesavan Veluthat, feudatories or feudal rulers ruled over the chiefdom of Tamil Nadu. He presented the idea of feudalism in South India. He discusses the establishment of *nadus* in Medieval Kerala in his book *The Early Medieval in South India*. He contends that the development of agriculture leads to the rise of these political powers. He examines the temple and the state's relationship to it

in the early Medieval South Indian political system. The temple accelerated the breakup of the tribal culture and its conversion into a caste system. Those who established the agrarian villages eventually formed businesses to oversee those in the countryside.

C K Kareem's *Kerala Under Hidarali and Tipu Sultan* is regarded as the earliest study on the background of Mysorean habitation in Malabar. The author uses uncomplicated language to explain every facet of Mysorean interlude.

Structure of this Study

The current investigation is structured into five distinct chapters, accompanied by an introduction and a conclusion. The geography and topography of Punnathurnadu are examined in the first chapter, Interplay of topography and anthropology in Punnathurnadu. Here, an effort is made to show how human interactions with nature shape living patterns and production methods. They show the emergence of an agro-pastoral community with the knowledge of masonry, iron metallurgy, agriculture, and environmental and climatic change awareness. Punnathurnadu's various agricultural techniques matched the region's topography nicely.

The second chapter, Punnathurnadu: Development and Significance, describes the several marketing hubs that were located throughout the region, such as *Cantas*, *Angadis*, and so on. It also talks about how human activity changed later on when trading groups started to form. Over time, the expansion of agricultural activities resulted in the emergence of local or regional powers. It also emphasises Punnathurnadu's economic transformation from antiquity to the present. This chapter discusses Mysorian and British initiatives in a variety of sectors.

Using data from toponymical analysis as well as additional archaeological and literary sources, the third chapter, The Local History in the Construction of Punnathurnadu, discusses the area in various stages and aids in the clarification of facts on the Early and Medieval Social History. The historical progression is plotted

out with respect to geographical variation. Local historians have offered hypotheses that are clarified within their specific setting.

Chapter four, “Socio-economic conditions of Punnathurnadu”, provides a detailed account of the region's patterns of settlement and the rise of social stratification. In Punnathurnadu, caste is the most powerful institution. Wetland cultivation expanded throughout the area, requiring large labour inputs. The Guruvayur Satyagraha and its aftermath are also covered. This chapter covers topics such as measurement, categories of weights, folk games, family structure, and educational system.

The religious customs and secular lifestyle of the people of Punnathurnadu are revealed in the fifth chapter, Socio-Cultural and Religious Conditions. An attempt is made to highlight the distinctive characteristics of diverse cultural practices, the development of belief systems, and the practices associated with these belief systems. The rites of passage for believers and the yearly sowing and harvesting festivals that took place within the framework are considered to be of considerable significance in terms of ritual. This is where local celebrations from different towns are documented.

Based on a theoretical framework, the thesis concludes with a summary of the regional formation of Punnathurnadu. There are also glossary, bibliography, maps and appendices, etc. which are incorporated in the study.

CHAPTER 1

INTERPLAY OF TOPOGRAPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGY IN PUNNATHURNADU

This chapter extrapolates the relationship of Man with the physical environment of Punnathurnadu from the Iron Age. Topography combined with toponymy, help in arriving at an understanding about the ways of life, social structure and culture that existed in early times. Human beings use their capabilities in extending the horizons of their knowledge and transforming everything to suit their own purpose. The eco-consciousness of Man plays a major role in the flourishing of agriculture and life itself.

Man and Environment

The existence and development of environment is an essential factor for the progress of human species. The primitive populace depended on nature and fostered a healthy relationship with nature. Man lived in close contact with his local surroundings particularly with the hills, forests and trees. The people, who collected fruits and hunted animals and led a primitive life are considered to be the first inhabitants.¹ While he ate fruits and nuts, the early man noticed plants growing in a particular area and observed the seasons in which they flourished. All the flora and fauna in nature are mutually connected and dependent on soil and cannot be separated from the existing ecosystem. Environment is comprised of natural diversity and is distinguished by the inseparability of life, landscapes and ecosystems. So Environmental history, is the study of human relationships with the corresponding

¹ M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam: Keralavum Bharathavum*, Thrissur, 2018, p. 15; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, Sukapuram, 2011, p. 52; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Keraladarsanam*, M.R. Thampan (ed.), Thiruvananthapuram, 2011, p. 42.

natural communities through time.² Every region has a microcosm of these abundant traits of nature. The sites, as well as the progress and development of human settlements are very much influenced by the availability of natural resources like soil, water, minerals, etc.³ The settlements may be temporary or permanent depending on the nature and quality of resources. Cultures are effects of human adaption to this abundance of ecosystems. Mesolithic culture in India had existed during the post-pleistocene period in the Holocene.⁴ Everywhere, the Old Stone Age was replaced by the culture of the Mesolithic epoch. During this period, there was a sudden increase in the number of sites, in comparison to the earlier cultures. This probably indicates increase in population as well as formation of smaller groups. Man's primary need is food. The need for protection and shelter is also fundamental and universal. Besides using it for protection, the early man used fire to cook food and to expel darkness.

Kerala is a region that boasts of environmental uniqueness but not of a single ecosystem and is hence a conglomerate of historically contingent cultures in time. The dawn of history in Kerala as elsewhere in the Tamil South, is marked by the diffusion of iron-using people of the Black and Red Ware (BRW) tradition, the antiquity of which goes back to the 7th century B.C.⁵ This does not mean that Kerala didn't maintain any particularities as to be defined as a region of cultural uniqueness. There exists a lacuna in literature but there are ample sources of archaeological evidence to throw more light on the history of the locality.

The mode of human adaptation with each place is also varied as the geological systems varied from place to place. It is also a tool of analysis to interpret the varied

² J. Donald Hughes, *An Environmental History of the World*, London, 2001, p. 4; Rajan Gurukkal, *Myth Charithram Samooham*, Kottayam, 2013, p. 382.

³ Majid Husain, *Human Geography*, New Delhi, 1994, p. 255; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Keraladarsanam*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁴ P. Rajendran, An overview on Indian Mesolithic Culture and Early Rock- area in Kerala, in M.R. Manmathan (ed.), *Archaeology in Kerala Past and Present*, Calicut, 2007, p. 75.

⁵ K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2015, p. 16; Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple and the Early Medieval Agrarian System*, Sukapuram, 1992, p. 116; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, Sukapuram, 1991, pp. 68-69.

factual knowledge about the patterns of the inter-relationships between man and environment. The ecosystem is a condition where all living organisms and non-living components exist in a mutually connected system. Effort is the struggle of human existence.⁶ From the beginning of human settlements, including hunting and food gathering, multi-crop production, craft making, fishing and salt making. Agriculture forced men to live in groups and lead a settled life. Due to this development, humans began cultivating plants, breeding animals for food and began forming permanent settlements.

Due to non-availability of literary sources, reconstruction can only be based on archaeological material. It has long been acknowledged that South India is among the world's richest megalithic regions.⁷ The neighbouring regions provide richer material, in terms of the primary sources as well as the secondary studies based on these sources. Thus, insights available from these regions may help us to interpret our data more fruitfully. The burial remains of iron-using people of the BRW tradition are the most ancient source for reconstructing the physical environment of early life in Kerala.⁸ In Kerala, Archaeological studies have revolved around megalithic monuments for a long time. The grave artifacts of that period point to a society that was primarily hunting and gathering food and then gradually shifting to sedentary agriculture. It has been argued that the BRW people knew the techniques of irrigation and led a sedentary life.⁹ Burials were occasionally found within the habitation area. The places like Porkkalam, Eyyal, Ariyannur, Chiramanangad and so on were sites of habitation, located on the banks of River Bharathapuzha.¹⁰ The Megalithic period is associated with ritualistic pre-historic burials that were built of huge dressed stones. The word 'megalithic' is made up of two Greek words - Mega (great) and Litho

⁶ K.N. Ganesh, *Prakrithiyum Manushyanum*, Thrissur, 2014, p. 16.

⁷ H.S. Ramanna, *Megaliths of South India and South East Asia*, Madras, 1983, p. 4; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, Kottayam, 2015, p. 15; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

⁸ Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, Kottayam, 1971, p. 17; K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*

⁹ Guru Raja Rao, *Megalithic Culture in South India*, Mysore, 1972; K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

(stone).¹¹ It reveals a record of pre-historic people. The first megaliths were excavated by Babington as early as 1823.¹²

In ancient times, dead bodies were buried at specific places along with food, tools, weapons, beads and ornaments.¹³ The internment was usually done in urns or jars, in pits, cists or rock-cut caves. The simplest excavations in laterite for burial purposes in Malabar are square or circular pits that had to house large pyriform urns.¹⁴ Hat stones, umbrella stones and rock-cut caves that were connected with the megalithic culture are found only in Kerala. Historical relics and monuments provide ample information for the study of the lifestyle, cultural aspects and the architectural style of the ancient period.

Talappillinadu has long historical lineage, which are revealed through the existence of archaeological and historical evidences. The local people were the first to encounter the megaliths on the landscape as well as in the sub-surface, while digging for laterite and other purposes. They named them in different terms such as; *pantukuzi*, *muniyara*, *nannangadi*, *kotakkal* and *toppikkal* depending upon their characteristics and attributed different sources of origin to each.¹⁵ The same can be deduced from the monuments of this locality. They include rock-cut caves, umbrella stones and urn burials. These monuments could be a symbolic representation of fear of death. The megalithic monuments of early historic period were clearly represented in the cultural discourses of human beings at that time.¹⁶

¹¹ A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, Kottayam, 2010, p. 50; P. Sivadas, *Local History of Kerala Transdisciplinary Investigations at Parambathu Kavu Irumpiliyam Malappuram District*, Kottayam, 2019, p. 99.

¹² K.N. Dikshit, Ajitkumar, *The Megalithic Culture of South India*, New Delhi, 2014, p. 158.

¹³ K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 24; Ravindran, *Ente Keralam*, Kozhikode, 2008, p. 74.

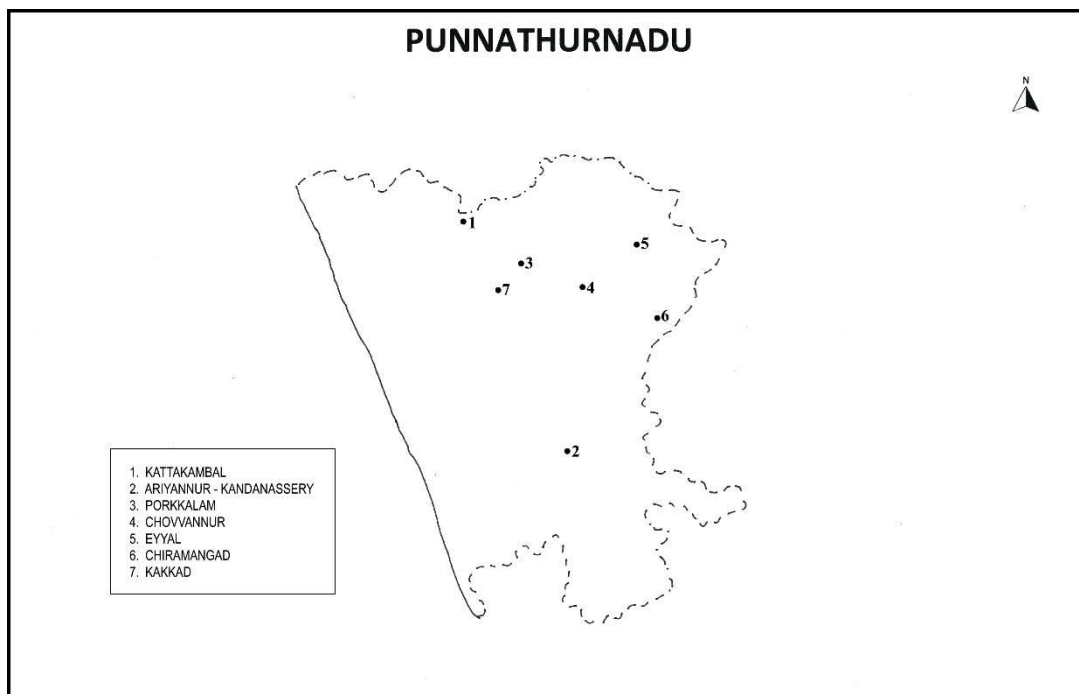
¹⁴ M.R. Manmathan, *Archaeology in Kerala past and present*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁵ Rajan Gurukkal, M.R. Raghava Varier, *Cultural History of Kerala Vol. I*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 104; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 224; K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*; T.R. Venugopalan, *Sampathum Adhikaravum Thrissuril Ninnulla Oru Kazhcha*, Thrissur, 2012, p. 44; Ravindran, *Ente Keralam*, *op. cit.*; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

¹⁶ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Kandanasseri Panchayat, Chowannur Block Vol. 82, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996.

Figure 2

Megalithic Sites in Punnathurnadu



*Not to scale

Rock-cut Caves or *Muniyara*

Rock cut caves are mostly found in Punnathurnadu. It is quite possible that in later times some of the caves might have occasionally given shelter to Buddhist or other monks or even to ordinary people.¹⁷ Such monolithic rock-cut sepulchers have been considered as a unique feature. Some of the most impressive ones are found near Kunnamkulam, such as Kandanassery, Chowannur, Kakkad, Porkalam, Eyyal and Kattakambal.¹⁸ These caves were originally formed by excavating a solid mass of laterite in the rock in a rectangular shape. The pits are of different depths in each cave.

¹⁷ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer Thrissur*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1962, p. 68; V.V.K. Valath, *Keralathile Sthalacharithrangal Thrissur Jilla*, Thrissur, 1981, p. 53.

¹⁸ T. Satyamurthy, *The Iron Age in Kerala A Report on Mangadu Excavations*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1992, p. 15; P.K. Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2012, p. 47; H. Sarkar, *Monuments of Kerala*, New Delhi, 1992, p. 12; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 225; A. Vini, *Thalappilly Swaroopam Samskarika Sambhavanakal*, Kottayam, 2018, p. 166; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralathile Rajavamshangal*, Kottayam, 2012, p. 150; V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 62; A. Sreedhara Menon, *District Gazetteer*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

A small rectangular entrance is cut into the vertical face, and access to the floor of the outer court is given through this narrow opening by rock-cut steps.

The megalithic rock-cut cave at Kandanassery is situated half a mile south of Ariyannur near Guruvayur. The natives of Kandanassery call this cave as *munimada* (see Appendix 4.1).¹⁹ There are benches on three sides, each with three legs cut out of the rock, with the hollowed-out space between the legs, taking the shape of the seats. At the centre of the domed vault of the cave, there is a circular opening.

The cave at Chowannur that is situated on the northern side of Kunnamkulam has yielded some burial caves. The peculiarity of the caves here is that it has no central pillar, nor any top-opening (see Appendix 4.2).²⁰ On its northern and southern sides of this cave are two benches. On the western side of the cave interior, there are 5 blocks cut out of laterite in a circular shape and of varying heights, but lower than the cave benches. The inner surface of the cave is extraordinarily smooth, testifying to the innovative workmanship of its builders. The excavation report was published in the year 1941.²¹

The cave at Kakkad is situated on the slope of a hill, one mile north of Kunnamkulam. Access to the entrance is by means of a cumference of its northern side there is only a single sectoral bench. To the south of bench near the entrance, is a rock-cut circular block, closely resembling the vessel-stands. Pyraform burial jar, four legged vases, black-and-red ware pottery, black ware pottery and red slipped

¹⁹ V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 54; Divakaran Kattakada, *Kerala Sancharam*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2015, p. 360; P.K. Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 49; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralithile Rajavamshangal*, *op. cit.*; Kandanasseri Panchayat, *op. cit.*; Personal interview with Mr. Prasad, Assistant monument attender, age 42, Burial cave, Ariyannur, on 31-08-2021.

²⁰ Y.D. Sharma, *Ancient India-Bulletin of Archaeological Survey of India*, New Delhi, 1985, p. 101; H.S. Ramanna, *Megaliths of South India and South East Asia-A Comparative Study*, Madras, 1983, p. 16; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 53; Personal interview with Mr. Promod K. Cheriyan, Assistant Monument Attender, age 52, Burial Cave at Chowannur, on 18.05.2022 at Chowannur, Thrissur District.

²¹ T.R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

ware iron implements have been excavated from these sites (see Appendix 4.3).²² The cave's layout is paraboloid and dome-shaped, with an almost straight edge on the side facing the entrance.

Porkalam is a village, where we can observe the marks of ancient human civilization. It is believed that, during the Indus valley civilization there was an active presence of human life in this region.²³ In the year 1948, B K Thapar discovered a number of megalithic monuments at Porkalam near Kunnamkulam in Thrissur district (see Appendix 4.4).²⁴ Two caves were examined and surveyed at this place. These two caves are located one behind the other facing the west-north-west direction. Inside the cave are two benches on either side of the entrance. However, unlike the benches in other caves, the benches here are relatively low in height. As in the Chowannur cave, adjacent to the side, opposite to the entrance, there are four vessel-stands. Both the caves have a rock-cut central pillar.²⁵ At the north-east corner of the Porkalam cave, a portion of the roof and sides have collapsed and a hole has been formed there. The megalithic burials are the predominant archaeological remains of the Iron age.

The place Eyyal, two and half miles south of Cheramanangad, has yielded a double-chambered cave (see Appendix 4.5).²⁶ The east-facing main chamber is about twice the size of the south-facing side chamber. The minor chamber has central pillar and a bench.²⁷ The pottery types, associated with this cave include four-footed jars

²² *Ibid.*; T. Sathyamurthy, *The Iron age in Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 28; Personal interview with Mr. Ravi, Assistant Monument attender, Kakkad cave, age 52, at Kakkad, Thrissur district on 17.05.2018.

²³ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Porkalam Panchayat, Chowannur Block, Vol. 82, Kerala State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram, 1996.

²⁴ *Ibid.*; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram, op. cit.*, p. 34; T.R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 44; V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 64; P.K. Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 48; Rajan Gurukka, M.R. Raghava Varier, *History of Kerala: Pre-Historic to the Present*, Hyderabad, 2018, p. 43; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralathile Rajavamshangal, op. cit.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History, op. cit.*; Y.D. Sharma, *op. cit.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 104; H.S. Ramanna, *op. cit.*; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History, op. cit.*; Kadangode Panchayat, *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Vadakkanchery Block, Vol. 83, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996; Personal interview with Mr. Unnikrishnan, Assistant Monument Attender, age 48 on 27.12.2021 at Burial cave, Eyyal, Thrissur District.

²⁷ P.K. Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

tall cylindrical bowls etc. The cave at Kattakampal is a multi-chambered one (see Appendix 6).²⁸ It lies about five miles north-west of Kunnankulam.

Megalithic period consists of ritualistic pre-historic burials built of huge, dressed stones. *Topikallu* (cap stone) and *kutakallu* (umbrella stone) are sculptural monuments peculiar to the laterite regions of Trichur.²⁹ Being a monument that easily attracts the attention of people, it has long been serving as a landmark.

Umbrella Stones

The Umbrella stones known as *Kutakkallus*, are unique and are the most beautiful among the megaliths of Kerala.³⁰ The *Kutakkallu* is modelled on laterite in the shape of a mushroom, which looks like a typical palm-leaf umbrella. Ariyannur, and Cheramanangad are well-known megalithic sites in Punnathurnadu. Several *topikallus* and *kudakallus*, which from a distance resemble a cluster of enormous mushrooms, are part of the megalithic site of Cheramanangad.³¹ In Ariyannur, seven *topikallus* were discovered. These sites are locally known as *kudakalluparambu*. A laterite stone with a broad, flat base that is spherical in shape and rests atop five clinostats makes up an umbrella stone (see Appendix 4.7).³² Recent excavations at Ariyannur have revealed two urns as per the information given by the Archaeological Survey of India. These sites are located near the Kandanassery cave at Punnathurnadu.

²⁸ *Ibid.*; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History, op. cit.*; Personal interview with Mr. Rafeek, Assistant monument attender, age 50 on 03.01.2022, burial cave, Kattakampal.

²⁹ A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History, op. cit.*; V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 63.; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Cultural History of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 115; P.K. Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 47; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, New Delhi, 1979, p. 44.

³⁰ Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, *Annathe Keralam*, Kottayam, 1969, p. 143.

³¹ A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History, op. cit.*, p. 52; V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 65; T. R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*, p.45.

³² N.P. Haneefa, *Ariyannurile Kudakkallukal*, Mathrubhumi Weekly, Book No. 40, Issue 8, 1962, May 6, p. 14; V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 63; Kattakada Divakaran, *op. cit.*; Personal interview with Mr. Pradeep, Assistant Monument attender, age 46, Kodakkalparambu, Ariyannur, Thrissur District on 20.05.2018.

Hat stones

Hat stones known as *Topikkallus* are burial urns with a stylised lid made of stone that almost resembles a hat, giving rise to the name. It is built of a circular laterite stone with a domical profile resting on four, quadrantal clinostatic stones joined together, over which a cap-like stone is placed. Ariyannur, Chiramangad and Eyyal in Thrissur District are the most well-known sites of the *topikallu*. Seven *topikallus* were discovered at Ariyannur – 12 miles to the west of Thrissur.³³ The Madras Circle of the Survey under the direction of B. Narasimaiah conducted an excavation at the centrally protected megalithic burial site at Cheramangad that has different structures like the *topikkallu* hood-stone, multiple hood-stones, stone circle, and burials marked by a capstone only on the surface (see Appendix 4.8).³⁴ One each of five types of burials urns was opened with a view to understand the interrelationship between them. Preserving heritage is an important element, in ensuring that the present and future generations retain their natural and acquired patrimony.

Peopling in India

We can speculate about the original or earliest inhabitants of India on the basis of information gleaned from physical anthropology regarding ethnic elements, i.e., the racial groups, in the population of India.³⁵ Among the inhabitants of India, the Proto-Australoid, the Palaeo-Mediterranean and the Caucasoid or Indo-European are the most strongly represented racial types.³⁶ Peopling of India is a study of endless fascination for all of us. It is a process, whose fuller understanding has to depend on

³³ N.P. Haneefa, *op. cit.*; V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*; P.K. Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 47; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History, op. cit.*, p. 52.

³⁴ I.A.R. 1990-91, The Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1995, p. 33; Kadangode Panchayat, *op. cit.*; Personal interview with Mr. Shanmughan, monument attender age 60, burial site at Chiramanangad on 08.11.2021.

³⁵ S.C. Dube, *Indian Society*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 2.

³⁶ A.L. Basham, *A Cultural History of India*, Delhi, 1975, p. 7.

bringing together of pieces of evidence from many lines of human enquiry: genetics, evolutionary biology, ecology, archaeology, history, linguistics and anthropology.³⁷

The peopling of India refers to the migration of Homo sapiens to the Indian subcontinent. There are many lines of evidence indicating a series of colonisation from different directions. The main factors for such migration were the conditions in the lives of the people, which forced them to leave their home and country, in search of better living conditions and peaceful life. The conditions prevailing at the destination attract migrants to come and settle there. The process of migration occurs throughout history, the dimensions and characteristic of which are specific to time and region. In ancient times, there were many classes of people like *kuravar*, *idayar*, *maravar*, *vellalar*, *parathavar*, *arrayar*, *vanikar* and so on who lived in South India.³⁸

Peopling in Kerala

The builders of the megalithic culture should be regarded as the earliest inhabitants or the aborigines of Kerala. From the tools and implements, polished and unpolished, used by these men of the Neolithic age, we can make certain inferences regarding the type of life they would have lived. Over time, the accommodating attitude of the early settlers accelerated the wave of migration to Kerala. Yadavas and Nagas migrated to Malabar in various times by defeating the tribes like Villavas and Meenavas.³⁹ They were encroached and deserted plains also. Among the early tribes, the Muthuvans and the Kanikkar migrated from Tamil Nadu. The Dravidians were overpowered by the Aryans who had entered Kerala centuries before the Christian era.⁴⁰ The migration of Aryans from the north was an event of far-reaching social and

³⁷ Madhav Gadgil and, U.V. Sambu Prasad, *Peopling of India*, New Delhi, 2012, p 65.

³⁸ V.R. Parameswaran Pillai, *Purananuru*, Thrissur, 1997, p. 15.

³⁹ K. Balakrishna Kurup, *Kozhikodinte Charithram*, Kozhikode, 2013, p. 26.

⁴⁰ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala History and its Makers*, Kottayam, 1987, p. 19; K.V. Krishna Iyer, *Kerala Charithra Nirmanam*, Mathrubhoomi Weekly, Book No. 36 Lukkam 50, 1959 March 1, p. 10; V. Rajeev, *Aryadhinivesavum Namboothiri Samskaravum*, Kottayam, 2015, p. 17.

cultural significance in the history of Kerala.⁴¹ The Namputiri Brahmins may be regarded as the later elements among these Brahmin immigrants. In the early centuries of the Christian era, when Jews faced persecution in their motherland, they migrated to Kerala.⁴²

Malabar is one of the most densely populated districts in the Madras Presidency.⁴³ This province on the Western coast of India extends from 10°12' to 12°15'. North latitude and between the parallels of 75° 10' and 76° 50' East longitude. The coast runs diagonally in a south easterly direction, and forms a few head-lands and small bays. It is bounded by the Province of Canara on the North, Coorg and Mysore on the East, Coimbatore on the Southeast and the small province of Cochin on the South.⁴⁴ The migrants, though a different type of people from a different region with a different background, found no difficulty in co-existing with the society existing then in Malabar. They soon became an indivisible part of that society. It would appear that the internal migration of the Brahmins took place over several centuries, starting from the second-third centuries.⁴⁵ In the eighth century, a large force of Brahmins reached Kerala from Deccan.⁴⁶ Brahmins gradually established themselves in 64 *Gramas*, scattered over the length and breadth of the land, and by

⁴¹ K.M. George, *The Malayalis*, Thrissur, 2002, p. 8; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁴² K.K.N. Kurup, *The Legacy of Islam*, Kannur, 2006, p. 84; K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

⁴³ C.A. Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1st published 1908, 2nd Reprint 1997, p. 92.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1; Ward and Conner, *A Descriptive Memoir of Malabar*, Kerala Gazetteers, Thiruvananthapuram, 1st Published in 1906, Reprint 1995, p. 1.

⁴⁵ K.N. Ganesh, *State formation in Kerala- A Critical Overview*, I C H R Bangalore, 2010, p. 24.

⁴⁶ Elamkulam P.N. Kunjanpillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, Kottayam, 1970, p. 311; V. Rajeev, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

their immense superiority in education, culture and knowledge.⁴⁷ It is universally accepted that the 32 *Gramas* in Kerala.⁴⁸

With the emergence of the Brahmin supremacy, agriculture was expanded and scattered villages were formed. For the settlements, people moved down into the valley by the riverside, as clearing of land progressed. Fertile soil, vegetation, climate were conducive for agriculture and settled life. The social structure in the villages entailed formation of separate groups like *Kollan, Asari, Tattaan, Chakkalan, Musari, Kaniyyan, Velan, Vannan, Panan, Veluthedan, Tiyyan, Pulayan, Parayan, Kanakkan, Mukkuvan*, etc. were classified according to the respective professions of the people. Extensive grasslands led to domestication of animals and big trees facilitated the construction of houses. This region is characterized by raised beaches, sand bars, estuaries, backwaters and alluvial plains. The main source of water was the annual monsoons that sustained various water-harvesting structures in both alluvial and laterite regions. The backwater region is a particularly well-recognised feature of the land of Punnathurnadu. The water transportation facilities from Bharathapuzha to Pamba river and Chettuvai sea port helped the natives to transport their goods from one place to another place. A canal connected from Chettuvai sea port to Palayur also found here. These factors were considered as the main attraction for people to settle here.

Agriculture in Ancient Times

Arable lands in Malabar were classified as wet, dry and garden. The wetlands were devoted almost exclusively to rice cultivation. Coconuts, Areca nut and Jackfruit

⁴⁷ V. Rajeev, *op. cit.*, p. 53; C. Achutha Menon, *The Cochin State Manual*, Govt of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1995, p. 53; Rajan Gurukkal, M.R. Raghava Varier, *History of Kerala: Pre-Historic to the Present, op. cit.*, p. 78; Malayinkeezhu Gopalakrishnan, *Keralam Lokacharithrathilode*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2014, p. 8.

⁴⁸ Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History, op. cit.*, p. 195; Kanippayyur Sankaran Nambudiripad, *Aryanmarude Kudiyettam Keralathil*, Kunnamkulam, 1966, p. 10; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam, op. cit.*, p. 145; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram, op. cit.*, p. 122; V. Rajeev, *op. cit.*, p. 15; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Keraladarsanam, op. cit.*, p. 126; K. Sugathan, *Buddhamathavum Jathivyavasthayum*, Calicut, 2011, p. 71; N.M. Nampootiri, *Vellagruha Charithram*, Sukapuram, 2010, p. 58; T.R. Venugopal, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

were grown in garden areas. The banks of the river Bharathapuzha in Southern Malabar, is considered as the rice-bowl of this region. *Vayal*, the lower ground was mainly meant for the cultivation of paddy. Lands with clayey loam (alluvial) or clayey sand generally support paddy cultivation. These lands are called *nilam* or *patam*. It is also found on both sides of canals and streams (*thodu*) and near tanks or ponds (*kulam*).⁴⁹ Wetland agriculture including paddy cultivation witnessed widespread use of iron technology.⁵⁰ The implements like plough, sickle, yoke, axe etc. were used for cultivation. Punnathurpadam, Thozhurpadam, Palemakkalpadam, Kottapadam, Kalarappadam, Vilakkattupadam, Kakkasserypadam, etc. were the main paddy fields here.⁵¹ Besides these, some *nilams* at the places like Kannamkulangara, Thamarappilli and Annakara were mentioned in Vanjeri Grandhavari.⁵² The fertility of these tracts has entirely depended on the monsoon.

The plot where the paddy is sown or seedling is planted is called *kandam*. The types and nature of *kandams* are related to the topography, the nature of soil and its location, proximity to water sources and to the availability of other sources for cultivation. Each *kandam* is marked by *varambus*. Farmers have been modifying *varambus* from the beginning of agricultural operations. *Kandams* are so arranged so as to allow water to flow from one end of the field to the other. The paddy seed varieties used in those days were *Aaryan*, *Chittyeni*, *Thavalakannan* and *Cheera*.⁵³ Paddy varieties like *Vattan*, *Cheera* and *Chityeni* were cultivated in the Malayalam

⁴⁹ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookode Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 81, Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur District, 1996; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Chowannur Panchayat, Chowannur Block, Vol. 82, Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur District, 1996.

⁵⁰ Kesavan Veluthat, *Early Medieval in South India*, New Delhi, 2011, p. 256; P.K. Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 152; Rajan Gurukkal, *Myth Charithram Samooham*, Kottayam, 2013, p. 383; T.B. Seluraj, *Innalekalile Kozhikode*, Calicut, 2015, p. 117; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁵¹ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookode Panchayat, *op. cit.*

⁵² M.G.S. Narayanan, *Vanjeri Grandhavari, Ola 16, Puram 1*, University of Calicut, 1987, p. 69.

⁵³ Personal interview with Mr. P.C. Joseph, farmer age 78, at his residence at Chittattukara in Thrissur District dated on 19-06-2018.

month *Medam*.⁵⁴ Numerous variables, including terrain, nature of the soil, infrastructure for irrigation, and more, affect paddy production. Quite a few of these water courses were natural, but conscious efforts must have been taken to divert water from its natural course to the agricultural lands. Some of the *thodus* or *canals* were probably built this way.

After harvesting the land is ploughed by cattle.⁵⁵ To begin with, a powdered mixture of cow dung and ash was applied on the prepared land. Then the seeds were sown. Bamboo thorns were spread above these seeds so that they remain covered by a thin layer of earth. This was to protect the seeds from ants, insects and birds.⁵⁶ The benefits of this method were that it required lesser labour, lesser effort and ensured quicker growth of saplings.

Paddy cultivation is categorised into *virippu*, *mundakan*, *puncha* etc. on the basis of nature of the paddy field and climatic conditions.⁵⁷ Before sowing, dry leaves are heaped at various positions on the land and burned. This helped to control and destroy the pests. *Virippu* crop is harvested in *Chingam* (August 15 to September 15),

⁵⁴ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookkode Panchayat, *op. cit.*; Personal interview with A. Madhavan, Farmer, age 77, at his residence, at Elavally, in Thrissur District dated on 14-08-2019.

⁵⁵ K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 18; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Tolur Panchayat, Puzhakkal Block, Vol. 86, Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur, 1996; Personal interview with Mr. E.K. Prabhakaran, Farmer, age 84 at his residence, Chittilappilly, Thrissur District on 03.07.2022.

⁵⁶ Personal interview with Mrs. Kurumba Velayudhan, agricultural labourer age 82 at paddy field at Parappur in Thrissur District dated on 06-03-2020.

⁵⁷ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Elavally Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 81, Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur, 1997; N. Ajithakumar, *Kerala Samskaram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2004, p. 19; Francis Buchanan, *Francis Buchanante Keralam*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1981, p. 53; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 218; Rajan Gurukkal, M.R. Raghava Varier, *History of Kerala: Pre-Historic to the Present*, *op. cit.*, p. 132; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Arthat Panchayat, Chowannur Block, Vo. 82, Kerala Planning Board, Thrissur, 1997; C.R. Rajagopalan, *Kerala Samskarappolimakal*, Kottayam, 2017, p. 142.

which marks the festival season of Onam. Subsequently, *njaviri* was used to level and till the fields.⁵⁸

Mundakan crop is harvested during the month of *Makaram* (January – February).⁵⁹ The seeds that were sown were allowed to sprout. This was done either by building small bunds of earth or by preparing the wet soil. As the seedlings reached up to three to four week growth, they were plucked, packed into bundles and carried to the prepared land.⁶⁰ These plants are called *njaru*. *Njattadi* is a special *Kandam* for preparing *njaru*. Then the seedlings are planted at equal distances. This method is known as *njattukrishi*.⁶¹ This saves time and makes weeding easier and more efficient.

Puncha cultivation starts from the month of *Makaram* (January- February). Being a summer crop, it is ready for harvest by the Malayalam month of *Medam* (April- May).⁶² The *puncha* fields were limited to the immediate neighbourhood of rivers or large streams and were dedicated to this type of agriculture. There existed many *kole* lands in Enamakkal, Tolur and Kunnamkulam. The Enamakkal bund which protects the *kole* cultivation is located in this village.⁶³ *Kole* lands which are generally under water and these lands are cultivated by pumping out water from them by means

⁵⁸ Personal interview with Mr. Stephan Thomas, Farmer, age 72 at his residence at Tolur in Thrissur District dated on 05-02-2020; Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁵⁹ K.N. Ganesh, *Malayaliyude Desakalangal*, Calicut, 2018, p. 20; N. Ajithakumar, *op. cit.*

⁶⁰ Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*; K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 106; Personal Interview with Mr. P.C. Velayudhan, farmer age 80, at his residence at Annakara, in Thrissur District, dated on 13-11-2021; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁶² K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *A History of Kerala Vol. 1*, T.K. Krishnamenon (ed.), New Delhi, 2022, p. 97; N Ajithkumar, *op. cit.*; Arthat Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Choondal Panchayat, Chowannur Block, Vol. 82, Kerala Planning Board, Thrissur, 1997.

⁶³ C. Achuda Menon, *The Cochin State Manual*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1995, p. 508.

of wheels or water-pumps.⁶⁴ At the beginning of summer these lakes are drained and paddy is grown there.⁶⁵

In the harvest season, farmers from neighbouring places like Aviyur, Vazhappilly, Perakam would arrive in the early morning for harvesting.⁶⁶ To harvest paddy, they simply used sickles. To obtain rice, the farmer threshed and pounded the harvested paddy plants on the threshing floor (*kalam*). Majority of the works like sowing, weeding, harvesting and threshing are done by women.⁶⁷ The paddy seeds were reaped from the best yield of the cultivation.⁶⁸ The threshed paddy was winnowed well and dried in sunlight for eight to ten days. The grains were winnowed, and were stored either by inside gunny bags or inside strong, wooden chambers (*pathayam*) and granaries (*kalappura*). The *ara and pathayam* are usually built-in traditional facilities which are wooden granaries.⁶⁹

Agriculture enabled an increase and concentration in human population. Farming villages were generally larger than hunting settlements. It had never been an exclusive one but was an integral part of village life. Organized form of paddy cultivation at Punnathurnadu required an efficient water management system and systematic preparations of the land. The abundant water resources in these areas, the low-lying alluvial lands with sufficient amount of siltation and biomass deposits proved to be suitable for wetland agriculture operations.

⁶⁴ Descriptive Memoir of Village No. 10, Kunnamkulam Thalappilly Taluk, RAE, 1905; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Tolur Panchayat, *op. cit.*; Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 64; K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *op. cit.*

⁶⁵ K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 18; C.A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

⁶⁶ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookodu Panchayat, *op. cit.*

⁶⁷ K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 51; Personal Interview with Mr. A.K. Babu, farmer age 68, at his residence at Enamakal in Thrissur District, dated on 10-05-2018.

⁶⁸ Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁶⁹ K.S. Singh, *People of India Kerala Vol. XXVII Part I*, New Delhi, 2002, p. 73.

Role of Physical Landscape in Human Progress:

The rise and fall of civilisation can be linked to the formation and destruction of human landscapes. The destruction of one form of human landscape is related to the formation of a different pattern of livelihood in the same natural region. Against this backdrop, we have to look at the landscape of Punnathurnadu a little more closely. Thamatturpattu *parambu* and nearest *vayal* were under the hands of Punnathurnambidi.⁷⁰ The total extent of holdings of Punnathur Estate is 6358 acres as shown in the fasli 1315.⁷¹ Of the above 6358 acres, to extend brought under cultivation is 5351 acres as per the fasli 1319. Among these 1689 acres come under wetland, 2221 acres under garden land and 1441 acres come within occupied dry land.⁷² Percentage of cultivation to holdings of Punnathur Estate was 84.2 in fasli 1319. It is well known that human intervention has resulted in gradual, but definite transformation of pristine landscapes and these changes have in turn, resulted in the transformation of livelihood patterns of the people who live in that region. It has been pointed out that these interrelationships between human beings and environment lay at the core of the historical process in a region. Forest areas were cleared and used for cultivation, especially along the coastal areas. The understanding of the geographical diversity of this region would help us to know how the human habitation and production operations were made possible in this region. Cultivation of food crops also spread in line with population growth. The nature of flora and fauna was another indication of the mode of utilization of resources.

Animal husbandry was an integral part of agriculture. Malabar was well endowed with regions fit for cattle rearing.⁷³ Cattle seem to have been fostered for domestic and agrarian purposes. The region could support substantial faunal wealth particularly cattle. Pasturage is found to have been obtainable for cattle on the unused

⁷⁰ M.G.S. Narayanan, *Vanjeri Grandhavari Ola 56 Puram I*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁷¹ *Punnathur Estate Revenue R DIS Book No. 70 S No. 18*, RAK.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 117; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 86; Rajan Gurukkal, *Myth Charithram Samooham*, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

dry lands. Water for cattle was obtained from canals, private tanks and wells. Cows and buffaloes were reared along with paddy cultivation as the straw and the bran obtained from paddy cultivation were used as fodder for cattle. The memories of the people demonstrate the existence of wild animals in the said regions but they have all disappeared in course of time. British records also show that the region had a large number of cows, oxen, buffaloes and sheep. Sheep were raised by a number of families and oxen and buffaloes were linked to agriculture.⁷⁴ Almost everybody reared chickens and occasionally rabbits in this region. From the topographical features and evidences related to the region, cattle rearing developed as an important form of subsistence as well.

Utilization of Natural Resources in Punnathurnadu

Geography is the backdrop prepared by nature for the progress of history. The path of progress is laid out by human beings themselves. Hence the study of the geographical conditions of a particular territory is essential for the study of its history. The concept of human ecology was proposed by American geographers who believed in the concept of Social Darwinism. In 1923, it was H.H. Barrows who, in his presidential address to the Association of American Geographers, declared that 'human geography is human ecology'.⁷⁵

The internal logic of geographical study has tended to split the subject into two parts: (1) Physical geography and (2) Human geography.⁷⁶ Apart from material gains and cultural developments; the physical environment directly or indirectly influences higher needs such as religion, belief, language, literature, fine arts, and folklore and also food, clothing, shelter, tools, technology, customs, traditions, socio-economic institutions, etc. Although human geography has emerged from earth sciences and has continuing links with physical geography, the basic objective of this branch of knowledge is to examine the various problems of different social groups in

⁷⁴ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Elavally Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Arthat Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Choondal Panchayat, *op. cit.*

⁷⁵ Majid Husain, *op. cit.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

relation to their environment.⁷⁷ Hartshorne, in his monumental work, “Perspective on Nature of Geography” stated that: “Geography is concerned to provide accurate, orderly and rational description and interpretation of the variable character of the earth’s surface.”

The people of Ancient Kerala also divided the land on the basis of soil formations and regions. The *tinai* concept of the anthologies, which is a reflection of the peculiar geo-ecological systems and the modes of human adaptation to them in *Tamilakam*, provides an intelligible beginning point for the study of contemporary socio-economic premises.⁷⁸ The concept involves a physiographic division of *Tamilakam* into five *tinai*s namely: *Kurinji* (hilly-backwoods), *Palai* (the parched zone), *Mullai* (the pastures), *Marutam* (the wet-land) and *Neital* (the sea coast).⁷⁹

The soils of this *nadu* can be broadly grouped into coastal alluvium, mixed alluvium and laterite soils.⁸⁰ The soil in the coastal areas is very deep sandy. Hence, water storage capacity is low in these areas. The coconut tree grows luxuriantly in this area and dominates the landscape.⁸¹ Cashew and other fruit trees are also grown. The mixed alluvium is mainly noticed close to coastal alluvium. The soils are frequently flooded and submerged. In addition to paddy, this area was also used to grow vegetables, tapioca, bananas, and other annual and seasonal commodities. The midland is sandwiched between the lowlands and the highlands. These valleys with laterite soils are characterized by occasional isolated hills and valleys leading to

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁷⁸ Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*; K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 2; V.R. Parameswaran Pillai, *op. cit.*; Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 17; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 78; K.S. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 41; Panmana Ramachandran Nair, *Kerala Samskara Patanangal*, Kottayam, 2013, p. 201; V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 17; K. Sugathan, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18; M.R. Raghava Varier, *Keraleeyatha Charithramanangal*, Kozhikode, 1990, p. 12.

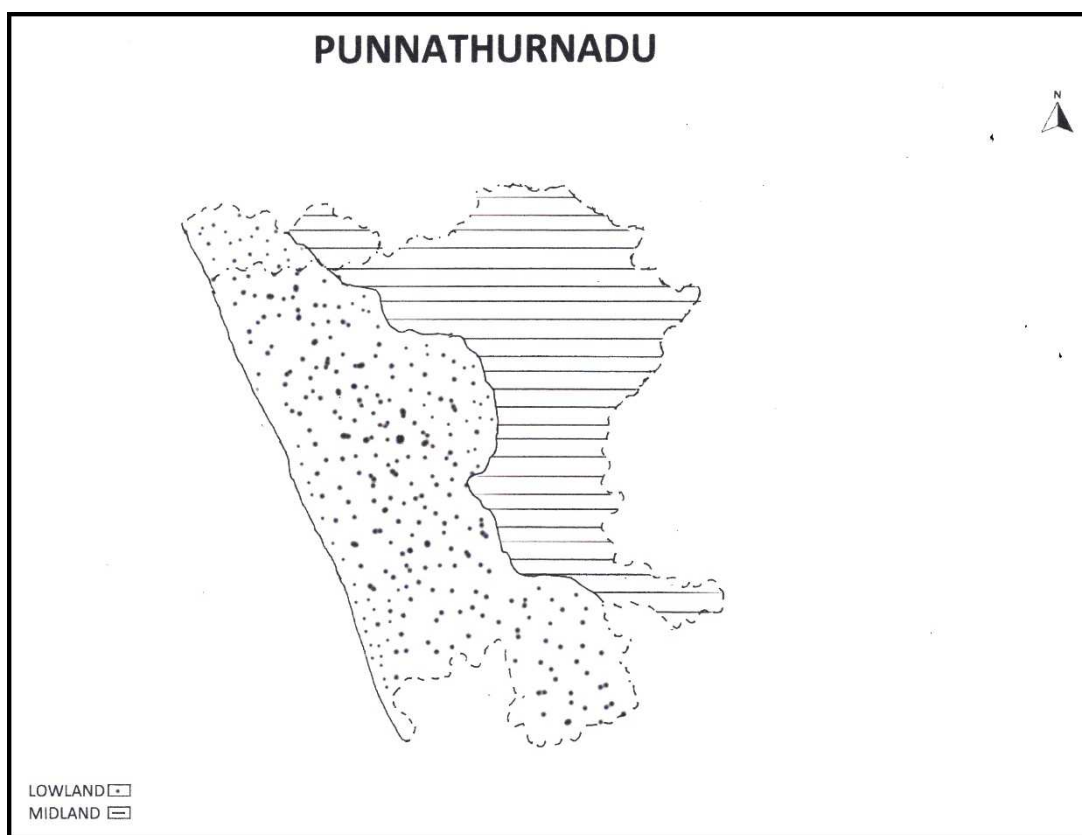
⁸⁰ State Soil Museum & Soil Information Centre, Thiruvananthapuram, 2014, p. 4; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Chowannur Panchayat, *op. cit.*

⁸¹ Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 55; K.N. Ganesh, *Kerala Samooham Innu Naale*, Kottayam, 2012, p. 12; K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 8; J. Rejikumar, *The Joint Commissioner’s Report on Malabar 1792-93*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2010, p. 8.

forested uplands. In Punnathurnadu, most of the Chavakkadu thaluk is lowland. All panchayaths are in Thalappilly Taluk, the eastern part of Elavally Panchayath in Chavakkadu Taluk, the eastern part of Kunnankulam municipality, and Tolur Panchayath in Thrissur Taluk in midland. The region is rich in agricultural products. The main crops are rice, tapioca, spices and cashews.⁸²

Figure 3

Physiographic Divisions of Punnathurnadu



*Not to scale

The climate of this region is usually pleasant for most of the year. It can be divided into four seasons - winter, summer, south-west monsoon and north-east monsoon. Winter starts with the end of the north-east monsoons i.e. from the later part of November and lasts till the middle of February. During this season temperature is

⁸² A.K. Gopalan, *Keralam Innale Innu*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2010, p. 13; *Survey and Settlement Register of Ponnani Taluk*, Desam No. 372 to 389, 398 to 411 and 424, RAK; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Thaikkad Panchayat, *op. cit.*; K.N. Ganesh, *Kerala Samooham Innu Nale*, Kottayam, 2012, p. 16.

comparatively low. The hottest months are March, April and May. Relatively higher temperature, low rain fall and slightly humid weather are the characteristics of the summer season. The primary rainy season is the south-west monsoon. This season (known as *edavappathi* as the rain starts by the middle of the Malayalam month *Edavam*) begins by the end of May or early June with the onset of the South West monsoon winds. Most of the rivers are fed by this monsoon.⁸³ North-east monsoon (known as *thulavarsham* because the rain starts in the Malayalam month *Thulam*) occurs in the months of October and November. Heavy afternoon rain accompanied by thunder and lightning is the main characteristic of this season.⁸⁴

Seasonal and climatic fluctuations have an effect on the growth of agriculture as well as vegetation. The sea turned back and formed marshy grounds or rivers flowed in various directions, forming islands, were some of the geographical phenomenon. But the marshy land and islands were transformed into paddy field and coconut plantations as a result of human effort. The basic foundation of social life is based on organised human labour.⁸⁵ The notable feature was that unlike *kadu*, *parambus* were liable to be transformed through human intervention. *Parambus* were bordering on forests and were often converted from forest lands.

Cultivation of land with plantains is a preliminary requirement for the conversion of high-lying wetlands into garden lands. The garden land cultivations were widely practised in this region. The *parambu* lands had been used for paddy cultivation in several areas of Punnathurnadu. The mixed crop regions characterised by loamy soil was a *parambu*, and those lands with clayey soil where coconut trees were grown were also called *parambu*. Thus the word *parambu* appears to be a term that signified the nature of vegetation, rather than a soil type. Elaborate preparation of the ground was necessary only in the case of grain cultivation in *parambu* lands. The

⁸³ *Ibid.*; K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 4; *Grama Vikasana Rekha* Elavally Panchayat, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁸⁵ Descriptive memoir of Village No. 10 Kunnamkulam Thalappilly Taluk, RAE; Rajan Gurukkal, *Myth Charithram Samooham*, *op. cit.*, p. 381.

type of paddy named *modan* was cultivated in *parambu* lands.⁸⁶ The development of multi-crops cultivation led to the formation of land space that came to be called *Parambu*. The nature of the vegetation grown in the area led to subtle changes in terrain itself. The cultivation and settlement in the laterite areas also led to development of orchards, in which mixed crops cultivation was practiced according to nature of monsoons and other weather conditions. Pepper along with other spices and fruit bearing trees were grown in the *parambus* and *thottams* (garden) along the coast and inland.⁸⁷ The flora of the *parambus* consisted of wilds trees, fruit trees, bushes and cultivated cash crop trees. Wild jackfruit, mango, tamarind and goose berry were commonly found in the *parambus*. Generally, wells were used for irrigating a *parambu* land. The implements like *thulan* (a wooden bucket for drawing water), *chakram* (water wheel) etc. were used for watering.⁸⁸

Undulating terrains, absence of large plains, abundance of water resources including rivers, tanks and backwaters have played a crucial role in the process of production. The Settlement Register provides a clear picture of the landscape and hints at the pattern of settlement.⁸⁹ The region is partly formed of Pleistocene laterite and the other parts consist of recently-formed alluvial soil.

Communication and Language

People who were did not have access to the written script of their language have a fantastically precise knowledge of their environment and all their resources. Folklore is vital and a part of daily life. It is people-centered and delves deep in to the social practices, cultural forms and customs. Hence, folklore marks the pulse of the

⁸⁶ Rajan Gurukkal, *Myth Charithram Samooham*, *op. cit.*, p. 409; K.N. Ganesh, *Kerala Samooham Innu Nale*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁸⁷ Rajan Gurukkal, M.R. Raghava Varier, *Kerala Charithram Part II*, *op. cit.*, p. 124; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Arthat Panchayat, *op. cit.*

⁸⁸ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Tolur Panchayat, *op. cit.*; Personal interview with Mr. P.K. Divakaran, Retired teacher, age 80, at his residence Peruvallur, in Thrissur District, dated on 25-01-2023; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Arthat Panchayat, *op. cit.*

⁸⁹ *Survey and Settlement Registers of Ponnani Taluk*, *op. cit.*

people. Oral tradition has an indispensable place in folklore.⁹⁰ It has the power to depict folk life and folk culture. The transmission of narratives is through prose or lyric and may include folktales, ballads, chants, prose or verses. This enables a civilization to transmit knowledge orally, without using written language, between generations. Oral tradition helps in the process of socialisation as well. Each tradition-bound society has numerous oral folk traditions.⁹¹ Various aspects of the agrarian production process and the involvement of the working class in the labour process can be revealed too. Proverbs, adages, prayers, popular idioms, and in particular, superstitions, beliefs, narrative tales, and legends are all included in this category of ways of communicating and interacting.⁹²

The history and language of ancient Kerala itself is deeply intertwined with that of Tamil Nadu. Malayalam is a Dravidian language closely akin to Tamil.⁹³ A community's customs, beliefs, and stories were transmitted orally from generation to generation. Myths or beliefs were related to a particular locality or an activity or a group of people. In folk culture, oral tradition not only represents thoughts and feelings, but also ascribes meanings and imaginary ideas to them. The examination of the effects of folk consciousness on the populace is a crucial component of the study.

Folk songs are the liveliness of human life. They are passed from lip to lip.⁹⁴ An innumerable account of folk songs, owe their credit to the Malayalam language. Folk songs are created and sung by the village community for themselves. They arise from different social groups. Folk songs have lyrics which contain simple words and expressions and are easily acquirable for the ordinary man. It reflects the social psyche and human desires and also reveal the life of subjugated and suppressed people.

⁹⁰ M.V. Vishnu Namboodiri, *Folklore*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2012, p. 15.

⁹¹ Raghavan Payyanadu, *Folklore*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2014, p. 6.

⁹² Majid Husain, *op. cit.*, p. 203; K.M. Anil, *Folklore: Janasamskrithiyude Verukal*, Kannur, 2018, p. 79.

⁹³ C.A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 193; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁹⁴ M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Malayalathile Natan Pattukal*, Kottayam, 2011, p. 11; Raghavan Payyanadu, *Folklore*, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Charles E. Gover, *The Folk Songs of Southern India*, New Delhi, 2002, p. 1.

Krishipattu contains the knowledge, experience and faith of a farmer.⁹⁵ Their words, movements, rhythms have together generated folk songs. Songs accompany all the phases of agriculture like the burning and preparation of the fields, sowing seeds, removing weeds, harvesting, irrigation etc.⁹⁶

*“Teyyatinuntatinuntinamtara
Taratinuntatinuntinamthara
Onnamkandathipodiparanne
Othiriyothirivitherinje
Marimayakalchorinje – cheru
Vayalukalokkenananje
Poottiyorukkipparanje – cheru
Njarukalkettiyeerinje
Patamkoyyunnepaniyarukoyyunne
Thamprantepathayammerayunne.”⁹⁷*

Preparation of the soil and ploughing were important activities for the transplanting seedlings. People believed that humming tunes relieved monotony and lightened the heavy physical labour. Singing songs helped villagers handle their laborious life. They would be songs suitable for every event in life, like marriage, death and so on.

There is vast literature available on proverbs and riddles. As so often, there are disputes about definition and interpretation of the same, which are often useful in

⁹⁵ C.R. Raja Gopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 94; M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Malayalathile Nadanpattukal, op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁹⁶ A.K. Nambiar, *Surviving Folk Arts and the Social Analysis of their Origin and Development*, in P.J. Cheriyan (ed.) *Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990, p. 17; A.L. Basham, *A Cultural History of India, op. cit.*, p. 235; Vattaparambil Peethambaran, *Nattarivukalude Ullarakalilekku*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2014, p. 98; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 141; Krishna Chaithanya, Kerala, New Delhi, 1994, p. 121.

⁹⁷ *Krishippattu* used while planting paddy sprouts (Meaning: Farmers sowed the seeds in the fields after ploughing, the land became wet after the rain, they threw the sprout bundles to the fields, paniyas harvested the land and filled the landlord's granaries); Vattaparambil Peethambaran, *op. cit.*

pointing to features that might otherwise be neglected.⁹⁸ Proverbs are a collection of all the precious knowledge gleaned by people from their forefathers. They are circulated from generation to generation through repetitions. They are pleasing to hear with a strong aesthetic sense along with intelligent and wise thoughts. Proverbs are terse, didactic statements that contain concise knowledge and information relating to various aspects of life.⁹⁹ Proverbs are a powerful medium to convey facts and information. Collectively, they form a genre of folklore. This genre specially reflects the cultural vividness of a particular society and the vitality of its language. *Kumbhathil mazha peythal kuppayilum manikyam, kumbhathil nattaal kudatholamchena, meenathil nattaalo meenkanninolam, thirimuriyaathe thiruvathira njattuvela.* These proverbs demonstrate how much the local climate and agriculture have influenced this area.¹⁰⁰ Proverbs also frequently teach farmers mechanical skills related to planting, cultivating, harvesting, and plowing.

Everyone, regardless of age, uses riddles as one of the oral language structures. It's a nicely phrased but confusing figurative inquiry that's challenging to respond to. There is a deeper meaning to riddles. Proverbs and riddles are tools for controlling and adjusting one's perspective on life. The roles played by individuals in physically dynamics of their life activities are contained in these texts. Among primitive societies with a relatively simple material culture and social structure oral communication must have been adequate for social needs. This genre can also be used to understand the life of the common people in this region.

Food Habits, Dress and Ornaments

Food, dress and ornaments are so closely interlinked with life and society that it becomes difficult to separate them from a culture. Cultural traditions that stem from

⁹⁸ Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Traditions and The Verbal Arts*, London, 1992, p. 151; M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vijnaneeyam*, Kottayam, 1996, p. 241.

⁹⁹ Raghavan Payyanadu, *Folklore, op. cit.*, p. 299.

¹⁰⁰ Rajan Gurukkal, *Myth Charithram Samooham, op. cit.*, p. 399; Personal Interview with Mr. P.C. Antony, Retired teacher, age 80, at his residence at Chittattukara in Thrissur District, dated on 28-01-2020; M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Nototivijnaneeyam, op. cit.*, p. 241.

circumstances and events in the corresponding physical environment have a significant impact on eating habits.¹⁰¹ In Kerala, rice is a staple diet.¹⁰² In addition to eating rice in its granular form, rice is also part of many dishes like *idli*, *dosa*, *puttu* etc. which are made from batter prepared from rice or rice flour. *Puttu* is prepared by mixing rice flour and desiccated coconut, which is then cooked on steam. People of the region use coconut oil as well as the milk extracted from the flesh of coconuts in cooking. The milk helps in thickening flavours. Some underground succulents like *marachini* (tapioca), *koorkka* (Malabar catmint), *koova* (East Indian arrowroot), *chena* (Elephant yam), *chempu* (Colocasia), *kachil* (Yam) etc. are also part of the staple diet of the community in this region.¹⁰³ Fish and seasonal fruits also form part of their food habits.¹⁰⁴ The leftover rice is preserved in cold water at night and is eaten as *pazhamkanji* or *vellachoru* the following morning with some pickles. Rice, vegetables or non-vegetarian meals (fish, meat, etc.), *sambar*, *rasam*, *olan*, *aviyal*, *kalan*, etc., or wheat preparations make up lunch and dinner. Pickles, buttermilk, and fried savory snacks are consumed with every meal. Regular consumption also includes *thairu* (curd) and *moru* (buttermilk). The majority of fruits consumed are those found in the area, such as papaya, jackfruit, guava, pineapple, sapota, *vazhappazham* (plantain), and *mampazham* (mango). After the Malayalam month *Makaram* the most commonly eaten fruits are jackfruit and mango.

Household utensils used by early people were *aripetty*, *kinnam*, *vattaka*, *kolambi*, *montha*, *chellam*, *villakku*. The *aripetty*, which literally means ‘rice box’, is kept in the store room or kitchen. *Kotta*, *Vatti* and *Kooda* are containers made of

¹⁰¹ Majid Husain, *op. cit.*, p. 200; N. Ajithkumar, *Kerala Samskaram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2004, p. 45.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*; Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. 1, op. cit.*, p. 84; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 123; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram, op. cit.*, p. 83; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralathile Rajavamshangal, op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹⁰³ Rajan Gurukkal, *Myth Charithram Samooham, op. cit.*, p. 45; M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram, op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.

¹⁰⁴ K.N. Ganesh, *Malayaliyude Desakalangal, op. cit.*; Majid Husain, *op. cit.*, p. 37; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala, op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.

bamboo and were used for storage purposes.¹⁰⁵ They were made of brass and other alloys. *Kindi*, is the container, used for water, or milk, is made of bronze and resembles an inverted retort with a spout to allow the water to flow. *Kinnam* is a flat, circular plate made of bronze, in which food is served. *Vattaka* and *montha* are containers to hold water. *Kolambi* is another bronze utensil that was used as a spittoon.¹⁰⁶ *Chellam* is, the traditional brass box that was used to store the various items for the practice of betel quid chewing. This Indian cultural practice entailed chewing an elaborate mix of betel leaves with areca nuts and mineral slaked lime. The chewed mixture is spat out after a while into the aforesaid spittoon. The different varieties of *vilakku* (lamps) such as *kolvilakku*, *kuttuvilakku*, *thookkuvilakku*, *nilavilakku*, etc. were used for various social functions.

Clothing is an important aspect as it acts as code of a particular society. Dressing style is also determined by environmental and cultural features like geography, natural resources, climate, technology, aesthetic sense, economic status.¹⁰⁷ The study of dress patterns provides insights into the life led by people in the past. In ancient times, all people wore clothes made of cotton.¹⁰⁸ Traditionally, each caste had its own jewelry and fashion sense. Garments in Kerala used to be made out of an unstitched strip of cloth worn around the waist.¹⁰⁹ The body was stripped to its uppermost portion. Males and females both wore their upper bodies bare when it came

¹⁰⁵ Personal interview with Mrs. Lilly Thomas, Housewife age 90, at her residence at Tholur in Thrissur District dated on 20-03-2020.

¹⁰⁶ Personal interview with Mrs. Annie Thomas, Housewife age 77, dated on 20-10-2020 on her residence at Pavaratty in Thrissur District; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

¹⁰⁷ P.K. Abdul Kalam, *History and Dress of Mappila Muslim of Malabar in Kerala*, South Indian History Congress, 36th Annual Session Proceedings, Puducherry, 2016, p. 863; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁸ V.R. Parameswaran Pillai, *Purananuru*, *op. cit.*, p. 17; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

¹⁰⁹ Rajan Gurukkal, *Myth Charithram Samooham*, *op. cit.*, p. 59; N Ajithkumar, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 59; F Fawcett, *Nayars of Malabar*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 197; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

to the *avarnas* (backward lessons). Furthermore, they were forbidden from donning loincloths that fell below their knees.

The Nambuthiris (Brahmins) wore a very basic traditional garment made of two pieces of white cloth that had not been sewed together. The men wore a loincloth, called a *mundu*, that was 2½ yards long and 1½ yards wide around their waists. The second cloth was thrown over the shoulders.¹¹⁰ Traditionally, nambuthiri women would cover their upper body and conceal their faces and bodies with an *olakkuda* or *marakkuda*.¹¹¹

Christians and Muslims were allowed to follow the dress code of their religion in Malabar. Among the Christians, the dress worn by men resembled that worn by the other communities. The Christian women, however, had many peculiarities in their dress and costume. They wore a white *mundu* with a fan-shaped frill at the rear, measuring about 7½ yards in length and 1½ yards in width. They wore *chatta*, or full or half-sleeved white blouses, to hide the upper portion of their bodies.¹¹²

Muslim males wore the *mundu* knotted on the left side, as opposed to the right, as men from other religions did. When they visited the mosque or went to events like weddings and funerals, they donned a white cap or a black and white cap. Instead of a cap, people now cover their heads with a scarf called an *urumal*. Muslim women cover their upper body with a *kuppayam* (blouse), the sleeves of which, for older women, extend to the wrist and, for younger women, to the elbow. *Thattom* is the

¹¹⁰ K. Balakrishnakurup, *Kozhikodinte Charithram, op. cit.*, p. 47.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 48; Personal Interview with Mrs P K Kamalam, retired teacher, age 82, at her residence Tolur, Thrissur District, dated on 28-11-2019; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 111.

¹¹² Chummar Choondal, *Christian Folklore Vol. I*, Kerala Folklore Academy, Thrissur, 1988, p. 25; N. Ajithkumar, *Kerala Samskaram, op. cit.*, p. 61; Rajan Gurukkal, *Myth Charithram Samooham, op. cit.*, p. 61; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 115; M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vijnaneeyam, op. cit.*, p. 277; Aswathi Thirunal Gauri Lakshmi Bai, *Kerala Samskaram: Oru Thiranottam*, Kozhikode, 2012, p. 227.

name for a tiny piece of cloth worn over the head and shoulders.¹¹³ Thus, dress code is an important aspect of culture that reflects the evolution and changes in the economic, social and cultural life of people.

In the past, each community had distinctive styles of ornaments. Ornaments were made using gold, precious stones, pearls, corals etc.¹¹⁴ Ornaments made of gold, silver and brass were used by early Christians.¹¹⁵ In olden days, they used a number of peculiar ornaments. The traditional Christian women used to wear *mekkamotiram* (heavy gilt gold ring) on the upper earlobe.¹¹⁶ Muslim women had many assortments of ornaments. The ear decorations were jimikki and alicath. On the ear rim, they wore several alicath, or coiled gold or silver earrings that were used to distinguish Muslims.¹¹⁷ During the medieval era, wearing particular jewelry was subject to rigorous regulations. The right to wear gold ornaments was prohibited to the *avarnas*. They used to wear inexpensive metal bracelets and beaded necklaces called *kallumala*.¹¹⁸ Additionally, they wore *olachuttu*, a *pandanus* or coconut leaf scroll, in their earlobes. Dress and ornaments form an indelible part of the individual as well as racial self-expression.

Topographical Evidence in History

Toponymy is a branch of Onomastics, the science that deals with the study of names, that gives insights into the historical topography of a particular place. Toponymical evidence has a special significance in historical studies. The name given

¹¹³ *Ibid.*; N. Ajithkumar, *Kerala Samskaram, op. cit.*; Personal Interview with Mr. A.M. Mohammed, retired Village officer, age 65, at his residence at Tolur in Thrissur District, dated on 15-11-2019; M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vijnaneeyam, op. cit.*, p. 279.

¹¹⁴ V.R. Parameswaran Pillai, *Purananuru, op. cit.*; Chummar Choondal, *Christian Folklore, op. cit.*, p. 223.

¹¹⁵ Chummar Choondal, *Christian Folklore, op. cit.*, p. 223.

¹¹⁶ N. Ajithkumar, *Kerala Samskaram, op. cit.*; M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vijnaneeyam, op. cit.*, p. 279.

¹¹⁷ M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vijnaneeyam, op. cit.*; Personal Interview with Mrs. N.H. Ramlath age 62, at her residence at Thamarappilli, Thrissur District, dated on 10-12-2021; M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vijnaneeyam, op. cit.*

¹¹⁸ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Prabhatha Kiranangal*, Kottayam, 2001, p. 46; N Ajithkumar, *Kerala Samskaram, op. cit.*, p. 66.

to a place is based on geographical and natural peculiarities of the locality. Archaeological names and names of places are essential in historical and cultural studies. The early settlements and the indication of them in topography seem to be a very important factor. It is said that there are enormous pieces of evidence of pre-historic settlements along the length and breadth of Punnathurnadu.

Hence, Malabar has been descended from Male; however, it is most likely a compound of the Dravidian word *mala*, which means hill, and either the Arabic word *bar*, which means continent, or the Persian word *bar*, meaning country.¹¹⁹ Punnathurnadu lies in the southern part of Malabar. Historically the region has a long lineage. The continuity of its formation can be traced from early Iron Age phase to the pre-modern times and later. But it doesn't mean that the *nadu* had existed in that name from the early period onwards. The available source materials testify to the historical continuity of the region of Punnathurnadu as an agrarian unit, from Iron Age to the Medieval Age. The principal varieties of the landscape include: hills, hillocks, slopes, valleys, plains, marshy lands and wetlands, various water sources like streams, river, natural ponds, and coastal lands.

Some fields are named after flora and fauna while some others are named with reference to a cardinal direction. There are names which indicate the nature of the terrain, water resources etc. Place names give us an idea of the regional dialects, the customs and practices of the people of a particular region. The name Punna was coined from *Punnai* referring to species of tree.¹²⁰ Punna used as prefix the places like Punnathur, Punnayur and Punnayurkulam in this region. Chavakkad is a large bazaar

¹¹⁹ C.A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 1; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Charithram*, Kottayam, 2007, p. 27; William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Calicut, 1997, p. 1; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 21; Shamsullah Qadri, *Pracheena Malabar*, Calicut, 2012, p. 21; V. Chithra Devi, Trade in Medieval Kerala, B. Sobhanan (ed.), *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2003, p. 57; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Ibubathootha Kanda Keralam*, Kottayam, 2014, p. 50.

¹²⁰ P.M. Joseph, *Prakrit Influence on Kerala Place Names*, ed. Puthusseri Ramachandran, *Perspectives in Place Name Studies*, Proceedings of the National Seminar on South Indian Place names, Place name Society, Thiruvananthapuram, 1987, p. 179; Personal interview with Mr. K.K.N. Kurup, former V C of Calicut University, Age 82 History Department at Calicut University dated on 05/07/2021.

has a *musjid* and Lubbay population. Adjacent to it, is a small fort, which like the Pagoda it once encompassed is now in completely dilapidated. This is the capital of the District.¹²¹ A legend is linked with the name of the place called Chavakkad. Due the arrival of St. Thomas and his missionary activities, some Brahmins opposed him and cursed this place as *sapakkad* (*Saapam* meaning curse).¹²² Some Namboothiris left Chavakkad and built a *mana* (*orumana*) in the new place. Thus, the place acquired the name Orumanayur.¹²³ Some Brahmins settled another place and built a new *mana* (*puthiya mana*). Hence the place is known as Puthumanassery.

One may argue that Kunnamkulam is the district capital of Talappilli. It's one of Cochin's biggest Christian towns.¹²⁴ This village is bordered to the north by Porkalam and Chowannur, to the east by Chowannur and Kanippayur, to the south by Kanippayur and Arthat, and to the west by Anjur.¹²⁵ The chief crop is paddy and areca nut trees are also grown abundantly. Seated on a raised ground, amid fine groves of the betel nut palm, the bazaar was scenic.¹²⁶ The village contains many well-built houses, belonging to affluent people and was comparatively clean.

The place Vedakkad situated three kilometers north of Kunnamkulam. Many *Rishis* used to assemble at the Bhagavati temple for meditation and for dialogues on the *Vedas*. The place thus got the name *vedaranyam*, literally meaning forest where

¹²¹ Ward and Conner, *A Descriptive Memoir of Malabar*, Department of the Collectorate of South Malabar, Calicut, 1906, p. 219; T.R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

¹²² Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli*, Palayur, 2016, p. 12; George Menachery, *Marthoma muthal Medlikkottu vare*, in *Centenary Commemoration 1887-1987 Thrissur diocesan*, Archeparchial Archives Thrissur, 1987, p. 130.; V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 174; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli*, Parish Directory, Mar Thoma Major Archiepiscopal Shrine, Palayur, 2010, p. 52; Raphy Neelankavil, *Desham Chollithanna Kathakal*, Cochin, 2020, p. 16.

¹²³ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Orumanayur Panchayat, Vol. 81, Chavakkad Block, Thrissur District, Kerala Planning Board, 1996; Raphy Neelankavil, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹²⁴ Ward and Conner, *Memoir of the Survey of Travancore and Cochin States*, Vol. II, Thiruvananthapuram, 1994, p.272; Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras Through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, New Delhi, 1988, p. 391.

¹²⁵ Descriptive Memoir of Village No. 10, Kunnamkulam of the Talappilli Taluk, RAE.

¹²⁶ Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 592.

Vedas are uttered and discussed.¹²⁷ The temple has been associated with the Bhattatirippats of Payyur *mana*.

Guruvayur *desam* is situated about 15 miles south of Ponnani.¹²⁸ In ancient records this *desam* known as Kuruvayur. The word Kuruvayur is a combination of three words – *kuru*, *vai* and *ur*. Here *Kuru* means small, little or short. *Vai* means the junction of a river with the sea, wind or the speedy horse or the god of Wind, otherwise a vital air.¹²⁹ At the holy place Kuruvayur, there was a lake full of lotus flowers.¹³⁰ The famous Sree Krishna temple located here. Guruvayur is remarkable as being the residence of the Azhvancherri Tumbran, or chief of the Nambuthiris.¹³¹ Here are two large Kolaghums, a similar number of pagodas very conspicuous for their size, within close proximity of this place.

About three miles northeast of Kuttungal is the little town of Kottapadi. The terms *kotta*, which means fort, and *padi*, which means gate, gave rise to the town name Kottapadi. It is primarily home to Syrian Christians, who also operate a church there, and is well-known for its coconut oil trade. The location appears to have been chosen for this purpose because it is near the Punnathur *kotta*, or seat, of Punnathur *Raja*, an ancestor of the Zamorin chieftains who were feudatory in the past.¹³²

The nature of topography, cultivation and crop pattern, climate and water resources have a significant influence in the configuration of the region. The majority

¹²⁷ S. Jayashanker, *Temples of Thrissur District*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2006, p. 100; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Porkkalam Panchayat, *op. cit.*; V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 64; C.M. Shanmughan, Archaeological Remains of Vedakkad Temple – A Centre of Megalithic Culture, in E. Sreejith (ed.) *Kerala Charithra Congress Prabandhangal*, Kottayam, 2014, p. 165; P.G. Rajendran, *Kshetravijnanakosam*, Kottayam, 2000, p. 1105.

¹²⁸ Descriptive memoir of Guruvayur *desam* No. 377 Ponnani Taluk, RAK.

¹²⁹ S. Jayashanker, *op. cit.*, p. 435; A Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 103; N.R. Gopinatha Pillai, *The Place names mentioned in Kokasandesam – An Etymological Study*, in *Perspectives in Place name Studies*, *op. cit.*, p. 226; C.A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 480; Pepita Seth, *Heaven of Earth*, New Delhi, 2009, p. 29.

¹³⁰ Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, *Kokasandesam Stanza 34*, Kottayam, 1959, p. 48.

¹³¹ Ward and Conner, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

¹³² William Logan, *Malabar Manuel*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1989, p. ccccvii; V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

of the soils are sandy, while the core regions have red loam. In the words of Francis Day; “The Enamakal division lies south-west of Thrissur, separated for about two-third of the distance by the lake, and for the remainder by a small stream. It contains an area of about sixty-six-and-a-half square miles, but nearly a quarter of this is occupied by the lake, and a quarter of the remainder is under cultivation.”¹³³ Approximately 3 miles east of Chettuvai and 8 miles from Chavakkad is the lake known as the Trichur lake.¹³⁴ The backwaters at Chettuvai flow into the sea, and this lake is connected to them. This lake lay partly in Venkidangu *amsam* of Ponnani taluk and partly in Cochin¹³⁵ territory. During the British period, there was built a bund across the lake connecting the places between Enamakal and Manalur for paddy cultivation.¹³⁶

Thus, nature helps us to identify units of specialisation and man-made changes in certain areas. These characteristics are all seen reflected in topography. Some unnoticed patterns of settlements, urbanisation and distribution of specialised centers in the area are also brought to light in this toponymical analysis, which are corroborated by the available observations of other branches like history, geography, anthropology.¹³⁷ Thus, the suggestions that emerged from the toponyms given to fields are of unique. However chronological sequences of evolutions and changes that had occurred in these aspects cannot be traced on the basis of toponymical evidences alone.

Due to the peculiarity of the disbursed settlement pattern in Kerala, the village space is generally divided into a large number of fields and each field is given a name,

¹³³ Francis Day, *The Land of the Permauls: Or Cochin, Its Past and Its Present*, New York, 2010, p. 15; V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

¹³⁴ William Logan, *Malabar Manual Vol. II, op. cit.*, p. cccxcviii.

¹³⁵ C.A. Innes, *op. cit.*

¹³⁶ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Venkidangu Panchayat, Mullasserri Block, Vol. 87, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996.

¹³⁷ M.R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram, op. cit.*, p. 45; M.R. Raghava Varier, *Village Community in Pre-Colonial Kerala*, Mysore, 1994, p. 9; Vilakudy Rajendran, ‘Sthalanamangal’, Panmana Ramachandran Nair (ed.), *Kerala Samskara Padanangal*, Kottayam, 2013, p. 192; M.R. Raghava Varier, *Keraleeyatha Charithramanangal, op. cit.*, p. 134.

with the result that each village register contains hundreds of such 'field names'. An analysis of the specifics of the field names with Mannalam as a generic also reveals the social and cultural peculiarities.¹³⁸ Names are basically identification marks. Mannalam denotes a land which belongs to a particular household. Mannalamkunnu is a place at Punnathurnadu, which is situated very near the sea.

Among the large number of toponyms one category stands out with a characteristic *jati* orientation. It is understood that the traditional Brahmin settlements and individual family settlements of Brahmins are differentiated by using the term 'Mangalam'. In the inscriptions of the early period, we get evidence of using both these *grama* name and Mangalam name in them.¹³⁹ The identification of many *grama* settlements was possible on the basis of the inscriptions collected from the *gramakshethra*. There are 41 manas out of which Mangalath *mana* is a famous one in this region, because it is adjacent to Guruvayur temple.¹⁴⁰

Geography of a region is an integral part of its history. Archaeological record is the result of a natural process that leads to the deposition of evidence of human activities in Punnathurnadu. Knowledge of the landscape, people, cultural and environmental resources are essential for the study of a micro region. The migration of Brahmins began in sixth and eighth century in Kerala. These migrations resulted in the expansion of agriculture. The agrarian settlement unit of this *nadu* was mainly found in the fertile tracts of the river valleys. In areas with laterite soil, mixed crop cultivation was largely practised. The *nadu* was the grouping of garden, coastal area and wet land regions. The different soils and climates encountered by the natives compelled them to grow certain types of crops. This region's peculiar river and backwater systems have an impact on how the economy develops.

¹³⁸ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Punnayur Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 81, Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur District, 1996.

¹³⁹ Kesavan Veluthat, *Brahmin Settlement in Kerala: Historical Studies*, Thrissur, 1978, pp. 96-101; K.V. Krishna Iyer, *Kerala Charithra Nirmanam*, Mathrubhumi Weekly, Book No. 36, Issue, 50, 1959, March 1.

¹⁴⁰ M.R. Raghava Varier, *Village Community in Pre- Colonial Kerala*, *op. cit.*

CHAPTER 2

PUNNATHURNADU: DEVELOPMENT AND SIGNIFICANCE

The geographical features of Kerala have played an important role in the evolution of a robust trade network. Trade and commerce constitute a vital aspect of the economic system. Punnathurnadu, in ancient times, had a flourishing domestic as well as international trade system. It is understood that this *nadu* was powerful and prosperous because of its thriving trade and commercial enterprises. This chapter attempts to trace the formation of *nadu*, from the early historic chieftdom to the Medieval, matrilineal, household state called *swaroopam*, and into an independent geopolitical entity during the pre-modern period.

Commerce

From ancient times, the Western world had been cognizant of India as a lucrative centre of commerce. Trade had flourished, particularly between South India and the Western world. Among the foreign peoples who interacted with the Malabar coast in ancient times were the Arabs, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Israelites, and the Chinese.¹ The sea played a permanent and decisive role in the region, leading to the rise in prominence of Malabar as the emporium of world trade and commerce. Being a global centre of commercial transactions, Malabar commanded a pre-eminent status among the territorial units of Indian subcontinent. The Jews, Arabs and Syrian Christians who were maritime traders have a long tradition of following the profession

¹ K. N. Ganesh, *Kerala Samooham: Innu Naale*, Kottayam, 2012, p. 43; Chummar Choondal, *Christian Folklore Vol. I*, Thrissur, 1988, p. 65; P. K. Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2012, p. 283; V. Chithra Devi, Trade in Medieval Kerala, B. Sobhanan (ed.), *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2003, p. 57.

of sailors.² Two distinct categories can be used to study the trade and commerce of the Malabar coast: inland trade and seaborne trade. Seaborne trade might include coastal trade, intra-Asian trade, and Indo-European trade. The produce of the land and its resources had to be sustained. The state had to encourage trade and commerce. The advent of the Portuguese on the coast of Malabar was part of the maritime explorations of European countries in the fifteenth century for commercial expansion.³ Chettuvai, Veliyamkode and Ponnani were the main seaports in South Malabar, that witnessed extensive trade in spices and other agricultural commodities. In addition to South East Asian nations and West Asian regions, the goods from Malabar were exported to other regions of Europe.

Chettuvai, a seaport which was the gateway of internal and external trade.⁴ With the growth of trade, many seaports sprang up on the western coast. This radically changed the pattern of trade in the region. Spices like pepper, cinnamon, cardamom and other precious timber like teak wood etc., attracted the Europeans. Pepper, or 'black gold', was a favourite merchandise for foreign traders, though a systematic cultivation of the crop had not been undertaken by the people of Malabar. In *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, K. N. Ganesh gives a socio-economic interpretation of Kerala's history from the earlier period. He discusses the manufacture, distribution,

² K. S. Singh, *People of India Kerala Vol. XXVII Part I*, Anthropological Survey of India, New Delhi, 2002, p. 131; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam: Keralavum Bharathavum*, Thrissur, 2018, P. 17; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2015, p. 167; T.K. Rajasekharan, *Kerala Through the Ages*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1976, pp. 52-53; P.K. Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 253; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala*, Thrissur, 2013, p. 173; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Keraladarsanam*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2011, pp. 156-157.

³ K.S. Mathew, Trade and Commerce in Kerala (1500-1800), in P. J. Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History The Second Millennium*, Vol. II, Part II, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 221; P. K. M. Rahim, *Vannerynadu*, Sri. Kattumatam, Narayanan Shashtipoorthy, Celebration, Perumpadappu, 1994, p. 24; M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram Part II*, Sukhapuram, 2012, p. 140; V. Chithra Devi, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

⁴ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithramurangunna Chettuvayum Mahakavi Chettuva Pareekuttiyum*, Kozhikode, 2015, p. 15; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithra Kavadagal*, Kottayam, 2011, p. 81.

and redistribution of wealth, resources from the sea and forests, the diverse arts and crafts of mediaeval Kerala, the commercial crops of Kerala, the spice trade, the numerous items of exports and imports from and to Kerala, and so on. The significance of trade and commerce was emphasised more in the years following the discovery of the sea route to India in light of these broad ideas held by economic historians. The foreigners who arrived in Malabar centuries ago on their search for spices were aware of the commercial significance of the waterways. Commercialisation, the spread of the market, trade and monetisation and the increasing use of money are often assumed to have occurred in tandem historically.⁵ Such a connection can be made for barter or other forms of money-less exchange, but these have their limits.

Trade in Punnathurnadu

Kerala was basically an agricultural territory. Generally, the production was localised and was not widely distributed due to varied climatic conditions. Trade, the main social activity of man started when he began to produce beyond his immediate needs. The excess that was thus generated was traded for other people's surpluses, which was taken from them in turn.⁶ As majority of the produce of ancient societies, were consumed directly by the producers themselves, the proportion of goods available for trade was relatively small. Trade and emergence of towns played an important part in the distribution of the social surplus.⁷ Karl Polanyi distinguished between trade that was an expression of social or political intent and trade that was carried out through economic calculations.

Malabar coast has been acknowledged as one of the major centres of the trading network in the Indian Ocean, during the Medieval period.⁸ Our vast collection

⁵ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Money and the Market in India 1100-1700*, Delhi, 1994, p. 11.

⁶ M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram Part II, op. cit.*, p. 129; Rice Michel, *Search for the Paradise Land*, London, 1985, p. 175.

⁷ R. S. Sarma, *Material Culture and Social Formation in Ancient India*, University of Michigan, 1983, p. 16.

⁸ K. N. Ganesh, *Reflection on Pre-Modern Kerala*, Kottayam, 2016, p. 124.

of writings and inscriptions provides insight into the vast network of trade that has existed from the beginning of time. Margaret Frenz wrote on Malabar ports that; “the ports located along the Malabar coastline differ from one another in their geographical features and have been of varying significant over the centuries to the trade around the globe.”⁹ A careful look at exchange processes reveals several factors that are crucial in the conduct of trade. These comprised one or more resource areas, local exchange procedures, market hubs, trade routes via land and water, ports of trade, and an exchange mechanism involving the use of cash and credit. As an institutional definition, trade was a method of acquiring goods which were not available locally.¹⁰ All discussions on the trade of Medieval Kerala should be prefaced with a detailed analysis of its terrain and agricultural framework. There are also detailed descriptions of *angadis* near ports of trade such as Chettuvai.

Since travellers’ accounts are of little help in understanding the interior market centres, historians have made use of literary sources and archival forms such as *Granthavaris* to identify interior centres.¹¹ They also describe the market centres adjoining such places. A trading community which had developed in Malabar, was the Jewish community, who had reached this part of the world, in the early centuries of the Christian era.¹² Roman gold and silver coins have been discovered here, including those from the eras of Augustus, Tiberius and Nero. Descriptions and photos prove the same. Close to the Palayur church, is a garden known as Jew’s Hill. It is believed that Jews had settled in this coastal area for trading purposes.¹³ Near the

⁹ Margeret Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British Rule in Malabar 1700-1805*, New Delhi, 2003, p. 8.

¹⁰ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

¹¹ K. N. Ganesh, *Reflection on Pre-Modern Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

¹² *Ibid.*; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli*, Palayur, 2016, p. 13; Divakaran Kattakada, *Kerala Sancharam*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2015, p. 371.

¹³ C. A. Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, Govt. of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997, p. 478; Jose Chittilappilly, *op. cit.*; Velayudan Panikkassery, *Charithra Kavadangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 80; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikal Kanda Keralam*, Kottayam, 2001, p. 47; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikalum Charithrakaranmarum*, Kozhikode, 1954, p. 137; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli*, Parish Directory, Mar Thoma, Major, Archiepiscopal Shrine, Palayur, 2013, p. 41; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralathile Rajavamshangal*, Kottayam, 2012, p. 177.

Jew's Hill, there was an *angadi* known as *Angadithazham*. The region of Kuttungal was renowned for its agrarian and commercial economy, supported by the network of trade. Some of these market centres like Kuttungal, Kottapadi, Chittattoor, Enamakal etc. survive even today. But the locations of many others have not been determined with certainty. The difficulties in identifying such centres, also raise questions about the nature of such centres.

Market – Figuring out the space

The term 'market' means a place where goods are bought and sold. In its most basic definition, a market is an area where people regularly purchase and sell goods.¹⁴ Village markets show institutional forms of these kinds of exchange at regular intervals.¹⁵ The regular local market was known as 'bazaar' or *angadi*. It was a permanent trading centre, located near towns or temples, where villagers sold their agricultural products and bought goods which they needed.¹⁶ It appears that the expansion of local bazaars followed the previously described trajectory of agricultural expansion.¹⁷ Local bazaars and a corresponding growth in the number of local artisans satisfying the requirements of the populace were inevitable as these towns expanded into the interior. There were many *angadis* and *cantas*, that developed in the places, which connected the place of resources to the coastal area. However the market needs to be viewed not just in economic terms but also in sociological, anthropological and cultural dimensions.¹⁸ In another sense, a market can be taken as a sociological phenomenon, in which various social groups perform differentiated functions. Some useful investigation in the direction has been made by Kenneth R. Hall. He expresses the view that the *nagaram* is a marketing centre. A market could be a *canta* (fair),

¹⁴ Kesavan Veluthat, P. P. Sudhakaran, *Advances in History*, M. P. Sridharan Memorial Trust, Calicut, 2003, p. 102.

¹⁵ Ashin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, Cambridge, 1967, p. 99.

¹⁶ K.N. Ganesh, *Malayaliyude Desakalangal*, Calicut, 2018, p. 43; M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 134; N. M. Namboothiri, P. K. Sivasadas, *Kerala Charithrathinte Nattuvazhikal*, Kottayam, 2009, p. 448.

¹⁷ Chathanath Achuthanunny, M. R. Raghava Varier, *Kokasandesam*, Sukapuram, 2007, p. 25; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

¹⁸ Kesavan Veluthat, P. P. Sudhakaran, *op. cit.* p. 102.

nalangadi (day market) or *anthiangadi* (evening market).¹⁹ From the 12th and 13th centuries onwards, there arose a widespread growth of *angadis* and *cantas*. The traders included Christians and Muslims, which is the common indicator of a *nagaram*.²⁰ The distinction was apparently between the congregation of traders in a fixed location *canta* (fair) versus a settlement of population around a market. *Angadis* as a day or evening markets, probably existed from an early historical period and survives till today. The formation of an *angadi* signifies the development of a fair into a settled market of some form and characterises urbanism within an agrarian landscape.

Most of the *angadis* were developed along the banks of rivers and trade routes. This helped to move goods from hinterlands to the site. Enamakkal, Chettuvali, Mullasserri, Maruthayur, Vattekkad, Elavathur, Manathala, Guruvayur, Chittattur, Palayur, Ariyannur and Kottapadi (Karayur) were the places where local markets and flourished at Kuttungal.²¹ Almost all the cash crops and food crops were available in the regions, which contributed to the advancement of economic activities and the development of exchange systems. There were two kinds of local markets, one was ‘periodic market’ and the other was ‘regular local market’. The periodic market or weekly market was known in Malabar as *canta*, and was summoned once in a week.²² They present a convincing argument against the notion of economic self-sufficiency while dramatizing the interconnectedness of villages economically.²³ Weekly markets appear to have served a variety of places, many of which have a reputation that extends beyond just the local community. There are nine weekly markets held in the Ponnani

¹⁹ M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 133; N. M. Namboothiri, P K Sivadas, *Kerala Charithrathinte Nattuvazhikal*, *op. cit.*; M.R. Raghava Varier, *Keraleeyatha Charithramanangal*, Kozhikode, 1990, p. 14.

²⁰ K. N. Ganesh, *Kerala Samooha Padanangal*, Pathanamthitta, 2002, p. 31; K. N. Ganesh, *Malayaliyude Desakalangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

²¹ T. R. Venugopalan, *Sampathum Adhikaravum Thrissuril Ninnulla Oru Kazhcha*, Thrissur, 2012, p. 270.

²² M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, Part II, *op. cit.*, p. 134; K. Balakrishnakurup, *Kozhikodinte Charithram*, Kozhikode, 2013, p. 53.

²³ M. N. Srinivas, *Village, Caste, Gender and Method*, Delhi, 1996, p. 18.

Taluk.²⁴ Since Friday is a holy day for Muhammadans, who make up the majority of traders, no markets were held on that day.²⁵ In all markets, which had been frequented by local merchants, town merchants and cultivators, salted fish seemed to have been the chief article of trade along with large quantities of vegetables and other articles. These two types of markets functioned as the focal points of local trade. There are essentially three types of exchange process patterns. The first was local, frequently carried out by the producers themselves without the need for financial assistance. That is known as the barter system. The second was local exchange would be based on accepted equivalent forms, according to the local customary practices (*mariyadai* or *nattunatappu*) whereas the higgly-haggle trade prevailed when goods not produced in the region, but essential for the buyers such as textiles, vessels etc. were brought to the market. Thirdly, both buyers and sellers had an understanding of the price of commodities based on their use or exchange value. However, the process of bargaining determined the actual price. The interior market centres and the port of trade provides an insight into the link between the production processes and trade networks.

The Medieval market centres were multipurpose centres and not centres that concentrated only on a few products. Karl Polanyi defined market trade 'as a double movement of goods in opposite directions passing through a supply-demand rice mechanism. The movements were regulated by prices and these in turn were the function of the market.'²⁶ The local market was a place where the buyers and sellers dealt with their own goods in a particular locality or village or area, as stated earlier. This market acted as an important centre of commercial transactions in the internal trade. Gradually they transformed into towns and urban centres. The substantial growth of agriculture corresponded to the formation of exchange spaces in the region.

²⁴ William Logan, *Malabar Manual Vol. II*, Delhi, 1887, p. ccccxii.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, in his work *Money and the Market*, refers Karl Polanyi who defined market, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

Different kinds of markets like evening markets, weekly markets, daily markets and cattle markets were the common market places in the pre-modern society.²⁷ Old Tamil songs reveal that there existed some temporary markets as well.²⁸ *Nalangadi* was a market, which functioned only during forenoon hours while the evening market was open in the evening. There was active participation in the market place and goods were exchanged. This exchange was based predominantly on the commodities produced locally by the traders themselves. Usually, the common folk depended on these markets to exchange their goods. Agricultural markets were diverse and highly complex. Paddy, areca nut, pepper, plantain fruit, betel leaf, clothes, coir, fish etc. were the goods that were sold in the markets. Foreign traders came here to buy local goods.²⁹ It's interesting to note that local trade carried on for a while without experiencing any significant changes.

A market was necessary for the production of handicrafts and agricultural goods. Additionally, Kuttungal-area occupational groups like the *Pulayas*, *Parayas*, and *Mappilas* were influential in this process. This *desam* is situated about 16 miles south of Ponnani.³⁰ Kuttungal *canta* (market) which was located in present-day Chavakkad, was under the control of the Punnathur *Kovilakam*.³¹ Agricultural tools, planting implements, handicraft products, devices for watering etc. were available in the local market.³² They included crop markets and agricultural input markets. People who belonged mostly to the lower castes came to purchase goods from Kuttungal *canta*. At the same time, upper caste people sent their servants for purchasing goods. 2500 persons attended this market every week.³³

²⁷ K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadam Pravasavum*, Vadakara, 2015, p. 152; Divakaran Kattakada, *op. cit.*, p. 372; M. R. Raghava Varier, *op. cit.*, p. 134; C.R. Rajagopalan, *Kerala Samskarapolimakal*, Kottayam, 2017, p. 95.

²⁸ N. M. Namboothiri, P. K. Sivadas, *op. cit.*

²⁹ Chathanath Achuthanunny, M. R. Raghava Varier, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

³⁰ Ward and Conner, Descriptive Memoir of Choughat *desam* No. 408, of the Ponnani Taluk, RAK, 1906.

³¹ K. K. N. Kurup, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

³² William Logan, *op. cit.*

³³ *Ibid.*

Kunnamkulam is a village that came under the authority of the Kakkad *Karanavappad*, the descendant of a petty chief.³⁴ This place had a famous market where grains, agricultural implements, handicrafts and seeds were the main commodities.³⁵ The bazaar is full of bustle and activity, seemingly quite disproportionate to the value of its wares. Along with all the ordinary produce of the surrounding land which was procurable, many different kinds of cloth were also supplied from this bazaar. So many people came here for buying and selling their goods. The chief crop of the village was paddy. Coconut trees, areca palms and jack trees were also grown. Areca nut palms grew abundantly. It was a place of some trade, chiefly in areca nuts and other local produce.³⁶

Palayur, which is also called Paloor, is a small village situated one mile away from Kuttungal.³⁷ Ptolemy, a famous historian who lived in the 2nd century, had mentioned a place by the name, 'Paloor'.³⁸ This place was one of the ancient commercial centres of Kerala.³⁹ Traders came to Palayur through the Chettuvai port.

³⁴ *Descriptive Memoir of Village no. 10, Kunnamkulam of Thalappilly Taluk*, RAE, 1905; *Memoir of the Cochin Survey*, p. 272.

³⁵ *Ibid.*; T. R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 252; C.R. Rajagopalan, *op. cit.*

³⁶ C. Achutha Menon, *The Cochin State Manual*, Govt. of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1995, p. 502; Francis Buchanan, *Francis Buchanante Keralam*, C K Kareem (ed.), Thiruvananthapuram, 1981, p. 46.

³⁷ V. V. K. Valath, *Keralathile Stala Charithrangal, Thrissur Jilla*, Thrissur, 2003, p. 175; A. Vini, *Thalappilly Swaroopam Samskarika Sambavanakal*, Kottayam, 2018, p. 120; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli*, Parish Directory, Mar Thoma, Major, Archiepiscopal Shrine, Palayur, 2020, p. 52.

³⁸ Jose Chittilappilly, *op. cit.*, p. 11; N. M. Namboothiri, P. K. Sivadas, *op. cit.*; *Tharppanam-2016*, Souvenir, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Palayur, Archeparchial Archives Thrissur; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikalum Charithrikaranmarum*, Kozhikode, 1954, p. 46; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrakavatangal, op. cit.*, p. 82; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli, op. cit.*, p. 52; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikal Kanda Keralam, op. cit.*, p. 41.

³⁹ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikal Kanda Keralam, op. cit.*, p. 42, George Menachery, *Palayur Palli: Loka Christava Charithrathil*, in *Tharppanam*, Archeparchial Archives, Thrissur, 2016, p. 27; M. A. Thomas, *An Outline History of Christian Churches and Denominations in Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1977, p. 4.

Located in Brahmakulam *amsam*, Chittattur is a small village around 4 miles southeast of Kuttungal.⁴⁰ People inhabiting the areas within ten miles, depended on Chittattur for their daily needs. The villagers from Enammakkal, Mullassery, Mattom and Parappur arrived here to buy and sell their products.⁴¹ Here, there was an important, ancient church that belonged to Syrian Christians.⁴² The Church had bequeathed $1\frac{3}{4}$ cents of land to each person for business purposes.⁴³ So people bought land according to their wealth and set up businesses. Gradually they started to construct their houses attached to their shop. The peculiarity of this place was that the houses in the streets are in a line. There existed only a narrow path to travel and there were shops in the front portion of the houses seen on the streets.⁴⁴ Even now you can observe such sights in Chittattur.

The Guruvayur bazaar was maintained by itinerant merchants, who belonged to the Nair and Brahmin castes. They came to Guruvayur in order to conduct trade and would return to their hometowns after business hours. The population was composed of the upper castes, almost exclusively while there were existed a considerable number of people belonging to the Konkani community as well.⁴⁵ Being regular merchants, they carried on an extensive trade in oil, due to high demand for the same in wealthy households.

Kottapadi (Karayur) is another trading centre in this locality. This *desam* is situated about 13 miles south of Ponnani.⁴⁶ In 14th century AD, the generous

⁴⁰ *Parish Directory*, St. Sebastian's Church, Chittattukara, 2012, p. 23; *Centenary Celebrations*, Souvenir, St. Sebastian's High School, Chittattukara, 2005, p. 27; William Logan, *op. cit.*, p. ccccviii.

⁴¹ William Logan, *op. cit.*, p. ccccviii; A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 120; St. Sebastian's High School, *Souvenir -Centenary Celebrations*, Chittattukara, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁴² V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 175; *Parish Directory*, St. Joseph's Parish Shrine, Pavaratty, 2016, p. 19; Ward and Conner, *A Descriptive Memoir of Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

⁴³ *Palli Nalagama Charithram*, St. Sebastian's Church, Chittattukara, Thrissur District

⁴⁴ V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*; A. Vini, *op. cit.*; *Parish Directory*, St. Joseph's Parish Shrine, Pavaratty, *op. cit.*; St. Sebastian's High School, *Souvenir -Centenary Celebrations*, Chittattukara, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁴⁵ Ward and Conner, *A Descriptive Memoir of Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

⁴⁶ *Descriptive Memoir of Karayur Desam No. 374 of the Ponnani Taluk*, RAK.

Punnathur Raja donated some land to Christians for residential construction.⁴⁷ The principal trading activity was to extract oil from coconut and other oil seeds. Most royal inscriptions as well as inscriptions on temples refer frequently to oil presses. By this period, oil had become an important aspect of daily life of the Punnathur *kovilakam*, for temple rituals and other household purposes. Oil seeds were available in large quantity in this place. Therefore, majority of the people in this region were engaged in production and distribution of oil.

In very early times, people of Malabar made very beautiful and thin fabrics.⁴⁸ The fact that 'calico' derives its name from Calicut, illustrates the importance of the weaving industry in Malabar.⁴⁹ Made from unbleached and frequently incompletely treated cotton, calico is a thick, plain-woven fabric. It is an important commodity traded between India and Europe. In those times, there were several textile shops located in Punnathurnadu. Calicut was the centre of fabric production. Kuthampully is a hamlet situated near the Ponnani river. It is inhabited almost entirely by *Chetans* or *Devanga Chettis*.⁵⁰ Almost all of them are weavers, who weave most varieties of cloth. The fabrics woven by them were extensively used in this area. They were found to be more prosperous than weavers found elsewhere. Cloth was brought to Punnathurnadu from Calicut and Kuthampully. Chittattukara was one of the places in Punnathurnadu, which was a main centre of textile trade. The spread of trade resulted in the growth of settlements of traders. The merchants carried bundles of cloth from Kuthampully on their head and they halted for one or two days at the marketplace.⁵¹ They would return home after they had sold their merchandise.

⁴⁷ *Thrissur Diocesan Centenary Commemoration 1887-1987*, Archeparchial Archives, Thrissur, 1987, p. 138.

⁴⁸ M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 142; Velayudan Panikkassery, *Sancharikalum Charithrakaranmarum*, Kozhikode, 1954, p. 130; Velayudan Panikkassery, *Sancharikal Kanda Keralam*, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁴⁹ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 253; M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ C. Achutha Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

⁵¹ Personal interview with Mr. M. J. Chacko, general merchant, age 85, at his residence at Chittattukara in Thrissur District, dated on 28-12-2019.

The villagers also flocked in vast numbers to the periodic fairs, or melas, held on the occasion of the festival of the local deities or on other sacred days. Fairs fulfilled a variety of functions, both religious and secular. In Punnathurnadu, for instance, the annual fairs were held in many places. It is reported that fairs were held on special occasions like Guruvayur *ekadasi*, Manathala *nercha*, Palayur *thirunal*, Vishu etc. On the *ekadasi* day in the month of *Vrischikam*, fairs were conducted at Guruvayur. In this fair, delicacies such as puffed rice (*Pori*), *uzhunnappam*, halwa, dates, tender coconut, statuettes and sugarcane were sold.⁵² Another fair connected with the Manathala *Nercha* was conducted on 15th day in the month of *Makaram*. In this fair too, similar delicacies were sold.⁵³ Palayur *thirunnal*, which was observed on 15th July, was held on the grounds of the church every year. In this fair, toys for children, costumes and agricultural products were among the commodities sold. *Vishuvanibham* at Chowallurpady was a famous local fair that attracted hundreds of people.⁵⁴ Agricultural products and crockery were the special commodities associated with this fair. The fair connected with the festival would commence a week before the day of the festival. Held in connection with religious festivals of Hindus, Christians and Muslims, these fairs played a very important role in the promotion of trade and commerce.

Inland and Outland Trade

The growth of towns in South India was facilitated by a number of factors like industry, temples, rivers, resorts and agricultural infrastructure, etc. Towns were generally centres of internal trade. We have seen that aristocratic clientele exerted a formative influence in the town economies of the pre-colonial period.⁵⁵ In that time, there was a trading path from Vadakkancherry to Kodungallur, connecting the place like, Kunnamkulam, Chavakkad, Venkidangu and Brahmakulam.⁵⁶ The location of

⁵² A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazatteer Thrissur*, Tiruvalla, 1962, p. 350.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Thaikkad Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 81, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996.

⁵⁵ C. A. Bayly, *Rulers Townsmen and Bazzars*, New Delhi, 1992, p. 428.

⁵⁶ N.M. Namboothiri, *Mamankam Rekhakal*, Sukapuram, 2005, p. 22.

Chavakkad in Punnathurnadu was highly conducive to the development of trade centres.

One important and dynamic factor was trade. There was a strong trading network on the western shore, as well as a vast network of local and long-distance trade. These factors affected a pronounced influence on the formation of settlements. Evidence regarding various *angadis* indicates the links between production zones and trade networks. Agricultural production also had a corresponding impact upon the pattern of trade of the region. A descriptive account of the terrain, nature of soil, proliferation of agriculture and the pattern of settlements become necessary in this perspective. Insights from folklore have also been helpful in analysing the various features of trade and market centres.⁵⁷ The chief articles of trade were coconut and coconut oil.

When plenty of fish was available, the surplus quantity was cured and sent to different, distant markets like Changanassery, Thoothukudi, Nagapattanam and Ceylon.⁵⁸ Prawns were exported in large quantities to foreign markets, especially to places like Ceylon, Rangoon, Malaya and so on.⁵⁹ Even now, most coastal villages distributed across Chavakkad, Blangad, Kadapuram remain as fishing coasts. During the time of British administration, a fish queering yard had been established at Anchangadi. Thousands of natives including women had worked here. Port cities also flourished in the coastal areas with the development of foreign trade.

In olden days, there existed only mud roads here. People had to travel by foot and goods were carried on the head. When those carrying the loads, would become tired, they would place their loads on structures called *chumaduthangis* or *athanis*.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Chummar Chundal, *Christian Folk Songs*, Thrissur, 1983, p. 15.

⁵⁸ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Orumanayur Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 81, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996.

⁵⁹ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Kadappuram Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 81, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996.

⁶⁰ Personal interview with Mr. Payyappat Ayyappan, farmer, age 82, at his residence at Peruvallur in Thrissur District on 27-01-2023; K. Balakrishna Kurup, *op. cit.*; V. S. Bindu, *Nattuvazhi – Keraleeyarkku Nashtappetta Grameena Gruhathurathwam*, Kottayam, 2017, p. 51; Raphy Neelankavil, *Dhesham Chollithanna Kathakal*, Cochin, 2020, pp. 80-82.

Made of wood or carved from stone, travelling traders could transfer their consignment on to such *chumaduthangis* un assisted. *Athanis* can be seen in the region which is the symbol of a good trading system. We can see these types of *athanis* at Annakara, Chavakkad, Mulassery etc. in Punnathurnadu. Near the *chumaduthagis*, there would be a *thannirpanthal*, which was a place where a person would distribute *sambaram* or water free of charge, to quench the thirst of the itinerant merchants.⁶¹ In those times, landlords usually travelled in palanquins (*manchal*). They sat or lay in the *manchal* and were carried by their employees.⁶²

In the absence of proper roads, only narrow passages existed. Later bullock carts and pulling carts began to be used. Buchanan, who inspected this country between 1800-1801, testifies: “In Malabar, even cattle are little used for transportation of goods which are generally carried by porters”.⁶³ The duration of travel was calculated in accordance with the speed of bullocks. Travel expenses were low in those times.

Fishing was also developed as a dominant and lucrative means of subsistence in the nearby coasts of the *nadu*. The coastal region must have been a productive unit which existed along the river banks, where fishing settlements had developed. Fishing is a long-standing tradition in Kuttungal. It has abundant natural resources for inland and marine fishermen. Except for during the monsoon season, the shoreline and tides are conducive to fishing. For many, fishing was their primary source of income.⁶⁴ Their boats made of aini (*Artocarpus hirsute*) or mango wood. Various types of boats like *nadan vanchi*, *loop vanchi*, *choonda vanchi*, *kothumpu vanchi* etc. used in that time.⁶⁵ Shark, prawn, *aavoli*, *kudutha*, *ayakora* and *mathi* are the different varieties of seafishes available in this locality. Usually, the catch was transported to the local

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁶² Kanippayyur Sankaran Nambudiripad, *Aryanmarude Kudiyettam Keralathil*, Kunnankulam, 1966, p. 129.

⁶³ Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 434.

⁶⁴ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer: Trichur, op. cit.*, p. 21; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Kadappuram Panchayat, *op. cit.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

markets by head portage. The majority of the freshly caught seafood brought to the market was purchased by the locals.

Traditional methods are used to preserve fish, however the majority of the catch is sold fresh for human consumption. When the catch cannot be disposed of while it is still fresh, fish is typically preserved. The two conventional techniques of curing are (a) sun-drying without the use of salt and (b) salt curing, which can be done wet or dry.⁶⁶ Development of transport routes was essential for the progress of trade. Articles were transported from one place to another through different routes. The journey would prove to be very difficult, especially in the rainy season. Due to lack of good transportation facilities through land, the natives had to depend on waterways.

Waterways

A peculiar geographical feature of the coastal area was very favourable for the development of an extensive network of waterways. The area had a number of inland waterways which are linked with one another. The zigzag pattern of lagoons or backwaters along the shore may be the most remarkable characteristic of Ponnani Taluk. In the south of the Ponnani river, considerable traffic is carried on between Ponnani and Kunnankulam. The Kattakampal lake extends over the portions of Talappilli and Ponnani taluks. This helped in connecting artificial canals and resulted in easy inland water carriage of goods.⁶⁷ The total length of this system of inland water navigation from Ponnani to Chavakkad was section 17 miles while Chavakkad to Cochin was section 60 miles.⁶⁸

There were a number of rivers and small water outlets or *thodus* flowing through Punnathurnadu. Even though there were such rivers, all of them were not used for the constant traffic. But for the movement of certain commodities or articles, such rivers and *thodus* were indispensable. Thus, products from inland regions were carried to big towns and coastal areas through such *thodus* like Kozhithodu, Kumpully canal

⁶⁶ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer, op. cit.*, p. 288.

⁶⁷ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 267; William Logan, *op. cit.*, p. cccxcvii.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

and Conolly canal.⁶⁹ Kecheri river, Mookkola river, Manichal, Tolur river, Korotha river, Kotta *thodu* etc. are some rivers in this *nadu*. Kecheri river starts from Machad hill and flows through the place like Choondal, Eranellur, Chiranellur, etc.⁷⁰ As a result, such places like Enamakkal, Mullassery, Chittattukara, Palayur, Kottapadi were developed considerably.

Kochi irrigation canals pass through this *nadu* by connecting *kole nilams*. The Vadakkancheri river flows from north to south through the western part of Tolur Panchayath.⁷¹ *Kadavus* or ferries have more historical significance in the progress of the *nadu*. Transportation through such ferries is still clearly recollected in the collective memory of the inhabitants of the area. It was through such a congregation that *kadavus* got its prominence as trading centres. *Kadavus* in the region were also used for carrying hay, rice, vegetables, catch of fish and other vital necessities of life. Goods were transported along the *kadavus* to interior regions as far as Chettuvai, from where the Conolly Canal originates. The ferries or *kadavus* like *Enamakkalkadavu*, *Pulikkakadavu*, *Vanchikadavu*, *Vallakadavu*, *Kundukadavu* and *Munakkakadavu* had become a part of the exchange process in Punnathurnadu. Common country boats were generally used both for cargo as well as for ferrying passengers. They could hold five to twenty people and were often operated by two men. A boat might go at an average speed of 2.5 miles per hour and pay a maximum of 2 annas per mile.

Tipu was the pioneer who introduced water transport and constructed new canals in Malabar.⁷² The Conolly Canal, while taking advantage of the natural facilities, looped the drainage areas together. Under the direction of Mr. Conolly, the

⁶⁹ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Venkidangu Panchayat, Mullasseri Block, Thrissur District, Vol. 87, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Elavally Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 81, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996.

⁷⁰ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Choondal Panchayat, Chowannur Block, Vol. 82, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996.

⁷¹ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Tolur Panchayat, Puzhakkal Block, Vol. 86, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996.

⁷² K. K. N. Kurup, *Tipu Sultan and his State Policy in Malabar*, South Indian History Congress, 1991, Calicut, p. 67; K. K. N. Kurup, *The Legacy of Islam Kerala*, Kannur, 2006, p. 111; P. K. M. Rahim, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

Malabar Collector, the canal was built, and it was finished in 1848.⁷³ For the construction of canals, he had received the Zamorin's support.⁷⁴ The facilities it affords to traffic are largely utilised. Currently, transportation via water is practicable during all seasons, only for small boats and a scheme for improving it is under consideration. The Conolly canal connects Chavakkad with major trading centres like Kozhikkodu, Ponnani and Kodungallur.⁷⁵ Hundreds of boats and thousands of *changadams* made their way through this canal. Sheaves of paddy were transported to households through this canal. Similarly, coir was transported to the Cochin market through the same canal.⁷⁶ In those days, natives depended on this canal for their daily needs. Vanchikkadavu was the centre of the trade conducted through the canal.⁷⁷ Many traders used this place as their resting centre. The latter, along with the backwaters of Chavakkad, stretch approximately fifteen miles from N. Lat. 10°44' to 10°32' and from E. Long. 76°6'. The backwater meets the Chettuvai river at its southernmost point.

Chettuvai was the most important seaport in the Malabar Coast which became a part of world trade, with the advent of European companies as stated earlier. In ancient times, commodities from various places of India were exported from this port and commodities from foreign countries were also imported through this port.⁷⁸ There were some temples for goddesses, *sangaramams* for Buddhist monks and multi-

⁷³ P. K. M. Rahim, *op. cit.*, p. 64; William Logan, *op. cit.*, p. 12; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Venkidangu Grama Panchayat, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ T. B. Seluraj, *Kozhikkodinte Paithrukam*, Kozhikkode, 2011, p. 127.

⁷⁵ K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadam Pravasavum*, *op. cit.*, p. 152; A. Sreedhara Menon (ed.), *Kerala District Gazetteers, Thrissur*, Thiruvalla, p. 8; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Orumanayur Panchayat, *op. cit.*; Divakaran Kattakada, *Kerala Sancharam*, *op. cit.*, p. 372; Jose Chittilappilly, Palayur Palli, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁷⁶ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Venkidangu Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Vatanappilli Panchayat, Talikulam Block, Vol. 88, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithramurangunna Chettuvayum Mahakavi Chettuva Pareekuttiyum*, *op. cit.*; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrakavadangal*, *op. cit.*; K.M. Anil, *Folklore: Janasamskrithiyude Verukal*, Kannur, 2018, p. 64; Personal interview with Velayudhan Panikkassery, renowned local historian, age 86 at his residence, Engandiyur, Thrissur district, on 05.06.2019.

storeyed building for priests near the port. A number of marketplaces existed outside the port. Persons who engaged in different occupations such as goldsmiths, architects, astrologers, artists etc. lived there. There were five travellers' bungalows in Ponnani Taluk.⁷⁹ One of them is situated at Chettuvai, four miles south of Kuttungal, beside the Chettuvai river on the road from Ponnani to Cochin. In A.D. 45, Hippalas the Greek navigator, visited India through the Chettuvai port for business purpose.⁸⁰ Foreign contact and trade had been carried on in places like Chavakkad, Palayur and neighboring *desams*.⁸¹

Along the seashore, there are occasionally large and small mud banks. This particular area of India's west coast is home to unusual mud banks.⁸² The rivers carry sand and alluvium along their course and these are deposited at their estuaries. Sometimes this would form a separate island such as the seaboard tract at Chettuvai in Punnathurnadu. Islands of this kind have been of great commercial importance because of their water transport facilities. The origin of the term Chettuvai can be found in the river Chettuvai and its associated backwaters, which empty into the sea and the island known as Manapuram, meaning sandy land.⁸³ Ships can anchor along the coast due to the offshore barriers, which are made up of several banks.⁸⁴ Ships from Arabian and Western countries came to Chettuvai port, and built warehouses on the banks of the river, for exporting cash crops and selling their goods.⁸⁵ The average tonnage was 4987 per *annum*. The imports accounted up to Rs. 671 while the exports

⁷⁹ William Logan, *op. cit.*, p. ccccxii.

⁸⁰ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrakavadangal, op. cit.*; Krishna Chaithanya, *Kerala*, New Delhi, 1972, p. 13; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Kerala Darsanam, op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁸¹ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikalum Charithrakaranmarum, op. cit.*, p. 46; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithramurangunna Chettuvai*, N. M. Nampootiri, P K Sivadas (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 463; K.T. Muhammed Ali, *Kerala – Middle East Relations, op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁸² Rajan Gurukkal, M. R. Raghava Varier, *Cultural History of Kerala Vol. 1*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990, p. 51.

⁸³ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, Kottayam, 1978, p. 237.

⁸⁴ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithra Kavadangal, op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁸⁵ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Orumanayur Panchayat, *op. cit.*; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrakavadangal, op. cit.*

reached up to Rs. 31927.⁸⁶ Here, there had existed a huge flag post for identifying the port. This flag post helped the merchants identify the way to this port. The terrain along the banks is peculiar, as it is very fine and soft. These mud banks were said to be mostly immobile but perhaps move a short distance along the coast. They take on their shape and stature during the monsoon or rainy seasons, when they are produced. The banks become less noticeable and flatten down during the dry season.⁸⁷

The development of a port city depends upon the volume of trade that is carried out with the outside world. The modes of transportation, networks, riverine and land traffic created the link between the ports and hinterlands. The rivers that cut across the land along with backwaters, made it easy for the goods to be transported to the ports. The fields in both the alluvial region and in the hinterlands were developed over centuries. The existence of water transportation facilities that connected hinterlands with the Chettuvai port city was an important factor for the expansion of trade at Kuttungal. The goods of hinterlands that reached Punnathurnadu, were exported to overseas areas, from where the port was linked through shipping. Chakkumkandam was another port in this region. Various kinds of boats like merchant boats, passenger boats and royal boats were active in this port.⁸⁸

Enamakal is another village in Venkitangu *amsam* about 8 miles to the south-east of Kuttungal. It is always passable and features slow, deep currents that are influenced by the tides. Its bed is filthy and its banks are steep. This *desam* is connected to Chavakkad by road and to Chettuvai by river.⁸⁹ The port cities came up in the coastal areas with the development of foreign trade. These port cities were developed from the port centers of the classical period. It invited the attention of the outside world owing to the good quality of commodities, that it provided to foreigners.⁹⁰ The Chettuvai port city boasted of extensive involvement in long

⁸⁶ P. J. Cherian, *William Logan's Malabar Manual in Two Volumes Vol. I*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2000, p. 77.

⁸⁷ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

⁸⁸ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Thaikkad Panchayat, *op. cit.*

⁸⁹ William Logan, *op. cit.*, p. ccccviii.

⁹⁰ Velayudhan Panikkasserry, *Charithra Kavadangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

distance trade networks. The inland waterways are robust in this *nadu*. The networks of routes were highly significant in trade activity.

Development of *nadus*

The original *nadus* developed in the wetland agricultural lands and later incorporated the *parambu* areas and forest areas into their fold. Thus, it became a mixed crop region, which produced the necessary items needed for daily life of the inhabitants. It was a grouping of agrarian settlements. It was influenced by natural factors like soil, water resources etc.⁹¹ The *nadus* also varied greatly in size, ranging from a few hundred square miles to several hundred square miles, and they consisted of one to up to forty communities. These factors together contributed to the lack of uniformity among the *nadus*. They had no natural boundaries such as rivers. In fact, there were *nadus* lying on either side of a stream or a water course.

Kerala as a geographical and socio-cultural entity, was comprised of several *nadus* in pre-modern times. Originally *nadu* was seen as a geographical division that developed after the Sangam age.⁹² Elamkulam thus differentiated several *nadus* in Kerala such as Venad, Kudanad, Kuttanad, Puzhinad, Karkkaranad, Punnad and so on based on Sangam and post-Sangam works.⁹³ Places like Thrissur, Palakkad and some parts of Kozhikkode formed Kudanad. Unlike the Tamil territory, where the *nadus* developed as widespread, mono-crop cultivation units, the *nadus* in Kerala were configured as multi-crop agrarian units. It consisted of both cultivated productive regions as well as non-cultivated forest regions. By treating them as an agrarian unit, perceptions of Kerala historians also changed and *nadus* were linked with the emergence of agricultural production exchange.⁹⁴ M. R. Raghava Varier expressed

⁹¹ Y. Subbarayalu, *The Political Geography of the Cola Country*, Madras, 1973, p. 33; N.M. Namboothiri, *Malabar Padanangal*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2013, p. 40.

⁹² T. O. Aleyas, *Syrian Manual – Samagra Kerala Charithram*, Kottayam, 2015, p. 72; K. N. Ganesh, *State Formation of Kerala A Critical Overview*, Bangalore, 2010, p. 17.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 27; V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 167; P. K. Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2012, p. 121; M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram Vol. I*, Sukapuram, 1991, p. 187; T. O. Aleyas, *op. cit.*; Rajan Gurukkal, M.R. Raghava Varier, *History of Kerala: Pre-Historic to the Present*, Hyderabad, 2018, p. 116.

⁹⁴ K. N. Ganesh, *State Formation*, *op. cit.*; K. N. Ganesh, *Kerala Samooha Padanangal*, Pathanamthitta, 2002, p. 16.

the view that the *nadus* of Kerala were made up spontaneously of agrarian settlements, in a territory grouped together for various economic and social needs.⁹⁵ Kesavan Veluthat observed that the *nadus* in Kerala stood for territorial divisions and that the pattern of settlement may have been responsible for the variation.⁹⁶

Adding to the aforementioned observations, it must be noted that the *nadus* are not simply an administrative unit or provincial divisions of kingdoms. Instead they are the basic component of the socio-political formation of pre-modern South India, that had formed the geographical and cultural basis for the formation of society during the pre-colonial period.⁹⁷ From historical records, we have obtained information about thirteen such chiefdoms. These chiefdoms were known as *nadus*.⁹⁸ They were Kolathunadu, Purakizhanadu, Kurumporanadu, Ramavalanadu, Eralanadu, Valivanadu, Nadumporayurnadu, Kalkkaranadu, Vembanadu, Keezhmalanadu, Munjunadu, Nantuzhanadu and Venad.⁹⁹ Some *nadus* like Eranad, Valluvanad, Nadumpurayurnadu, Kezhimalanadu, Kalkkaranadu had developed on the banks of the rivers Bharatapuzha and Periyar. Thalapilli, Chittoor and Palakkad constituted a part of Nedumpurayurnadu.¹⁰⁰ Punnathurnadu is a part of Thalappilly. Burton Stein points that most *nadus* are identified by the name of some village from as early as the Classical period.¹⁰¹ It implies that the district had its headquarters at Nedimporayur, where the temple of Netumpuraiyur Tali has yielded several Cera inscriptions.¹⁰² These inscriptions reveal the names of the different governors also. The difference in

⁹⁵ M. R. Raghava Varier, *Village Communities in Pre-Colonial Kerala*, Mysore, 1994, p. 22.

⁹⁶ Kesavan Veluthat, *The Political Structure of Early Medieval South India*, New Delhi, 2012, p. 193.

⁹⁷ Y. Subbarayalu, *The Political Geography*, *op. cit.*, p. 19; Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 145.

⁹⁸ Kesavan Veluthat, *The Political Structure*, *op. cit.*, p. 127; M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, Kerala Charithram, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

⁹⁹ R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, Kerala Charithram, *op. cit.*, p. 187; Malayinkeezhu Gopalakrishnan, *Keralam Lokacharithrathilode*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2014, p. 12.

¹⁰⁰ M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, Kerala Charithram, *op. cit.*, p. 190; P. G. Rajendran, *Kshethra Vinjana Kosam*, Kottayam, 2000, p. 542.

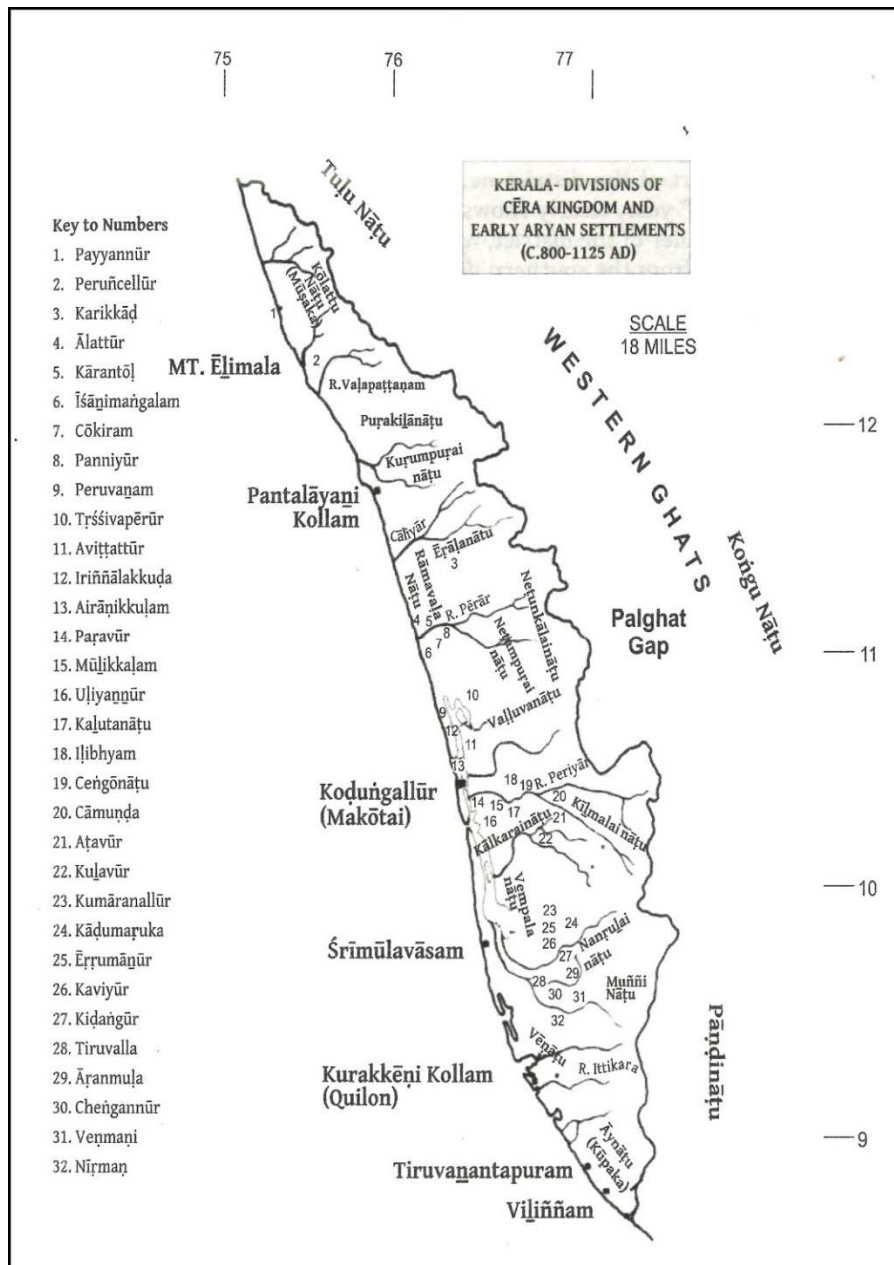
¹⁰¹ Burton Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 104; K. Balakrishnakurup, *Kozhikodinte Charithram*, Kozhikode, 2013, p. 32.

¹⁰² M. G. S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala*, Thrissur, 2013, p. 98.

family names proves that governors were not hereditarily appointed but nominated. Kalkarainadu and Venpolinadu were the neighbouring areas of Nedumpurayurnadu.

Figure 4

*Kerala – Divisions of Cera Kingdom and Early Aryan Settlements (C.800-1125AD)*¹⁰³



¹⁰³ Cited from M.G.S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 179.

Thalapilli was one of the existing *nadus* in Kerala.¹⁰⁴ Now it is the northern taluk of the Cochin State. As stated in Achutha Menon's notes: "The western half of this taluk and the Chavakkad side of Malabar were under the sway of four chiefs called Thalapilli Raja or Ayinikur Nambidies."¹⁰⁵ In that time, Punnathurnadu was considered as a part of Nedumpurayurnadu as stated above. This study intends to trace the formation of *nadu* in pre-colonial period. We can commence with the analysis of the present condition of the *nadu* and make an attempt to trace the historical continuity of region. The process of the formation of Punnathurnadu can be classified into three parts: the settlement geography, the socio-economic and cultural configuration and the political organisation. As an outcome of a multi-crop agrarian pattern, the dwelling places of occupational groups had proliferated in the productive areas of the *nadu*. It has been stated that the habitation sites of people were scattered in the plantation or *parambu* land and coastal area of the *nadu*. Thus, the growth of agricultural lands, either in the alluvial or in the coastal plains, the reclamation of lands, the clearing of forests and emergence of new settlement patterns had contributed significantly towards the advancement of the social formations that had been dependent on the nature of economy of the terrain. The political organisation primarily depended on the multi-crop agrarian and multicultural settlement pattern of the region. Punnathurnadu was a bounty full agricultural region from very early times.

The administrative facets

The management of the affairs of the districts and villages was the responsibility of prominent citizens of the localities. Kerala's dispersed settlement pattern gave rise to the formation of a peculiar social organisation called *kara/tara/cheri*, which is an area or neighbourhood or settlement equal to village organisation for civil purposes.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithramurangunna Chettuvayum, op. cit.*, p. 22; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Choondal Panchayat, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁵ A. Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar*, New Delhi, 1911, p. 64; T. R. Venugopal, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁶ P. K. Balakrishnan, *Jathivyavasthithiyum Keralacharithravum*, Kottayam, 2008, p. 142; K. N. Ganesh, *Reflections, op. cit.*, p. 83; K. K. Adoor, Ramachandran Nair, *Gazetteer of India Kerala State Gazetteer Vol. I*, Kakkand, 1986, p. 13.

The country was divided primarily for military purposes into *desams*, each under the command of the *Desavazhi*. It was the basic unit of administration. Two or more *desams* constituted a *nadu*. The *Naduvazhis* became the nominees of the ruler or were at least recognised as such by the ruler.¹⁰⁷

The *naduvazhi* collected the ordinary and extra revenue and in his duty, the revenue collected during the pre-colonial period was sufficient for the conduct of the regional administration. The revenue varied according to production and economic conditions of region.¹⁰⁸ Sheikh Zeinuddin claims that although there were fees levied on traders, Kerala did not have any kind of land tax or revenue extraction in the 15th or 16th centuries.¹⁰⁹

Many of these *nadus* continued to exist after the decline of the Cera state, although many changes occurred in the territorial extent and political configuration of the *nadus* during the period from the 12th to 18th centuries.¹¹⁰ Malabar was also divided into a number of small principalities or *swaroopams*. Most of the *swaroopams* had developed in the agrarian regions called *nadus*.¹¹¹ The primary sources of political power in medieval Kerala were familial and ancestral relationships.¹¹² During the

¹⁰⁷ P. K. Balakrishnan, *Jathivyavasthithiyum Keralacharithravum*, Kottayam, 2008, p. 141; K. N. Ganesh, *State Formation, op. cit.*, p. 27; K. K. Adoor Ramachandran Nair, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Prabhathakiranangal, op. cit.*, p. 65; T. B. Seluraj, *Innalekalile Kozhikode*, Kozhikode, 2015, p. 51; C. K. Kareem, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁸ Kanippayyur Sankaran Nambudiripad, *op. cit.*, p. 128; J. Rejikumar, *Graeme's Report on the Revenue Administration of Malabar*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2010, p. 9.

¹⁰⁹ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralam Pathinanchum Pathinarum Noottandukalil*, translation of Shaikh Zainudheen, *Thuhfathul Mujahideen*, Kotayam, 1983, p. 89.

¹¹⁰ S. K. Vasanthan, *Nammal Nadanna Vazhikal - Kerala Charithravum Samskaravum*, Thrissur, 2006, p. 221; C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 222; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Kerala Darsanam, op. cit.*, p. 82; V.V. Haridas, *Madhyakala Kerala Charithram*, Kottayam, 2022, p. 153.

¹¹¹ V. V. Haridas, *Samoodiriperuma- History*, Thrissur, 2012, p. 38; K. N. Ganesh, *Reflection op. cit.*, p. 97; M. R. Raghava Varier, *State as Swaroopam: An Introductory Essay*, in R. Champaka Lakshmi, Kesavan Veluthat, T.R. Venu Gopalan (eds.) *State and Society in pre-modern South India*, Thrissur, 2002, p. 120.

¹¹² K. N. Ganesh, *Reflection, op. cit.*, p. 75; V. V. Haridas, *Zamorins and The Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, New Delhi, 2016, p. 52.

post-Perumal period, *swaroopams* were the power centres in all *nadus*. Some of these *Nattutdayavan* became powerful and achieved their sway over the others, for instance, Kolathunadu *swaroopam*, Nediyrrippu *swaroopam*, Venad *swaroopam* and Perumpadappu *swaroopam*.¹¹³ They were powerful political and judicial authorities. Thalappilly *swaroopam* comprised of six families. They were Kumarapuram, Punnathur, Chirilayam, Chittanjoo, Eliyangattu and Manakkulam.¹¹⁴ It is stated that the geographical divisions known as *swaroopams* are the result of the current socioeconomic circumstances. Instead of being based on centralization, the political power was decentralized and exerted by a number of family members who lived in various *Kovilakoms* and belonged to separate *kur* or *tavazhi*.¹¹⁵

One feature shared by the *swaroopams*, or governing houses, of all the *nadus* in Kerala was their kinship structure, which adhered to the *marumakkattayam* (matriliny) system of inheritance.¹¹⁶ Punnathur followed this system as well. Seniority was the primary need among the *swaroopam* gradations to become the ruler. We used to term this process assuming *Muppu* (Eldership).¹¹⁷ The royal line of descent was traced back through the mother's side, which included younger brothers and nephews rather than the King's sons. This had a significant impact on the era's politics. In the

¹¹³ S. Achutha Warriar, *Kerala Samskaram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2012, p. 93; K. P. Rajesh, *The Political and Cultural Geography of Kurumbranadu*, in M. P. Mujeebu Rehman (ed.), *Locale Speaks Papers in Local History*, Perambra, 2009, p. 32.

¹¹⁴ A. Vini; *op. cit.*, p. 177; P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam*, *op. cit.*, p. 127; E. Satheshan Raja, *Elyangattu Kovilakam*, ed. In *Vannerinadu*, *op. cit.*, p. 131; T. R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 53; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Chowannur Panchayat, Chowannur Block, Vol. 82, Thrissur.

¹¹⁵ A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, Kottayam, 2010, p. 168; T. O. Aleyes, *op. cit.*, p. 75; J. Rejikumar, *Graeme's Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 36; M. R. Raghava Varier, *State as Swaroopam : An Introductory Essay*, in *State and Society in Pre-modern South India*, *op. cit.*, p. 128; M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram Vol. II*, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

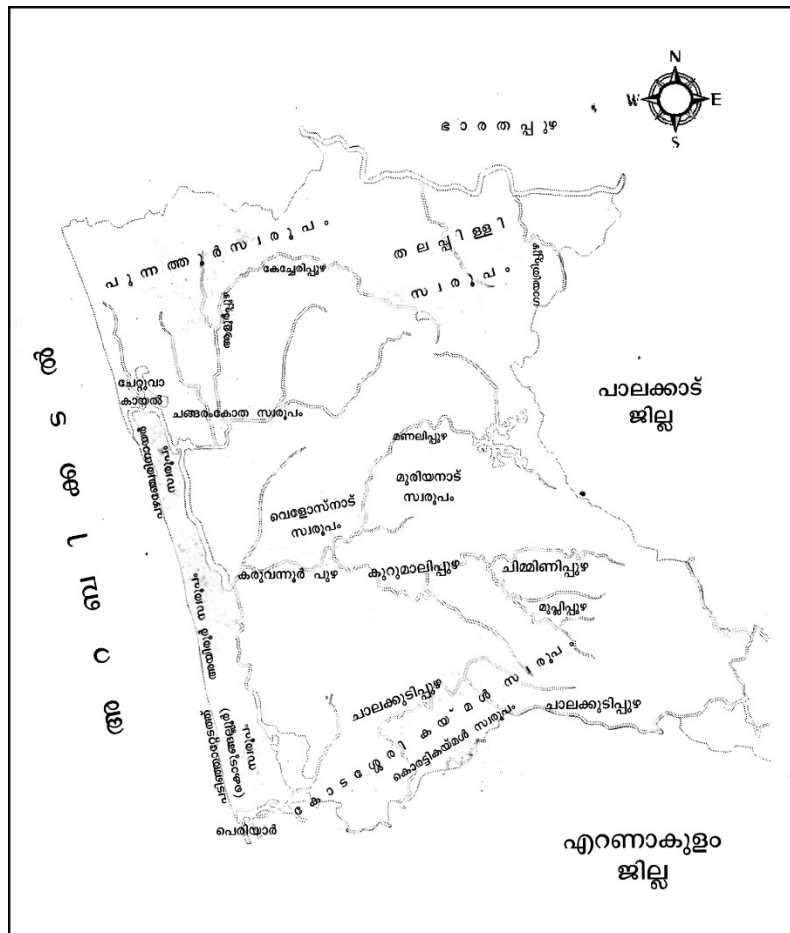
¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*; C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 223; P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam*, *op. cit.*; A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 144; V. V. Haridas, *Zamorins and The Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 53; K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

¹¹⁷ K. N. Ganesh, *Reflection*, *op. cit.*; V. V. Haridas, *Samoodiriperuma – History*, *op. cit.*, p. 40; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Innalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 318; M. R. Raghava Varier, *Madhyakala Keralam*, *op. cit.*; V.V. Haridas, *Zamorins and The Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 54; V.V. Haridas, *Samoothirikalathe Kozhikode: Kadhayum Charithravum*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2009, p. 54.

female line, the eldest male member became the king. In all these *nadus*, there was a predetermined succession pattern denoted by placements in the royal lines. These roles made up what the records called *kuruvazha* and were determined by the incumbent's chronological seniority in the various *tavazhi* of the *swaroopams*.¹¹⁸

Figure 6

Naduvazhi Swarupam



Source: T.R. Venugopal, *Sampathum Adhikaravum: Thrissuril Ninnilla Oru Kazhcha*, Thrissur, 2012, p. 57

All the *swaroopams* established or patronised temples. The Alikkal temple, Perumudissery Vettakkorumakan temple, Akilanam temple and Chavakkad

¹¹⁸ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 222; V. V. Haridas, *Zamorins and The Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 54; K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, pp. 317-318.

Kozhikulangara temple were under the *melkoima* of Punnathur *swaroopam*.¹¹⁹ It comprised of five *desams* of Kollengode, Vattakkad, Vatavannur, Elavanchere and Payyalur. Vengunad *Nampidis* were the *Naduvazhis* of Punnattur *swaroopam*.¹²⁰

The kingdom of Thalapilli (Siroviharam in Sanskrit), in its flourishing days, were extended from Ponnani in the north to Chettuvai in the south.¹²¹ Each region was known as *cerri*, on the basis of direction. The northern side is called Vadukkumcerri and the eastern side is known as Keezhcerri and so on. In 1763, Thalapilli was divided amongst four chiefs or *Tavazhis*, namely Ainikkur, Punnathur, Manakkulam and Kakkad.¹²² In *History of Kerala*, Padmanabha Menon discusses about these four principalities.¹²³ The chiefs of the four branches were collectively known as Thalapilli Rajas.¹²⁴ *Karamkooru* was a person who held the position of supervising the wealth of forests. He had a right to one-third of the resources. In the beginning, Edavanattu *nampidi* owned this position. Later this position was granted to the Punnathur *nampidi*.¹²⁵ He was responsible for supervising the northern side of the forest.

When the *gramas* quarrelled each other, they divided the country into four *kazhakams* or divisions like Payyannur, Panniyur, Paravur, Chengannur and each

¹¹⁹ P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam*, *op. cit.*, p. 127; T. R. Venugopal, *op. cit.*; S Jayashankar, *Temples of Thrissur District*, Directorate of Census Operations Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 2006, p. 449.

¹²⁰ Shihabudheen T P, *Colonial State, Indian Feudateries and resource Mobilization: The Changing Status of Kollengode Nampidis (1792-1900)*, Unpublished Thesis, University of Calicut, 2013.

¹²¹ V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 165; A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 110; T. R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 53; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Choondal Panchayat, *op. cit.*

¹²² *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Choondal Panchayat, *op. cit.*; Francis Day, *The Land of the Perumals*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 15; V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 166; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Tolur Panchayat, *op. cit.*; A. Galletti, *op. cit.*, p. 64; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralathile Rajavamshangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

¹²³ K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. I*, Eranakulam, 1924, p. 127.

¹²⁴ A. Galletti, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Chowannur Panchayat, *op. cit.*; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*; T. R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Choondal Panchayat, *op. cit.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

kazhakam had a *valnambi*.¹²⁶ The entire community broke up into two rival groups called the Sukapuram (Chovaram) and Panniyur factions, or Kurus.¹²⁷ These *gramas* were situated along the southern coast of the Ponnani river and were important in the political and religious milieus. While the Panniyur *gramas* were Vaishnavites, those belonging to Sukapuram were Shaivaites. Thirumalasseri Namputiri was the head of the Panniyur *kuru* and its capital was Govardhanapuram. Eliyangat Nambutiri, Kakkad *nambi* and Paravuru Raja were the other famous families in this *kuru*.¹²⁸ According to *Unnichirudevi Charitham*, Azhvancherri Tamprakkal resided at Sukapuram.¹²⁹ Later the family of Azhvancherri Tamprakkal established his household at Mullassery, near the Parambatt Tali temple.¹³⁰ The Tolur Vishnu temple and Ponnore Siva temple were under the trusteeship of Azhvancherri Tamprakkal. The faction led by Zamorin supported Panniyur and the other that included Cochin, supported Sukapuram.

¹²⁶ Kanippayyur Sankaran Nambudiripad, *Aryanmarude Kutiyettam*, *op. cit.*, p. 2; Kunhikuttan Thampuram, *Keralam*, Tirur, 2017, p. 72; P. Sankaranarayanan, *Vannerinadum Sangakaliyum*, *op. cit.*, p. 77; A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 173; K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 38; N.M. Namboothiri, *Vellagruha Charithram*, Sukapuram, 2010, p. 58; Malayinkeezhu Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹²⁷ P. K. Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarikacharithram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2012, p. 370; V. V. K. Valath, Vanneriyum Perumpatuppum, in P. K. M. Rahim (ed.), *Vannerynadu*, *op. cit.*, p. 9; Kanippayyur Sankaran Nambudiripad, *Ente Smaranakal*, Kunnamkulam, 1964, p. 149; C. Achutha Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 53; K.K.N. Kurup, *Sree Guruvayoorshethram: Puravruthavum Charithravum*, Kozhikode, 2014, p. 55; K. N. Ganesh, *Reflections*, *op. cit.*, p. 74; N. M. Nampootiri, *Malabar Patanangal Samootirinadu*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2013, pp. 512-513; V.V. Haridas, *Samootherikalathe Kozhikode*, *op. cit.*, p. 40; V. Rajeev, *Aryadhinivesavum Nampootiri Samskaravum*, Kottayam, 2015, p. 17; K.V. Krishna Iyer, The Mamankam, in N.M. Namboothiri (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 206; Kerala History Association, *Kerala Charithram*, Vol. I, Cochin, 1973, p. 283.

¹²⁸ Kanippayyur Sankaran Nambudiripad, *Ente Smaranakal*, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150; Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Kokasandesam*, *Stanza 26*, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, *Stanza 29*, *op. cit.*, p. 43; V. V. K. Valath, *Vanneriyum Perumpatappum*, *op. cit.*, p. 11; Kunhikuttan Thampuram, *Keralam*, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

¹³⁰ Kanippayyur Sankaran Namboothirippad, *Ente Smaranakal*, *op. cit.*, p. 273; *Gramma Vikasana Rekha*, Mullassery Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Gramma Vikasana Rekha*, Tolur Panchayat, *op. cit.*; S. Jayashankar, *Temples of Thrissur District*, *op. cit.*, p. 461; C.G. Nair, *Guruvayur Kshethram Aithihyangalil*, Souvenir, Guruvayur Temple, 1974, p. 26.

Genesis of Punnathur *Nambidis* as feudatory power

Representatives of those Brahmins are responsible for the assassination of one of the first Malabari monarchs, and this is where *nambidis* originated.¹³¹ The Brahmins killed the Perumal during the ensuing conflict. Upon his killers' return to the location of the Brahmins' somber convocation, they were greeted with great affection. Even though the murderers were invited to sit with them, they believed that because of their horrible deed, they were no longer deserving of a seat with the other Brahmins. As a result, they offered to sit aside on the council room threshold and said, 'nampadimel', which literally translates to 'we will remain on the threshold'.¹³² This is said to explain how their name, 'nambadi', came to be corrupted into 'nampidi', which is short for 'nampadimel'. As a result, they and their offspring are now thought to have lost their Brahmin social standing and are categorized with the intermediate castes, with limited rights not shared by the group.¹³³ Cheraman Perumal, had granted the whole Rajaship of Thalappilly, to Kakkad *Karanavapad*. However, nothing remained with his descendants. The head of the family was known as Kakkad *Karanavappad*.¹³⁴ Due to having shed blood, they lost their caste and became *Nampidis*.

The Thalappilly (Kakkad) royal family was part of the lineage of Kakkad Bhattathiri.¹³⁵ Later this royal family was divided into two branches. The names of these branches, were Eliyangattu and Ainikkoor.¹³⁶ Some special privileges were

¹³¹ K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, ed. T. K. Krishna Menon, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1983, p. 418; V.V. K Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 167; William Logan, 'A Collection of Treaties, Engagement and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar' in *Malabar Manual*, Vol. III, Thiruvananthapuram, 1998, p. 201; (See Appendix 1).

¹³² A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 110; P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam*, *op. cit.*; Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

¹³³ Francis Buchanan, *Francis Buchanante Keralam*, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

¹³⁴ K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Written in the form of Notes on Visscher's Letters from Malabar*, Ernakulam, 1924, 1984, p. 348; Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Kokasandesam, Stanza 31*, *op. cit.*, p. 46; P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam*, *op. cit.*

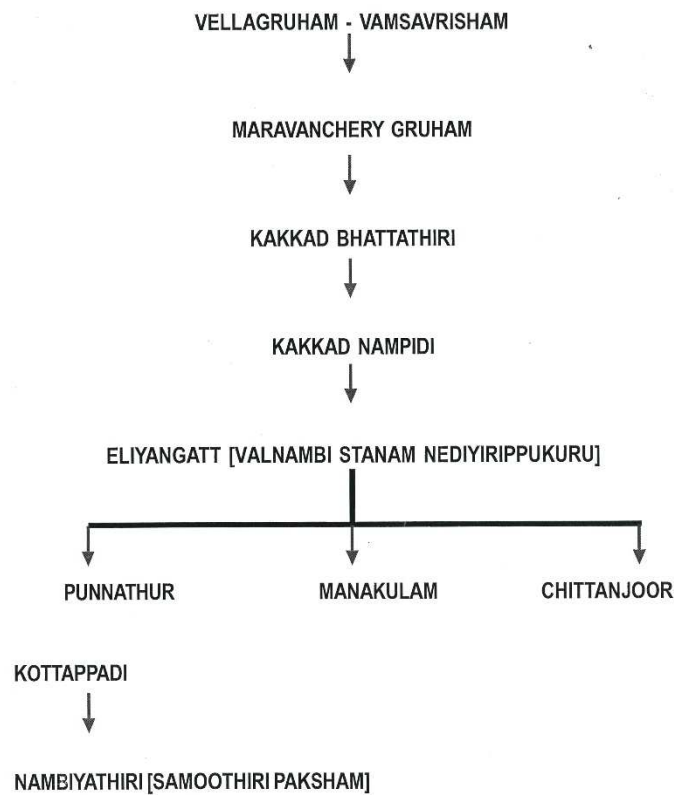
¹³⁵ P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam*, *op. cit.*; Elamkulam P. N. Kunjam Pillay, *Kokasandesam Stanza 31*, *op. cit.*, p. 45; A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 176; N.M. Namboothiri, *Vellagruha Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

¹³⁶ N. M. Nampootiri, *Vellagruha Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

given to these royal families. Kakkad Bhattathari, the member of Panniyur *kazhakam* gave the position of *valnambi* to Eliyangattu branch and the position of Kakkad *karanavappadu* (head of the family) was given to the Ainikkur branch. Punnathur had originated from the Eliyangattu royal family.¹³⁷ When there was no progeny in Punnathur *Kovilakam*, they adopted an heir from Eliyangattu *Kovilakam*.¹³⁸

Figure 6

Vamsavruksham (Lineage)



Source: N.M. Nampootiri, *Vellagruha Charithram*, Sukapuram, 2010, p. 63.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹³⁸ K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadam Pravasavum*, *op. cit.*, p. 147; E. Satheeshan Raja, *Elyangattu Kovilakam*, in K. M. Rahim (ed.) *Vannerinadu*, *op. cit.*, p. 131; A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 139; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Punnayurkulam Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 87.

Punnathur *nampidi* was included in Panniyur *gramam* and Ayinikur *nampidi* in Chovara *Desam*.¹³⁹ Among these families, Eliyangattu and Punnathur were part of British Malabar. It is to be assumed that they had lost their position of *karanavappad*.¹⁴⁰ As early as the fifteenth century, the Punnathur branch broke away from its subsidiary branches and joined the Zamorin group in opposition to the Cochin monarch.¹⁴¹ The Kakkad branch became extinct in the 18th century.¹⁴² According to the Joint Commissioners' Report on Malabar, a division of the whole country was made amongst three brothers of the same family, who claimed the Raja-ship at the same time; the eldest took for his share, half of the country; the two younger brothers contented themselves with one quarter of the whole each. The elder brother assumed the name of Punnathur Raja while the two younger brothers assumed the names of the Manakulam and Ainikutty Rajas.¹⁴³ This gave rise to disputes and led to Punnathur seeking the help of the Zamorin. After the king of Cochin was repeatedly routed in the conflicts between the Zamorin and them, several of the Thalapilli family's branches—most notably Punnathur—shifted their allegiance from the Cochin ruler to the Zamorin of Calicut.¹⁴⁴ The Zamorin bestowed vast swathes of land that he had taken from Cochin as a kind of token of appreciation to the Punnathur Thavazhi for their allegiance.

¹³⁹ K. K. N. Kurup, *Sree Guruvayoor Kshetram: Puravruthavum Charithravum*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*; A. Vini, *op. cit.*

¹⁴¹ K. K. N. Kurup, *Sree Guruvayoor Kshetram: Puravruthavum Charithravum*, *op. cit.*; T. R. Venugopal, *op. cit.*, p. 53; Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Kokasandesam, Stanza 31*, *op. cit.*; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralathile Rajavamshangal*, *op. cit.*

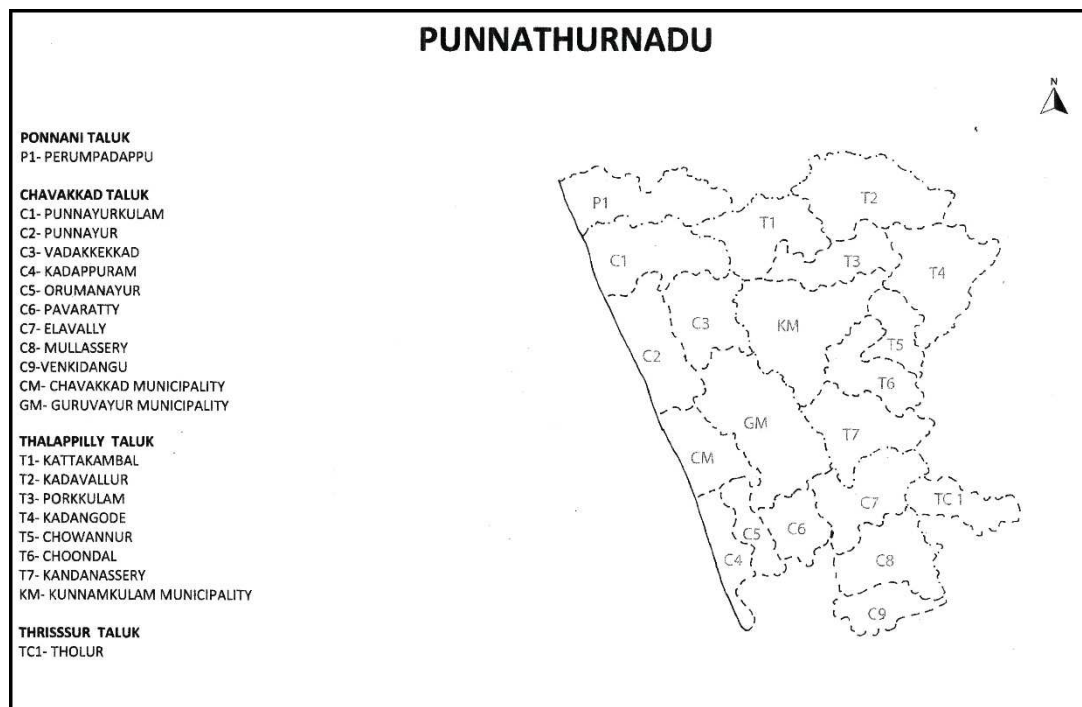
¹⁴² *Ibid.*; Francis Day, *The Land of the Perumals*, *op. cit.*; K. V. Krishna Iyer, *The Zamorin*, *op. cit.*, p. 114; T. R. Venugopal, *op. cit.*; V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*; A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 112; T. M. Chummar, *Sakthan Thampuran*, Book No. 1016 Appan Thampuran Smarakam, Thrissur, p. 350; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralathile Rajavamshangal*, *op. cit.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*; K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, T. K. Krishna Menon (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 127; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁴ Voice of Guruvayur, Guruvayur Town ship Committee, p. 22; Francis Day, *op. cit.*

Figure 8

Present Panchayats of Punnathurnadu



*Not to scale

The majority of the current Chavakkad taluk as well as nearby areas like Kunnamkulam, Kakkad, and Chittilappilly make up Punnathurnadu.¹⁴⁵ It was located near Vanneri, where the headquarters of Cochin Raja, Perumpadappu was situated.¹⁴⁶ When the Zamorin subdued Perumpadappu, Punnathur Raja attained complete supremacy in this region. Chawghat (Chavakkad) *desam* together with Cherumaruthayur, Maruthayur, Painkanniyur and Putumanassery *desam* formed the revenue *amsam* of Chavakkad.¹⁴⁷ Guruvayur *desam* together with Tamarayur, Karayur, Chulpuram, Mammiyur, Puttempalli, Tiruvenkidam, Perumpalli,

¹⁴⁵ T. M. Chummar, *Sakthan Thampuran*, Book No. 1016, *op. cit.*, p. 353; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Tolur Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Voice of Guruvayur*, *op. cit.*; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*; T. R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*; A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 150; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralathile Rajavamshangal*, *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁶ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. ccccvii; V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 167; A. Vini, *op. cit.*; P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam*, *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁷ Survey and Settlement Register, *Chavakkad Desam No. 408*, RAK.

Chavakkad and Karakkad *desams* formed the old revenue *amsam* of Guruvayur.¹⁴⁸ The Punnathur branch chief turned into a devoted Zamorin friend. At that time, Govindapuram was the capital of Punnathur Raja. The place was populated by Namputiris in the early period.¹⁴⁹ Ever since, the oldest male member of all the branches combined has been referred to as Kakkad Karanavappad.¹⁵⁰ In the state's northern region, he served as the Cochin Raja's armies' supreme commander.

Punnathurnadu as a Pre-modern State

The absence of pieces of evidence with regard to the existence of features such as social hierarchy, territory, standing army, bureaucracy and periodic exaction is not accidental. The non-stratified societies were the pre-state societies.¹⁵¹ The foundation of any state edifice in Indian administration must necessarily be the village.¹⁵²

The problems of state formation in South India have stimulated considerable research as well as important debates regarding the formation of states in pre-modern societies.¹⁵³ Across the subcontinent, there were often five or six major centers of power, each with a large number of smaller kingdoms that were either independent or subordinate to a larger ruler. The village community enjoyed full autonomy during this period in South India. Numerous village communities flourished in here and functioned with great success from about 700 A.D. to 1400 A.D.¹⁵⁴ Recently, several attempts have been made by historians to study the formation of the state of Kerala.

¹⁴⁸ Survey and Settlement Register, *Guruvayur Desam No. 377*, RAK.

¹⁴⁹ Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Kokasandesam, Stanza 31*, *op. cit.*, p. 44; P. G. Rajendran, *op. cit.*, p. 417.

¹⁵⁰ P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam*, *op. cit.*; T. R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Arthat Grama Panchayat, Chowannur Block, Vol. 82, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996; Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Kokasandesam, Stanza 31*, *op. cit.*, p. 46; V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 169; A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

¹⁵¹ Rajan Gurukkal, *Antecedents of the State Formation in South India, State and Society*, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹⁵² S. Murali, *South Indian Studies*, Delhi, 1998, p. 29; T. V. Mahalingam, *Readings in South Indian History*, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

¹⁵³ K. N. Ganesh, *State Formation*, *op. cit.*, p. 1; K. N. Ganesh, *Reflection*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹⁵⁴ T. V. Mahalingam, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

The Cultural History of Kerala, by Rajan Gurukkal and Raghava Varier, is the only serious attempt at raising the question of transition from tribe to state, based on the available sources.¹⁵⁵ As points of political power, the co-ordinating force of a king could be more cultural and ideational than material.¹⁵⁶

Historiography and Sources

There are several studies regarding the pre-colonial indigenous states and the impact of colonialism upon them by scholars like Kesavan Veluthat, M.G.S. Narayanan, M.R. Raghava Varier, K.N. Ganesh, S. Raju, Rajan Gurukkal etc. who have studied the pre-colonial political power structure in Kerala. Also, there are several other studies regarding the structure of indigenous administration during the colonial period and its impact on these states. From the perspective of social and religious organization, Malabar was a single entity despite being politically split among small territories.

The magnates of the area had comprised not just individuals but also organizations. The state itself, called *swaroopam*, was an elongated version of the former *taravad* family. In the 14th century, Punnathur was an independent *Nadu* and Kottapadi was its capital.¹⁵⁷ Palayur region was under the control of Punnathur *swaroopam*. Punnathur kotta was the palace of Punnathur Raja, which was located in Kottapadi about 3 kilometres away from Guruvayur. In the past, there were many trenches around the *Kotta*. The former was positioned in the midst of an extensive enclosure made of bamboo. This was the residence of the Punnathur Raja, one of the numerous chiefs that once held sway here.¹⁵⁸ Goda Sankara Raja was the title used by

¹⁵⁵ K. N. Ganesh, *Reflection*, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

¹⁵⁶ Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple*, *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁷ P. G. Rajendran, *op. cit.*, p. 845; T. M. Chummar, *op. cit.*, p. 350; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookode Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 81, Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur District, 1996; T. R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*; Ravindran, *Ente Keralam*, Kozhikode, 2012, p. 75; P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam*, *op. cit.*; A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 147; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralathile Rajavamshangal*, *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁸ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 169; V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 169; A. Vini, *op. cit.*

all the Punnathur Rajas.¹⁵⁹ Besides this *Valiya Tampuratti, Ilaya Raja stanam* were the key positions of this dynasty.¹⁶⁰ *Naduvakkattu mana*, *Konnorpully mana*, *Cheruvallur mana* and *Nenmini mana* were under the control of these *Rajas*. The prime attraction of this sanctuary is a 500-year-old palace, constructed by the erstwhile local rulers, known as Punnathur Rajas.¹⁶¹ The Punnathur Raja's *naalukettu*, a traditional rectangular house with a central courtyard, is also located within the enclosure (see Appendix 4.9). The estate, spanning over 6000 acres, is dispersed among 80 *desams* within the taluk. Constructed sometime between 1754 and 1758 A.D., it is a structure with low tiles surrounding an open courtyard. It is a typical Malayali nobleman's home, with its large lawn and surrounding temples and tanks.¹⁶² At Thampuranpadi, around 500 metre northwards, we can see Ilaya Raja's (younger brother's) palace (see Appendix 4.10).¹⁶³

An intriguing artifact from the past is the *Kalari*, or fencing school, which is next to the main structure. There was a *natakasala* in front of the Punnathur *Kotta*. Modern tastes are evident in the *natakasala* or hall, which was used for dramatic entertainments.¹⁶⁴ The most elaborate and deft carvings may be found on the door leading into the *nadumuttam*. Its length measures 40 feet and breadth measures 30 feet. There are no pillars within the structure. There were several windows on three sides of this *natakasala*. This *sala* was built like a gallery. There was no echo effect. The Punnathur *Kadhakaliyogam* was the most famous one in ancient times. *Guru Madhava Panikkar* was the main performer in this *Kathakaliyogam*.¹⁶⁵ Many famous

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 148; K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadum Pravasavum, op. cit.*, p. 146; P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam, op. cit.*

¹⁶⁰ Administration report- Punnathur Estate Record, Regional Archives, Kozhikkode; Settlement Register of Ponnani Taluk, Regional Archives Kozhikkode.

¹⁶¹ K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadum Pravasavum, op. cit.*, p. 146.

¹⁶² C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 485; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala State Gazetteer Thrissur, op. cit.*, p. 623.

¹⁶³ Personal interview with Suseela Antony, Retired teacher, age 86, in her residence at Thampuranpadi, Thrissur district on 15.04.2022.

¹⁶⁴ A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 177; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteers Thrissur, op. cit.*, p. 623.

¹⁶⁵ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookkodu Panchayat, *op. cit.*

performers were members of Punnathur *Kadhakaliyogam*. Ramunny Menon Assan, a famous exponent of Kathakali, had a *Kalari* at Punnathur. The great poet, Vallathol and others used to visit this place to enjoy Kathakali performances.¹⁶⁶ A multitude of old documents, mostly written in *kolezhuttu* characters on cadjans, can be found in the estate record room.¹⁶⁷ Some of the more fascinating ones include antiquated manuals on carpentry and how to heal snakebite injuries, as well as several old *Kanam* and other deeds that go back to 1736 A.D. The deeds are currently being translated into contemporary Malayalam and organized chronologically. Following the passing of the final monarch, Goda Varma Valia Raja, the property was placed under receivership.¹⁶⁸

The king's symbolic or ritual sovereignty was the main factor in the medieval integration of the South Indian states. These rituals were used to justify the divine of the ruler. The kings therefore led such ritualistic ceremonies. In ancient days, a large part of the Zamorin's revenue was spent on ceremonies, feasts and festivals.¹⁶⁹ The *Ariyittuvalcha* (coronation) was conducted by the Zamorin of Calicut. The chiefs of the community were investitured, and the Zamorin bestowed sanctified rice upon them. Formerly, the *ariyittuvazhcha* of the other *Stanis* also was held on the same day.¹⁷⁰ The Zamorin would proceed to the tank for *Pulakuli* or ceremonial bath to purify himself from so-called 'pollution'. He would enter the tank, hand in hand with the Rajah of Punnathur.¹⁷¹ In 1793 A. D., the Rajah of Bettet had also taken part in this ceremony, with the Raja of Punnathur holding the Zamorin's left hand while the Rajah of Bettet held his right. As soon as the Zamorin and Rajah of Punnathur plunged

¹⁶⁶ A. Vini, *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁷ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*; A. Vini, *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁹ K V Krishna Iyer, *The Zamorin of Calicut, op. cit.*, p. 28.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.; S. K. Vasanthan, *Nammal Natanna Vazhikal Kerala Charithravum Samskaravum*, Thrissur, 2006, p. 229; A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 73; V.V. Haridas, *Samootherikalathe Kozhikode, op. cit.*, p. 63.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31; N. M. Nampootiri, *Malabar Patanangal Samootirinadu, op. cit.*, p. 170; P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam, op. cit.*; V. V. Haridas, *Zamorins and the Political Culture of Medieval Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 88; V. Kunhali, *Calicut in History*, Calicut, 2004, p. 53; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralathile Rajavamshangal, op. cit.*

into the water, the latter would swim away to another part of the tank, which was hidden from the former. This is a piece of evidence of the intimacy that had been shared in the past between the two families. Another piece of evidence that reveals the unique privilege, enjoyed by the Rajah of Punnathur, was his privilege of dining with the Zamorin after the Ariyittuvazhcha.¹⁷² The king and the royal family made use of them for the effective functioning of the 'state machinery'.¹⁷³

The Rajas of Malabar, enjoyed a fifth of the revenue of their lands, without interfering in the management. Many of them were very intelligent and well disposed.¹⁷⁴ They were erudite statesmen who possessed minute knowledge of the state of the country, in comparison to most of the Rajas and Poligars on the coast, who lived in a state of luxury and ignorance. There was no distinction made between the work's civil and military or ritualistic and political aspects.

Indigenous Economy

Indigenous people's customary and regional economic systems made up their economies. These systems comprised a range of small-scale, land-based economic activities such as oil pressing, pottery, weaving, carpentry, and masonry. These methods also supported resource management that is sustainable.¹⁷⁵ Even if not every town was an agricultural community, every resident had some sort of connection to the industry.

Pakkamkuthu (the process of separating rice from paddy) was a traditional occupation in this locality.¹⁷⁶ During harvest, people bought paddy from farmers and carried it home on their heads. Usually, they would buy paddy from Parappur and Kokkur. They would start boiling the paddy and the paddy would be dried along the side of roads and yards. Pounding by hand was pre-eminently a feminine pursuit. The

¹⁷² *Ibid.*; N. M. Nampootiri, *Malabar Patanangal Samootirinadu*, *op. cit.*; K. V. Krishna Iyer, *op. cit.*, p. 31; V. Kunhali, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

¹⁷³ V. V. Haridas, *Zamorins and Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

¹⁷⁴ J. Rejikumar, *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁵ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Arthat Panchayat, *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

daily pay for women working in this sector ranged from Rs. 1 to Rs. 1.25.¹⁷⁷ Later the dried paddy was brought to the mill where rice grains were separated from the paddy. Then this rice was sold to the nearby houses. *Pakkamkuthu* was common across all households. Rice was measured using 'sar'. Two *nazhi* was counted as one *sar*. In those times, *para* was not used to measure rice.

Chavakkad is sandy throughout the *parambu* lands. The large quantity of coconuts and the articles yielded from them, such as oil, therefore constituted a main item of export.¹⁷⁸ There were a number of coconut estates in this area. The dried coconut kernel used to extract oil is called copra.¹⁷⁹ The *pinnakk* is used locally both as cattle food and as manure. The profession of oil extraction goes back to ancient times. The extraction process has been developed alongside the progress of human civilisation. Before the invention of modern machines, a simple wooden machine was used to extract gingelly oil with the help of bullocks. One or two persons would goad the bullocks to quicken the process. This process is called *chakkattal*. People used oil lamps, kerosene lamps and hurricane lamps in their houses. Oil was also used for lighting lamps. Crude oil was mainly used for this purpose.

Oils extracted in Punnathurnadu were gingelly, *ode*, *maroti* (*hydnocarpus pentandra*), *punna* (laurel tree), *ungu* (*pongamin glabra*), castor and *veppu* (neemtree). Gingelly was one of the chief dry crops and its oil was extracted in a process similar to the method of extracting oil from coconuts. This oil was used for cooking as well as for massages.¹⁸⁰ *Maroti* seeds were available locally. *Ode* oil and *maroti* oil were used in Ayurveda shopsopre pare *thailams* or unguents. *Veppu* oil was used medicinally for external application as a cure for rheumatism.¹⁸¹ These oils

¹⁷⁷ Personal Interview with Thressia Devassy, Pakkamkuth labour, age 92, on 20.12.2021 in her residence Kakkassery, Thrissur district.

¹⁷⁸ Ward and Conner, *Descriptive Memoir-Malabar*, Calicut, 1995, p. 154.

¹⁷⁹ M. R. Raghava Varier, Kerala, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

¹⁸⁰ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

were also used in the manufacture of soaps. A good number of Ayurveda establishments functioned in this area.

Toddy tapping was also an important occupation in this locality. Coconut palms produced liquor known as toddy, the traditional wine of Malabar, which was distilled from the young sprigs of coconut.¹⁸² It is white in colour and is sweet and delicious. While the coconut tree is frequently used to make toddy, the Choondapana palm is preferred in some regions.¹⁸³ Coconut trees are fit for tapping as soon as they reach the age of bearing fruit. The palm fronds of the coconut tree were used for construction of houses. The outer layer of the coconut, known as the husk and shell, has been used to manufacture crafts, fuel for charcoal, and buff floors. In olden days, electricity was unavailable in this area. At night, people used coconut scrolls as torches for travelling.

The 'coir' or rope was manufactured from the fibrous bark of the coconut, which was also an important export item from here.¹⁸⁴ Coir, which is the fibre of the cask, is ideal for making cordage and cables for fishing and has several other uses too. The natural facilities helped in developing the coir industry in coastal areas. In early times, there existed a coir society at Palayur.¹⁸⁵ Extracting coconut fibre and processing it to produce coir products formed part of the cottage industry that had developed across this area. The indigenous method of producing coir involved soaking the husks in water for a certain period.¹⁸⁶

In Chavakkad taluk, another popular technique was to arrange the husks in coir nets. The coconut husks were buried in pits, which are found nearest to streams,

¹⁸² A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer*, Thrissur, p. 286; Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 76; T. B. Seluraj, *Innalekalile Kozhikode, op. cit.*, p. 40; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Ibnubathootha Kanda Keralam*, Kottayam, 2014, p. 82.

¹⁸³ K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Innalekal, op. cit.*, p. 62; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Arthat Panchayat, *op. cit.*

¹⁸⁴ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Prabhathakiranangal, op. cit.*, p. 72.

¹⁸⁵ Divakaran Kattakada, *Kerala Sancharam, op. cit.*

¹⁸⁶ Samuel Mateer, *Njan Kanda Keralam*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2005, p. 327; P. T. Bhaskarapanikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 379; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Orumanayur Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Punnayur Panchayat, *op. cit.*

rivers, and backwaters. The longer the better, whether it was six months, a year, or even eighteen months, they were left to soak.¹⁸⁷ They refer to these husk bundles as *mallis* or *kollis*. The retted husks were cleaned with water to get rid of any dirt or slime that had adhered to them after being removed from the pits or staked enclosures. After that, the outer skin was peeled off. After washing, the husks were pounded with a wooden mallet while resting on wooden blocks in order to extract the fiber from the cork and pith. The pith that is still stuck to the fiber would then need to be separated by hand cleaning it again or washing it again and gently beating it.¹⁸⁸ After that, the wet fiber was stretched out to dry. The process of making coir yarn involves hand-pinning the fiber or utilizing spinning wheels. Native furniture was composed of coir and fibrous grasses. Long hallways are perfect for coir matting, and coir carpets were once employed as short-length floor coverings. These can have clean edges or fringe when bound as rugs. The Vadanapalli and Venkidangu amsams in the Ponnani taluk are the source of the greatest yarn in Malabar.

Plenty of fresh water fishes like *kanambu*, *prayi*, *karimeen*, *poomeen*, *kolan*, *kora*, etc. are available in this region. About two thousand people have been employed in the fishing industry. Species of fishes like *varal*, *vala*, *paral*, *aaral*, etc. could be caught from water sources such as canals, ponds and *thodus*.¹⁸⁹ People relied on various traditional methods for fishing. When the rivers are full, they would use fishing nets and during the summer season, they would make bunds to catch fish. Fish are easily available across seasons in this locality.

¹⁸⁷ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

¹⁸⁸ Samuel, *Njan Kanda Keralam, op. cit.*; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal, op. cit.*, p. 62.

¹⁸⁹ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Venkidangu Panchayat, Vol. 87, Mullassery Block, 1996; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Tolur Panchayat, Vol 86, *op. cit.*; Personal Interview with Mr. T. K. Chandran, age 68, fisher man at Enamakkal *kadavu*, in Thrissur District, dated on 30-08-2019.

Further development

As stated earlier, agriculture was the chief occupation of the locality. While the saline, alluvial soil along the coastal sections was good for the growth of coconut trees, the lowland alluvial soil deposits were perfect for paddy farming. Therefore, rice and coconut were the crops that were mainly cultivated in such regions. Cottage industries were formed by individuals or by families within residential areas. Smiths of various metals and other skill-based professions such as carpentry, masonry, textile production etc. were also developed.

A minor industry in Malabar is *beeditheruppu* (rolling beedis).¹⁹⁰ Other districts provided the tobacco and the dried leaf to wrap it in. However, the expansion of this sector in several cities and villages might be attributed to the availability of inexpensive labor during the protracted rainy season.¹⁹¹ At that time, Malabar was a part of the Madras Presidency. Andhra Pradesh was a famous centre of tobacco cultivation which was also a part of the Madras Presidency. Both men and women were engaged in beedi-making for their livelihood. The proprietors of small stationery shops and tobacco merchants personally employed the laborers, providing the raw materials and picking up the completed goods.¹⁹² But women workers always took the beedi leaves and thread to their own homes and made beedis with the help of other family members.¹⁹³ Thus all people in the house were involved in this work. ‘Kajah Beedi’, ‘A-one Golden’, ‘C P Rose’, ‘Udaya’ and ‘Jawan’ are some of the important beedi manufacturers in this area.

¹⁹⁰ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Vadakkekka Panchayat, *op. cit.*; St. Sebastian’s High School, *Souvenir*, *op. cit.*, p. 32; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Arthat Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Elavally Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 87, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996.

¹⁹¹ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

¹⁹² Personal interview with Mr. P. P. Jose, *Beedi Merchant*, Age 75, at his shop at Chittattukara in Thrissur District, dated on 12 – 03 - 2020

¹⁹³ Divakaran Kattakada, *Kerala Sancharam*, *op. cit.*, p. 369.; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Vatanappilli Panchayat, *op. cit.*

Another cottage industry that grew in this locality was *pappad*-making.¹⁹⁴ Many people earned their livelihood through this job. *Pappads* were made by adding water to black gram flour. After kneading the mixture to a soft dough, the dough was then flattened into a round shape and dried under the sun. Soda powder and salt were mixed in the water, to which finely ground black gram flour and rice flour were added. This was kneaded by hand. The dough is again beaten with a wooden stick and stretched by hand. Then it is divided into small pieces and each piece is flattened.¹⁹⁵ Once made thus, these *pappads* are dried in sunlight. *Pappads* are laid out to dry on sacks or sheets of paper along the sides of roads and on the verandas of houses, making it another picturesque feature of this area. Dried *pappads* are packed and sent to different places for sale.

All imperial activities during the rule of the Perumals in Malabar were centered on the Chettuvai Island.¹⁹⁶ Laymen also played a remarkable role in the expansion of trade in this locality. But with the introduction of modern means of transport and communication, the importance of Kuttungal faded in the later years. Now a days, the place Kuttungal is known as Chavakkad and majority of its population is comprised of NRIs, who make a living in the Middle East. Chavakkad's primary source of income was expatriate earnings, which primarily came from Indians employed in the Middle East. During the last decades of the 20th century, migration to the Arab countries in the Middle East, has been the dynamic force that shaped the economy of Kerala. The rapid increase of prices of oil in the related industries opened up opportunities which attracted skilled youth of this region and, accelerated the migration to the Middle East nations. Due to this, from the 1960s onwards, the economic condition improved.¹⁹⁷ However, the younger generations are no longer

¹⁹⁴ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Vadakkekkad Panchayat, *op. cit.*; St. Sebastian's High School, *Souvenir*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹⁹⁵ Personal interview with Mr. K. A. Kesavan, *Pappad Maker*, Age 72, at his residence at Kakkassery in Thrissur District, Dated on 28- 12 – 2019.

¹⁹⁶ Chettuvai island, c-120, RAE.

¹⁹⁷ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Orumanayur Panchayat, *op. cit.*; Personal Interview with Mr. Jose Chittilappilly, Renowned historian, age 77 at his residence at Palayur in Thrissur District, dated on 20-01-2020.

interested in continuing in traditional occupations. As a result, paddy fields have been transformed into residential places with concrete buildings. The area is now referred to as 'Mini Gulf'.¹⁹⁸

Early Political History

The local magnates embodied all the traits of feudal nobility as they were understood by Kerala society. The four major kingdoms which had existed in Kerala during this period were Kolathunad, the Kingdom of Zamorin, Cochin and Venad.¹⁹⁹ Each kingdom had its own feudatories and subordinate principalities. Many of them were fighting against each other for control over resources and territorial expansion.²⁰⁰ They had significant political rights, both judicial and administrative, and were only loosely ruled by one of the four larger 'kings'. The reason behind the lofty titles employed by the Zamorins will become clearer to us when they rise from the status of minor chiefs to independent monarchs. The encampment of the dependent Punnathur Raja and the second prince of the Zamorin family lay to the right, across the river.²⁰¹ However, the Lords and minor Rajas of Malabar, enjoyed the rights to go to war as well as to enter into alliances and treaties.²⁰²

While the Zamorin's authority extended southwards, the Ponnani-Perumpadappu regions were under the control of Thirumanassery Namputiri.²⁰³ While the Valluvakonathiri attacked the regions of Thirumanassery Namputiri, he requested

¹⁹⁸ Divakaran Kattakada, *Kerala Sancharam*, *op. cit.*; Ravindran, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

¹⁹⁹ S. Achuthavarier, *Kerala Samskaram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2012, p. 23; V. V. Haridas, *Zamorins and the Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.; K. S. Mathew, *The Portuguese, Indian Ocean and European Bridgeheads 1500-1800*, ed. Pius Malekandathil, Jamal Mohammed, Tellcherry, 2001, p. 112.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 487; P. J. Cherian, *William Logan's Malabar Manual Vol. L*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2000, p. 166.

²⁰² K. M. Panikkar, *Malabar and the Portuguese Being a History of the relations of the Portuguese with Malabar from 1500 to 1663*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

²⁰³ N. M. Namputhiri, *Mamankam Rekhakal*, *op. cit.*, p. 23; V.V. Haridas, *Madhyakala Kerala Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 153; V. Kunhali, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

the help of the Zamorin. In return, he rewarded Ponnani to the Zamorin.²⁰⁴ The Zamorin fought against the Valluvanad Raja over Tirunavaya, the most important temple of central Kerala. About a century after the conquest of Polanadu, the Zamorin became the *Rakshapurushan* or the protector of the Mamankam.²⁰⁵ It was the festival that was held once in twelve years at Tirunavaya, on the banks of the river Bharatapuzha.²⁰⁶ Mamankam was a festival that would last for thirty days. It starts with the rise of the star *Pooyam* i.e., *Mamanka Thaipooyam* and the festival would end with the appearance of the *Makam* star.²⁰⁷ It came to be known as the *Mahamagham*, which became Mamankam in Malayalam. The Mamankam fest was not only a religious festival but also an occasion for the display of all the pomp and power of the kings of Kerala.²⁰⁸ In this ceremony, Punnathur Raja got 160 *fannam* in the first turn. Besides this, he had *Manusham* (72 *fannam*) also.²⁰⁹ After expelling Vallatiri, he carried his arms further south. He came to reside more and more at Ponnani, moving to Thrissur and Cranganore according to circumstances.²¹⁰

²⁰⁴ Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Kokasandesam, Stanza 26, op. cit.*, p. 42; S. Achutha Varier, *Kerala Samskaram, Thiruvananthapuram*, 2012, p. 97.

²⁰⁵ S. Achutha Varier, *Kerala Samskaram, op. cit.*, p. 94; N. M. Namputhiri, *Mamankam Rekhakal, op. cit.*, p. 203; V. V. K Valath, *Vanneriyum Perumpatapuram, op. cit.*, p. 11; Martha Bush Ashton, Robert P Sikora, *Krishnattam*, New Delhi, 1993, p. 21; K. C. Krishnakumar, *Keralam Jillakaliloode*, Kozhikode, 2009, p. 151; P.J. Cheriyan, *Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 69; V. Kunhali, *op. cit.*, p. 27; V.V. Haridas, *Madhyakala Kerala Charithram, op. cit.*, p. 130; V.V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam*, Kozhikode, 2008, p. 37; Malayinkeezhu Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 23; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Calicut: The City of Truth*, Kozhikode, 2018, p. 155.

²⁰⁶ Malayinkeezhu Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 23; Martha Bush Ashton, Robert P Sikora, *Krishnattam, op. cit.*; Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Chandrotsavam, Stanza 50*, Kottayam, 1962, p. 34; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Prabhathakiranangal, op. cit.*, p. 73; S. Achutha Varier, *Kerala Samskaram, op. cit.*, p. 96; V.V. Haridas, *Zamorins of Calicut, op. cit.*, p. 260; P.J. Cheriyan, *Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 69; V.V. Haridas, *Madhyakala Kerala Charithram, op. cit.*, p. 141; V.V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam, op. cit.*

²⁰⁷ V. V. Haridas, *Mamankavum Chaverum*, Kottayam, 2015, p. 37; Malayinkeezhu Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

²⁰⁸ N. M. Namputhiri, *Mamankam Rekhakal, op. cit.* p. 210; S. Achutha Varier, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

²⁰⁹ N. M. Namboothiri, *Malabar Padanangal, op. cit.*, p. 397; V.V. Haridas, *Samoothiri kalathe Kozhikode, op. cit.*, p. 60.

²¹⁰ K. V. Krishna Iyer, *The Zamorin of Calicut, op. cit.*, p. 38; V.V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam, op. cit.*

The Zamorin then turned his attention to the territories of Thalappilly Rajas. He began to foment disturbances in the Thalappilly (another name of Punnathur) Raja's dominions.²¹¹ Thus with all his supporters and arms of vellatiri, Zamorin subdued the Punnathur chieftain, who ruled Chavakkad and the adjoining areas.²¹² Kakkad and his successors did not enjoy a peaceful possession of their country for long. When the Zamorin's hostility increased, the Rajas of Thalappilly gave in without a fight.²¹³

The *nampidis* had been powerful rajas, until this region was conquered by the Zamorin of Calicut. In Cannanore area, the prominent lords of this type were the Iruvanad Nambiars and Cheranchery Kurup; in Zamorin region, they were Punnathur Nampidi, Koratty Kaimal, Mannarghat Nair, and Kavalappara Nair.²¹⁴ The *nadus* were independent political units earlier, but after the conquest of kings, they became subordinate units.²¹⁵ Actually, Malabar lacked anything really resembling royal authority. Vettam Utaya Mutta Kovil, Thalappalli Punnattur Nampidi, Thalappalli Kakkattu Nampidi, Tirumanacceri Namputiri, Vannilacceri Patinnare Nampidi, Parappur Karippuva Kovil, Cirrur Namputirippatu, Manakkulattil *Muppil*, Parappur Valavil Kovil, Parappur Kayyavil Kovil, Venninnanattu Nampidi, Kurumpuranatu Matamtu Unittiri, and others were among the chiefs of the region who served under the Zamorin.²¹⁶

²¹¹ V.V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam, op. cit.*; T. M. Chummar, *Sakthan Tampuran, op. cit.*, p. 350.

²¹² T. M. Chummar, *Sakthan Tampuran, op. cit.*, p. 350.; William Logan, *op. cit.*, p. ccccvii.

²¹³ A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History, op. cit.*, p. 155; K. K. N. Kurup, *Sree Guruvayoor Kshethram, op. cit.*, p. 58; P. K. Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarikacharithram, op. cit.*, p. 371; Malayinkeezhu Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

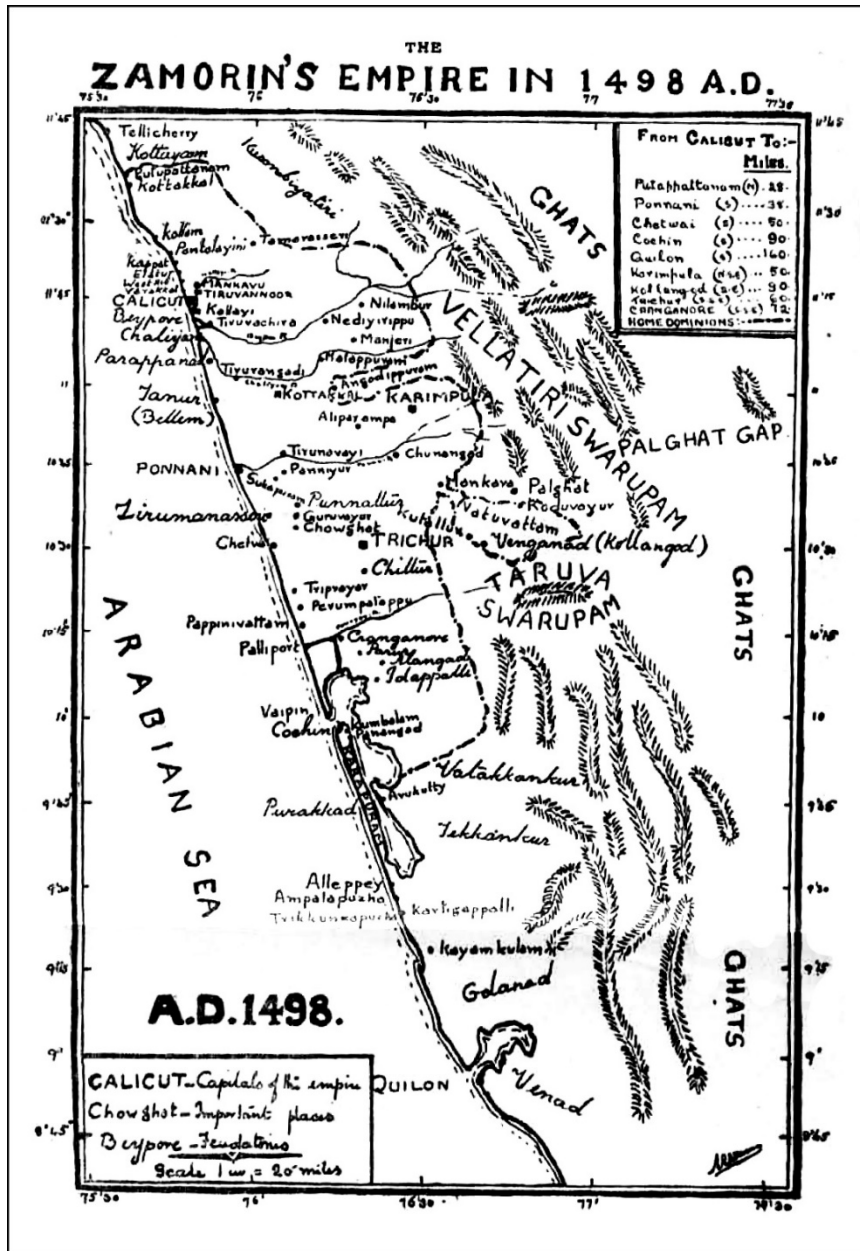
²¹⁴ K. M. Panikkar, *Malabar and the Portuguese, op. cit.*, p. 8.

²¹⁵ T. V. Mahalingam, *op. cit.*, p. 302; V. V. Haridas, *Samoothirikalathe Kozhikode-Kadhayum Charithravum, Thiruvananthapuram, 2009*, p. 57; Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras Through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar Vol. II, op. cit.*, p. 395.

²¹⁶ Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras Through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar Vol. II, op. cit.*, p. 395; V. V. Haridas, *Samoothirikalathe Kozhikode-Kadhayum Charithravum, op. cit.*, p. 58; V. V. Haridas, *Zamorins and the Political Culture, op. cit.*, p. 81.

Figure 9

The Zamorin's Empire in 1498 AD



Source: K.V. Krishna Iyer, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, Calicut, 1999, p. 349.

The royal family's varied rituals, rites, and festivals were once attended by local chiefs and magnates as well as royal functionaries. Depending on their relative importance within the political system, each of them was given a certain amount of money. When the feudatory died, the successor had to pay *Purushantaram* or successor fee, which varied according to their territories ranging from 3000 to 11500

panams.²¹⁷ On the occasion of important ceremonies like Onam and Vishu, they had to pay their respects to the Zamorin. They were to be present at Tirunavaya *Mamankam* and *Taipuyam* also, to pay their respects to the Zamorin.²¹⁸ Here, we have attempted to create a hierarchy according to the sums that the magnates and chiefs have got on various occasions.

A list of the chief feudatories may be given here.²¹⁹

1. Punnathur Raja
2. Tirumanasseri Nambitiri
3. Kutiravattathu Nayar
4. Venganad Nambidi
5. Manakkulam Raja
6. Azhvanchery Tamprakkal
7. Eliyangad Raja
8. Chithannore Raja
9. Tirinavaye Vadhyar
10. Thamme Panikkar
11. Kodenchery Adhyan
12. Mangatt Achan

Punnathur Nambidi was an agitated and restless monarch who frequently caused strife between the Cochin and Zamorin rulers.²²⁰ He had tried to impose French rule over his territory and establish his independence from the Zamorin three

²¹⁷ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Prabhatha Kiranangal*, Kottayam, 2001, p. 65; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Calicut: The City of Truth Revisited*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

²¹⁸ A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 157; V. V. Haridas, *Zamorins and the Political Culture*, *op. cit.*; V. V. Haridas, *Samoothirikalathe Kozhikkode- Kathayum Charitharavum*, *op. cit.*, p. 56; V.V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam*, *op. cit.*; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Calicut: The City of Truth Revisited*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

²¹⁹ V. V. Haridas, *Samoothirikalathe Kozhikkode - Kathayum Charitharavum*, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Calicut: The City of Truth Revisited*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

²²⁰ T. R. Venugopal, *op. cit.*; A. Galletti, *op. cit.*, p. 65; P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam*, *op. cit.*; K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. 1*, Cochin Govt. Press Ernakulam, 1924, p. 128.

years prior. However, he was stopped in his tracks, and those friends lacked the strength to carry out their plans despite their bravado. As a result, they were forced to leave empty handed.²²¹

In the Malayalam year 938, corresponds to 1763 A.D. of the Christian era, the Raja of Cochin happened to suffer great losses in warfare against the Raja of Travancore. In order to compensate for the losses, he sacrificed some districts to the Travancore Raja, under the condition, that he should assist him in the proposed conquest of the country of the three Rajas of Punnathur, Manakulam and Ainikutty. He succeeded so far as to divest the Raja of Manakulam and Ainikutty of all their territories, and likewise the Raja of Punnathur, of a part of his, to the extent of seven leagues from east to west and five leagues from north to south. In a short time however, the Raja of Punnathur found a means to reconquer the dominions of his family from the Cochin Raja, with the exception of the fort of Kakkad, which remained with the usurper.²²² Following the Zamorin's demise and the subsequent installation of British dominance, the Punnathur chief asserted his independence as a chieftain before the East India Company.²²³ Though the claim was not accepted, the move indicated the heightened authority of Punnathur Raja.

In November 1721, the Zamorin arrived at Chavakkad after his exile, from the state of Travancore. He took possession of the dominions of the Punnathur Raja and appointed the Raja as his collector; the Raja, having no means to defend his hereditary claims, was constrained to submit and to become the farmer of the very country of which he had been the only lawful sovereign. He remained in this predicament till August, when after submission of his accounts, he was deposed. The Zamorin's own people were sent to gather the collections; this remained the status quo till January 1792, when the Raja represented the hardship of being deprived of

²²¹ K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. 1*, Cochin Govt. Press Ernakulam, 1924, p. 128.; K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *Kochi Rajya Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 443; T. M. Chummar, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

²²² J. Rejikumar, *op. cit.*, p. 300; T. M. Chummar, *op. cit.*, p. 351; A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

²²³ A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 149; P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam*, *op. cit.*; T. R. Venugopal, *op. cit.*; T. M. Chumar, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

this small remnant of authority in the hereditary dominions of his family. The Zamorin appointed him as collector again with a monthly allowance of twelve hundred fanams.²²⁴ The Nambidi were finally degraded by the Zamorin to the degrading role of being their revenue collector in 1791. He was now receiving an annual payment of Rs. 20,000 from the Zamorin's malikhana, which was estimated to be "about one-fifth of the revenue" of the district.²²⁵

Colonial Interventions in Punnathurnadu

Before the Portuguese arrived, the political and social landscape of Malabar around the end of the 15th century had some notable characteristics. From Cannanore to Cape Comorin, the region was split up into several small principalities, each governed by a Raja or a less arrogant chief who only obliquely recognized the authority of one of the great kings.²²⁶ In later times, the Chettuvai island became the cockpit of Malabar. Chettuvai was the main centre of struggle between the *naduvazhis* and foreign powers.²²⁷ All the principal land engagements in the campaigns of the Zamorin, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the Mysorean conquerors were fought on this island.²²⁸ In October 1709, Dutch forces succeeded in capturing Chettuvai, belonged to the Zamorin. The construction of a fort at Chettuvai was resisted by the Zamorin who recaptured it in January 1715.²²⁹ The effect of the loss of Chettuvai was tremendous.²³⁰ Visscher wrote: "The natives thought that we were ruined. Two attempts to recover Chettuvai ended in failure, up on which a considerable force was

²²⁴ T. M. Chumar, *op. cit.*, p. 351; J. Rejikumar, *op. cit.*

²²⁵ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 225; Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras Through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar Vol. II*, *op. cit.*, p. 413; A. Vini, *op. cit.*, p. 150; William Logan, 'A Collection of Treaties, Engagement and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar' *op. cit.*, p. 216 (See Appendix 2).

²²⁶ K. M. Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

²²⁷ K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadvum Pravasavum*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²²⁸ The Chettuvai island, *op. cit.*; T.R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

²²⁹ N. M. Namboothiri, P. K. Sivadas, *op. cit.*, p. 469; T. R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 65; V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

²³⁰ K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *Kerala Through the Ages*, Govt. of Kerala Thiruvananthapuram, 1976, p. 65.

sent from Batavia in January 1717. War continued throughout the year and the Dutch occupied the whole of Chettuvai Manappuram. But peace is that was concluded in February 1718 did not bring any material benefit to the Dutch, except the cession of Chettuvai.”²³¹ Places like Guruvayur, Chavakkad, Chettuvai etc. were under the control of Punnathur Raja, who was the *samanthan* (nominee) of the Zamorin of Calicut. Thus, the Zamorin and Punnathur Raja turned against Dutch forces for having diminished their influence in the region.²³² In 1756, the Zamorin chased the Dutch away from Chettuvai.

The political anarchy that had existed in North Kerala during the 18th century, also helped the Mysoreans to conquer Malabar without facing any considerable resistance. During the period, the *naduvazhis* of Malabar were in opposition to each other and whenever chances came up, they did not hesitate to accept the help of conquerors and foreign powers, to attack and destroy their neighbours. This feudal anarchy and political instability ceased with the advent of Mysoreans in Malabar.²³³ The salient feature of Malabar politics on the eve of Hyder Ali's conquest was the lack of a uniting central authority.²³⁴ In Malabar, the feudal system had completely vanished since the land was owned by the Lords, not the king, who only had symbolic ownership rights. Between 1765-66 A.D., Hyder Ali, paid a visit to Chavakkad taluk, in the month of *Medam*, but made no definitive revenue arrangement, that is, no survey was made and no fixed land tax was established.²³⁵

Kunjimoosakutty was appointed as the governor of Zamorin. He was the person entrusted with the responsibility to collect taxes in this area.²³⁶ His son, Hydros Kutty Moopar was an intelligent and religious person. He also attained good military

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

²³² K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadum Pravasavum*, *op. cit.*, p. 22; T. R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

²³³ C. K. Kareem, *Kerala Under Haider Ali and Tipu Sulthan*, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ J. Rejikumar, *op. cit.*, p. 177; Kanippayyur Sankaran Nambudiripad, *op. cit.*

²³⁶ K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadum Pravasavum*, *op. cit.*, p. 104; K.T. Vincent, *Manathala Palliyum Desasnehiyum*, *Rashtradeepika Daily*, 2020 January 29, p. 1.

training and was favoured by the Zamorin. After the death of Kunjimoosakutty, Zamorin appointed Hydros Kutty Moopar as a governor.²³⁷ He was the most prominent leader who enjoyed considerable popular support. In the latter years, Chundur Row and Sreeniwas Row, led an army representing Hyder Ali. Under their leadership, the Chavakkad taluk was given on rent to Moheedeem Moopen and Hydros Kutty, who collected the whole undivided *pattam* of the proprietors. However, they found that the *pattam* was insufficient to enable them to fulfill their engagements to the government. Hence, they further imposed certain contributions and sought recourse to seizure of personal property to make their payments. But this resource failed.²³⁸ During the period of 1777-78, under the name, *Hoozoor Nigudee*, the government decided to acquire two-thirds of the gross produce as its share from paddy cultivations, after reaping and measuring the harvest. The cultivator was left with one part of the produce.²³⁹ After the conquest of the district, Hydrous Kutty Moopar was the Commissioner appointed by Hyder Ali, to collect the revenue in these parts of the taluk.²⁴⁰ A number of religious heads and scholars of Kerala were recipients of Tipu Sultan's gifts of land and cash.

Tipu had ordered Hydrous Kutty, the Chavakkad area commander, to gift the Guruvayur temple with an annual grant for the daily poojas and donations.²⁴¹ The money was regularly paid every year by Tipu Sultan's agent Hydrous Kutty Moopar of Manathala. But Hydrous Kutty Moopar appears to have angered Tipu and been compelled to battle the Sultan after he later championed the cause of the people against his master's despotisms.²⁴² He raised his voice against the unjust revenues and newly-introduced forms of justice in Malabar. Soldiers of Zamorin fought against Tipu's

²³⁷ K.T. Vincent, *op. cit.*; K. C. Sivadas, *Manathala Chandanakkudam Nercha*, Malayala Manorama, Marketing Feature, 29-01-2023, p. 1.

²³⁸ J. Rejikumar, *op. cit.*; William Logan, *Malabar Pravisya*, T.V. Krishnan (Trans.), Kozhikode, 2008, p. 202.

²³⁹ J. Rejikumar, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

²⁴⁰ Divakaran Kattakada, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

²⁴¹ P. K. Gopalakrishnan, *Op., Cit.*, p. 469; A. Sreedhara Menon, *District Gazetteers Thrissur, op. cit.*, p. 615.

²⁴² William Logan, *op. cit.*, p. cccviii.

army at Chavakkad, and they defeated Tipu's army. This helped in blocking the journey of Tipu Sultan towards the south. Hyder Ali had trusted Hydrose Kutty as a lieutenant, and he had battled for justice and the truth. Hydrose Kutty was later killed in a battle and his mortal remains were laid in the Edappully Jaram in the south-western corner of the township.²⁴³

The Mysorean invasion resulted in far-reaching, social changes. It shook the very foundation of traditional Malabar. All Hindus were equal before the Mysorean rulers. A number of actions taken by the Mysorean emperors, most notably Tipu Sultan, contributed to dispelling the idea of the upper castes' social supremacy and giving the lower classes an awareness of their own worth and dignity.²⁴⁴

The climate and the nature of Malabar were equally unfavourable for construction of roads up until the time of the Mysorean invasion. Highways were replaced with narrow trails 'running at random through paddy lands without any regard to convenience of travelling', and the need for good roads was not realized until Tipu carried his cannon into Malabar. Corroborating Colonel Dow, W. Logon sums up: "It was only after the Mysorean invasions, that the necessity of roads capable of carrying heavy guns began to be felt."²⁴⁵ Another route for transporting artillery was the coastal road that connected Beypore to Cranganore, passing through Tanur, Ponnani, Veliyangod, and Chettuvai.²⁴⁶ It stretched from Chaliyam to Chettuvai via Tanur, Ponnani, Veliyankod, Chavakkad and along the island of Chettuvai to Kodungallur. At that time, the main roads were the coastal road. Thus, the whole of Malabar became connected via a network of roads. The roads in existence now had been Tipu Sultan's designs for mobilising troops. These roads were helpful not only

²⁴³ *Ibid.*; V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*; Divakaran Kattakada, *Kerala Sancharam, op. cit.*

²⁴⁴ K. M. Panikkar, *A History of Kerala 1498-1801*, Annamalai Nagar, 1960, p. 345.

²⁴⁵ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 269.; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Vatanappilli Panchayat, Vol. 88, Talikulam Block, Thrissur District, 1997; Francis Day, *The Land of the Perumal, op. cit.*, p. 29; T. R. Venugopal, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

for administrative efficiency and military operations but also for the promotion of trade and commerce.

The claim set up by the Malabar commissioners was on the basis of the treaty of Srirangapattanam of 1792, which had been entered into by Tipu Sultan, with the English East India Company.²⁴⁷ In this treaty, Chettuvai island was shown as Tipu's territory, which had been surrendered by him to the English. Chettuvai is a fort located approximately twelve leagues away from Cochin. Its dual purposes are to safeguard trade and to provide defense against the adjoining Zamorin dominions.²⁴⁸ It was the most powerful fortification in Malabar and is located at the mouth of a river. Colonel Hartily established their camp at Chettuvai. Thus, Chavakkad and neighbouring places came under the control of British supremacy.²⁴⁹ Even historians who harbor animosity towards Mysore rule in Kerala concur that the British administrators established their political and administrative structure in Malabar based on the political and administrative framework that the Mysoreans had laid down, and that their actions in Malabar had set the stage for the Company's eventual assumption of sovereignty.²⁵⁰

The British government acknowledged this duty as well, allowing the temple to keep the money from the sale of some of its properties free from assessment and using it for temple-related purposes.²⁵¹ The company, in September 1792, began a policy of intervention and use of power against the Rajas. However, the local rulers were not ready to accept the proposal of temporary treaties with the Company under

²⁴⁷ The Chettuvai island, *op. cit.*, p. 4; K. N. Panikkar, *Against Lord and State*, *op. cit.*, p. 1; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookodu Panchayat, *op. cit.*; K. Gopalankutty, *Agrarian Relations in Malabar under the Mysorean Rulers*, A Journal of the Dept. of Post Graduate Studies in History and Centre for Advanced Studies in Local knowledge, 2007, p. 34; V.V. Haridas, *Madhyakala Kerala Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 80; Krishna Chaithanya, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

²⁴⁸ K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala* ed. T. K. Krishna Menon, Manohar, New Delhi, 2021, p. 16.

²⁴⁹ K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadvum Pravasavum*, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

²⁵⁰ K. K. N. Kurup, *Tipu Sultan and his State Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

²⁵¹ *Voice of Guruvayur*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

the status of revenue collectors.²⁵² Instead, they claimed their legal status as rulers. It was in this context that Messrs. Farmer and Dow insisted that the Company maintain the Rajas' authority and give them control over the nation's governance.²⁵³ In the beginning of the 18th century, Chavakkad and neighbouring places witnessed many wars. The Commissioners were conscious of the fact that the British alone could not police the countryside in Malabar and administration and that the mediation of the Rajas was necessary. As of 22nd April 1792, the local rulers had retrieved their previous principalities. The Commissioners were found to be in favour of maintaining the power of the Rajas and leaving the administration of the country in their hands.²⁵⁴

Major Dow reported that he had met with a self-styled Raja of Punnathur, who had laid claim to the district of Chavakkad and the adjoining district of Kerakepadom. “Punnathur Raja, whose name was Kota Shankara, did not arrive in Calicut until a few days before we left on our northern circuit in late March 1793. As a result, we did not have the opportunity to speak with him until after our return in mid-May. When he did occasionally visit us, Shamnauth, the Zamorin's carigur, was always with him, and it was evident that they were a little envious of him for giving him a chance to explain his own circumstances. This was, however, around the middle of July last year, he represented that, returning from Travancore under the Zamorin family's auspices.”²⁵⁵

The Malabar Rajas were finally pensioned and were reduced to the position of *Jenmis* or landlords under the English.²⁵⁶ Through British intrusions, economic exploitation, conquests and oppressive measures, Malabar witnessed far-reaching changes in the administrative, political, economic and religious life of the people.²⁵⁷

²⁵² Kanippayyur Sankaran Nambudiripad, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

²⁵³ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

²⁵⁴ Minutes of Joint Commissioners, Farmer and Dow, 22nd April 1792, Tellichery Cited in P Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India*, p. 17; M.P. Mujeeb Rahman, *Kerala Charithrathile Tipu Sulthanum Britishukarum*, Kottayam, 2022, p. 124.

²⁵⁵ J. Rejikumar, *op. cit.*, p. 298; T. M. Chummar, *op. cit.*

²⁵⁶ J. Rejikumar, *op. cit.*, p. 9; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Kerala Darsanam*, *op. cit.*, p. 103; M.P. Mujeeb Rahman, *Kerala Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

²⁵⁷ J. Rejikumar, *The Joint Commissioners' Report*, *op. cit.*

Analysing the levels of administration introduced by the British, it has to be noticed that they did not take into account the structures that had been previously developed in Malabar, apart from the retention of their names. The old *desams* were brought together into larger administrative units, namely, the *amsams*.²⁵⁸ When Buchanan visited the area in 1800, he provided a thorough account of the land tenure structure and the unique *Jenmi* right that the Malabar landlords possessed.²⁵⁹

The fact that there was no land tax applied to landed property in Malabar was another significant aspect of land holdings there.²⁶⁰ The Joint Commissioners of Malabar (1792) and Second Malabar Commissioners (1801) in their Reports admitted: “the whole of our subsequent arrangements for the realisation of the revenues of the Southern parts of Malabar, have been founded upon his settlements and investigation of the country.”²⁶¹

In the colonial period, almost all *nadus* of the pre-modern times were transformed into the revenue division called *taluk*.²⁶² The Palghat Division included the two taluks in the south - Palghat and Ponnani. The taluks were merged prior to their reorganization in 1861, and the newly created taluk was assigned to the Southern Division and placed under the supervision of a Deputy Collector, whose headquarters were located at Ponnani.²⁶³ 73 *amsams* were created out of Ponnani Taluk for administrative purposes.²⁶⁴ The Tahsildar was in charge of the taluk's general revenue and had his headquarters in Ponnani. Two Deputy Tahsildars, stationed at Betat-Pudiyangadi and Kuttungal, to whom 21 and 28 *amsams* had been assigned,

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁵⁹ Margret Frenz, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

²⁶⁰ Kanippayur Sankaran Namboothirippad, *op. cit.*, p. 136; C. K. Kareem, *op. cit.*, p. 147; Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

²⁶¹ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 323; C. K. Kareem, *op. cit.*

²⁶² C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ William Logan, *op. cit.*, p. ccc.

respectively, supported him in his task.²⁶⁵ Chavakkad (Kuttungal) the southern-most taluk of the Malabar collectorate, occupies a narrow tract of land, stretching from Kodungallur in the south, to the vicinity of the town of Ponnani in the north, a narrow estuary dividing it from the taluk of Kuttanadu.

The foundation of western education was laid in Kerala in the beginning of nineteenth century.²⁶⁶ The efforts of the English East India Company and the Charter Act 1813 allowed Christian missionaries to work in India.²⁶⁷ The Basel Mission established various types of school not only to spread the Christian faith, but also aimed at imparting basic education to all. Significant changes in the educational system of Malabar were introduced and successfully carried out. The missionaries generally built closer association with the people at all levels within the caste-ridden society in the region. As a result, Christian missionaries started a number of schools all over India. The Basel German Evangelical Mission is the sole Protestant mission operating in Malabar.²⁶⁸ Dr. H. Gundert, the creator of the Standard Malayalam English Dictionary, created the Mission. The Basel Missionaries were the pioneers of Western education in Malabar.²⁶⁹

A dramatic shift in society was aided by the activities of Christian missionaries and the expansion of western education. B E M L P School, which is considered to be the oldest school at Chittattukara, was established in 1878.²⁷⁰ It is commendable that

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ S. Ramachandran Nair, *Social and Cultural History of Colonial Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 3; K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

²⁶⁷ K. K. N. Kurup, *Adhunika Keralam-Charithra Gaveshana Prabhandhangal*, 1982, p. 29.

²⁶⁸ P. K. Gopalakrishna, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charitram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1974, p. 507; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Adiverukal*, Kottayam, 2012, p. 72; C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 206; K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 213; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; K. J. John, *Christian Heritage of Kerala*, Cochin, 1981, p. 253; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

²⁷⁰ St. Sebastian's High School, *Souvenir*, *op. cit.*, p. 33; St. Sebastian's Church, *Parish Directory*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

missionaries have brought evangelical activity among the lower classes of Hindu society societal attention. Students from all castes got admission in this school. Education up to standard four was compulsory for all children belonging to the Mission.²⁷¹ Among the students, majority belonged to the Ezhava caste. In the school, children of different castes were put together under one roof, which was in itself a revolutionary move in society in those days. At present, this school is under the management of the Church of South India (CSI). They have 42 schools in Kerala. Their corporate agency is situated at Calicut.²⁷² The place Kunnankulam is the chief centre of the Jacobites and there exist several old churches in the town and within its neighbourhood. St. Mary's church Arthat, Marthoma church, Kunnankulam old church, Bhadrassana church etc. were among them. It serves as one of the Church Mission Society's focal points of activity.²⁷³ Since 1088, Kunnankulam has been a front-runner in the field of education. At that time there were only three cities that housed high schools in Cochin State. As a result, many mission schools have been functioning in this area.

From the above analysis, we can deduce that Punnathurnadu conducted brisk trade through land and water routes. Here, trade and commerce had developed chiefly due to good communication and transportation facilities. Which were further extended and modernised by Tipu and later by colonial administrators.

²⁷¹ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 207; K. Sugathan, *Budhamathavum Jathivyavasthayum*, Calicut, 2011, p. 289.

²⁷² Personal interview with Mrs. Baby former Headmistress, age 76 at her residence at Kunnankulam in Thrissur District, dated on 10-01-2020.

²⁷³ C. Achutha Menon, *Cochin State Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

CHAPTER 3

THE LOCAL HISTORY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF PUNNATHURNADU

Local history is the study of the history of a relatively small geographical area or a particular settlement of a locality. The local collective is an ensemble of human relations, that are forged during the process of appropriating the resources of a particular locality. Sociological methods of conducting field work, linguistic analysis, study of economics and anthropology are of great help in writing local history. It provides some interesting insights which enables to understand the past and the present. The memories, stories and traditions of inhabitants are formed from first-hand knowledge and life experiences. These repositories, created and shaped in community life, were continually subjected to changes according to new circumstances and needs.

Local history

The locality refers to a small place, where life is based on face-to-face relations. Local history began as part of efforts to mainstream a region or community, and such trends continue to this day. It is the lived experience of people in a restricted area.¹ Frequent and regular contact with one another is assumed to generate common culture. Rituals, ceremonies and collective memories lead to cultural integration. The specificity of a locality could be due to many factors in which geography and human integration play important roles. Local history is not localised history. It is not confined to focusing on the local manifestations of larger political movements or socio-economic structures. It is a qualitatively different type of history, that uses different sources and different methodology.

¹ K. Gopalankutty, *Writing History: The need for reorientation*, General President's Address, South Indian History Congress Thirty Sixth Annual Session, Puducherry, 2016, p. 5.

Local history provides a source of information for different sections of society. In micro-historical studies, historians can achieve comprehensiveness and credibility by adopting a holistic and multidisciplinary approach. Micro-historical analysis said in linking histories of the local with the national and general.² Local history explores the histories of the marginalised, the excluded and invisible things or people. These groups - tribals, women, Dalits, fisher folk etc. have all contributed to the evolution and development of society but are not visible or at best remain marginalised in mega narratives. Local history ties together all sorts of disciplines including academic subjects such as history, geography and anthropology. The knowledge of how people in the past, had reacted to specific problems are also an important aspect of local history. The knowledge gained in studying problems in history should be applied in formulating policies to solve present problems.

People belonging to different periods in history will have their own impressions and understanding about their past, which they retain, document and transmit using the resources available to them.³ An important aspect of local history is the publication and cataloguing of information preserved in local/national records relating to respective areas. The study of local history aims to facilitate the documentation of all types of events and influences in the lives of people, as stated earlier.

A fragment of local history, reflecting people's individual identities, experiences, and goals, is inevitably closer to people's hearts and collective consciousness. The past of their community is being interpreted and recreated, encompassing its political, social, economic, and cultural aspects. As important as the quest for absolute and unbiased reconstruction is an awareness of local practice that reveals the temporal representation of the historical past. Since humans are the only beneficiaries of history, it is important to know what the purpose of history is and how

² Lyn German, *Regional and Local History in 1990's: Into The Mainstream. An original article from Journal of Regional & Local Studies, 1994*, Journal of Regional and Local Studies, Shropshire, 1994, p. 10.

³ M.P. Mujeebu Rehman, K.S. Madhavan, *Explorations in South Indian History*, Kottayam, 2014, p. 43.

historians form their own perspective on historical events.⁴ The knowledge and perception of a region are based on political and cultural determination.⁵ The universe of enquiry, as the very term suggests, is a small unit. As a result, it is often conceived as a departure from the macro to micro history.⁶ It also utilizes the existing sources including material artefacts, written and printed records and memories; and will also look into the features that set the locality apart from the macro-region. Local history provides general information about the pattern of land holdings and different types of occupation, education, cultural forms, caste, religion, etc. It is mainly read as revenue statistics and information on law and order like public works. Although they are important, they are still insufficient to understand socio-cultural processes.⁷

The present study on the local history of Punnathurnadu uses the methodology outlined above, to construct the history of human praxis in a region within South Malabar. Each region has its own importance and peculiarities. The history of a region begins from the first human settlement.⁸ From the perspective of local history, there appears to be a need to understand geographical space in detail. The first step is to identify the locality, its geographical landscape; the nature of soil, availability of water, flora and fauna etc. and all that is there without human intervention.⁹ The local social collective is the aggregate of the human relationships formed within a particular geographical area, including those who earn their subsistence by utilising the resources available in the area. In the local dialects, there are various references to land masses with water resources. Landscape categories and local terms may signify

⁴ George Sheeran and Yaniana Sheeran, *Reconstructing Local History*, The Local Historian Vol. 29 No. 4, 1999, p. 256.

⁵ C. Adarsh, *Vibhavanakal Vinimayangal- Kodungalloorinte Vyavaharika Bhoomisastram*, Sukapuram, 2013, p. 28.

⁶ K.M. Panikkar, *Writing Local History in time of Globalization Local History Explorations in Theory and Method*, Kozhikkode, 2009, p. 11.

⁷ K. N. Ganesh, *The Experience of making a Local History the case of Tirurangadi project, The Local Speaks, Papers in Local History, op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁸ V. V. K. Valath, *Keralathile Sthalacharithrangal Thrissur Jilla*, Thrissur, 2003, p. 17.;N. Rajendran, *Standardisation of Place names, in Perspectives in Place names Studies, : op. cit.*, p. 239.

⁹ K.N. Ganesh, *Locality & Culture in Kerala History, The Case of Tirurangadi*, Calicut, 2010, p. 19.

the nature of vegetation and soil type. These distinctions are important. The extent of the area signified by a place's name indicates both the landscape and cultural space encompassed in the neighbourhood. It is thus possible to call the space indicated by a place's name as a habitat. Local history has the potential to bring out deliberate efforts to stifle production in the locality. In Punnathurnadu, most of the lands are coastal area and others are *parambus* and paddy fields. While some of the locals in the coastal region worked in trade and agriculture, others went fishing. As previously indicated, the locations encompasses the midland and coastal areas. The inhabitants in this *nadu* benefited from an ample supply of biomass and siltation deposits, as well as an abundance of water resources, for farming. People are drawn to settle here because of this. Besides these, some quarries have been seen in places such as Peruvallur, Kandanassery, Brahmakulam, etc.¹⁰ The foundation for analysing human landscapes is these resources, which have not been created by human activity. The resources that underpin the development of human material life are natural items found within geographic space.

History serves as a record of the complex manner in which human society transformed from its primitive stage to the present. It often incorporates cultural and social aspects of life in a particular locality.¹¹ Many historians point out that the enquiry about past begins from the present.¹² It helps to throw more light on the hitherto unknown, ignored or neglected aspects of human life in small localities and also enables the critical reading of main stream histories and necessitates changes in them. Micro-history is the mode of studying the past on a very small scale. The

¹⁰ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Mullasserri Panchayat, Mullasserri Block, Vol. 87, Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur, District, 1996; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Thaikkad Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 81, Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur District; Personal Interview with Mr. P. K. Rajan, age 70, former member in Mullasserri Block Panchayat, at his Office at Peruvallur, in Thrissur District, dated on 20-01-2023.; Personal Interview with Mr. Babu Aloor, age 65, Councillar, in Guruvayur Municipality, at his office at Thaikkad in Thrissur District. dated on 30-05-2022; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Kandanasseri Panchayat, Chowannur Block, Vol. 82, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram, 1996.

¹¹ M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *A History of Kerala Vol. 1*, Vallathol Vidyapeetham, Sukapuram, 1991, p. 176.

¹² K.N. Ganesh, *Malayaliyude Desakalangaal*, Calicut, 2018, p. 11.

locality was subjected to micro-level studies by historians of the Annales school, in 1930s in Europe.¹³ It is a branch of study of history, developed by the German historian, George Gerson Iggers in the 1970s.¹⁴ It is the most interesting and innovative approach to history. As the studies of a wider scope naturally exclude diverse and minute aspects of each locality, only intensive, micro-level studies can offer an inclusive historical approach. It has to be distinguished from local history, in the sense of the latter being the study of general trends and traditions of a locality with an inherent interest in the local community. Micro history encompasses everything that had happened in an area.

Each fragment of human life in the world has a history as well. Local history helps us to understand the regional variation in the evolution of history. The exploration of the materialistic culture of people also provides some insight. Such an approach is pertinent today in order to counter the grand narrative that is usually woven while collating nationalistic history. Local history would be explained and characterised by indigenous factors, that would differ from and negate the macro-processes. We will first briefly examine the history of Malabar as has been narrated in standard histories of Malabar. This re-examination of the standard history of Punnathurnadu will be followed by the reconstruction of history of the landscape. The locals started cultivating various crops based on the climate, water availability, and soil type in this area. In the past, the principal crops were areca nuts, coconuts, and paddy. As mentioned earlier, some individuals work in small-scale enterprises including pakkamkuthu, coir production, toddy tapping, and fishing. The survival and availability of local records and other materials differ significantly from area to area. The names of habitations, rivers, villages, *parambus*, etc. can reveal a great deal about the history of such features and sometimes the entire locality, especially if the names could be traced back throughout its existence. More than written records, each village

¹³ M.P. Mujeebu Rehman, *The Locale Speaks*, M. P. Mujeebu Rehman, ed. *Papers in Local History*, Perambra, 2009 p. 7.; M.V. Vishnu Nampootiri, *Folklorum Janasamskarapadanavum*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2008, p. 20.

¹⁴ Sundara Raj T, *Micro History for Spiral Historical Consciousness towards Macro History*, South Indian History Congress 13th Session Kannur, 2010 p. 2.

has its own historical or archaeological record in the form of buried material remains, in the soil strata lying underneath. The megalithic site of Cheramanangad and Ariyannur, are mentioned in the previous chapter. The formation and transformation of the historical landscape of Punnathurnadu will form the basis of any analysis of history of the material and emotional/psychological life of the people of the locality.

Components

Local history draws information from different sources. Regional and local histories used a wide range of sources. These included written materials, inscriptions and archaeological remains and different forms of oral traditions.¹⁵ While writing the local history, a careful study of records of institutions such as churches, temples, mosques and synagogues, helps us to trace the life patterns of the people of a region and to identify the stage when the transformations that have taken place, actually occurred. Besides major events, human relations, cultural heritage, genealogy, folklore etc. have provided information on the region concerned. Historical sites, institutions, worship patterns, folk songs and folk arts throw much light on the past.¹⁶ Historical reconstruction greatly rests on the availability and accessibility of source materials. Archaeological and ethnographical materials, folklore and oral traditions play a vital role, in addition to the written documents, which might not be frequently accessible.¹⁷ Folklore and legends have their roots in man's faith and imagination. There are many folk songs connected to Punnathurnadu, like *panipattukal*, *aghoshapattukal*, *kuttipattukal*, *samudayapattukal*, etc.

¹⁵ M.R. Raghava Varier, *Keralolpathi Grandhavari*, Kottayam, 2013, p. 11.

¹⁶ M.R. Raghava Varier, *Local History Changing Perspectives*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.; M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Malayalathile Natan Pattukal*, Kottayam, 2011, p. 10.; Vattaparambil Peethambaran, *Nattarivukalude Ullarakalilekku*, *op. cit.*, p. 1.; Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History Some Interpretations*, New Delhi, 2010, p. 318.

¹⁷ M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Nadan Pattukal Malayalathil*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2008, p. 435.; C. Adarsha, *op. cit.*, p. 144.; P. Sivadasan, *Local History of Kerala Transdisciplinary Investigations at Parambathu Kavu Irumpiliyam Malappuram District*, Kottayam, 2019, p. 19.

Folklore consists of short stories bearing no apparent connection between one and another while a legend is a comparatively long narrative with some sort of unity.¹⁸ Folklore is the knowledge of human culture. All cultures have their own basic factors.¹⁹ Each geographical area has its own tradition. It is connected with regional history and myths about places. To a certain extent, folklore is the cultural history of a country, village etc.²⁰ Folklorists concentrate on local knowledge, traditions and aesthetic expressions. All folk knowledge was related to nature, society and culture. Folklore is an integral part of the very existence of the lower class and their society.²¹ Folk stories, folk songs, *panipattukal*, festival songs, folk games etc. shed light on the prevalent social life.

*Naangale kuppayil nattoru thrutha-
ppoovalle ningale thevanu mala
naangale kuppayil nattoru vazha-
ppazhamalle ningale thevanu pooja
avidekku naangalum ningalumokkum
pinnenthinee chovvarkulam pisakunnu.*²²

A folk song was spread in connection with the religious conversion and Palayur church as follows.

*“Keerthi perutha gramam Palayurennu
parthu vanna mathakkar nalpathil paramallo*

¹⁸ K.V. Krishna Iyer, *The History of Guruvayur*, Guruvayur, 1986, p. 24.

¹⁹ M.V. Vishnu Nampootiri, *Folklore*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²¹ Raghavan Payyanad, *Ideology Politics & Folklore*, Payyannur, 1999, p. 111.; Vattaparambil Peethambaran, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

²² It is a folk song, which explains the untouchability existed in Punnathurnadu because of the caste system. It says, “Higher caste people using the flowers and bananas grown in lower caste people’s trash for religious offerings in their temples. By this, both of them are equal and then why higher castes are restricting lower castes”.

M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vijnaneeyam*, Kottayam, 1996, p. 175.

Vampezhum janangalumundanekamavide
Vampicha Vishnukshethram Bhadrakaligrahangaal."²³

Many places have rich folklore and traditions which can be of both help and hindrance.²⁴ Peasants ploughing or harvesting or treading the water wheel (wheel used in ancient times to pump out water from the fields and prepare it for the next cycle of sowing) would sing songs; the rhythmic scansion of whose melodies aligned with the motor rhythm of their limbs in work. Through the various religious songs like *margamkalipattu*, *thiruvathirakalipattu*, *mappilapattu*, etc. we can learn more information about the various communities.

Archaeological and epigraphic sources were referred to in compiling local history.²⁵ Inter-disciplinary perspectives cross the narrow disciplinary boundaries and explore beyond the perceived water-tight compartments of history and archaeology. Inscriptions and archaeological remains were only locally found and not much was known about them outside. Living cultures and environments are equally important sources of the context. Rock-cut caves are found at Porkalam, Kakkad, Eyyal, Kattakambal, Chowannur and Kandanasserri which are the most important megalithic sites in this *nadu*. The regional and local histories quite often relied on such archaeological sources which had been locally discovered.

A new methodology becomes necessary for the creative and effective use of the sources of local history and necessitates a search for new sources. A study based on archival sources would be inadequate. Both literature and history are embedded in the social process, since they share considerable common ground. Historical representation is essentially guided by the availability or non-availability of evidence.

²³ Many people, from more than forty religions, came to Palayur because of its fame. There was lot of prominent people, a large Vishnu temple and a Bhadrakali (Goddess) temple in Palayur.

T.O. Aleyas, *Syrian Manuel-Samagra Kerala Charithram*, Kottayam, 2015, p. 62.

²⁴ M.V. Vishnu Nampootiri, *Folklorum Janasamskarapadanavum*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.; C. Adarsh, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

²⁵ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, Kottayam, 2015, p. 223.

As far as literary representation is concerned, imagination forms the central element.²⁶ In the construction of historical narratives, literature has also served as an important source. Society, as reflected in a particular text or in a corpus of literature like *Kokasandhesam*, *Chandrolsavam*, etc., have been a popular theme for researchers. Apart from traditional lore, there was another set of compositions in the form of narrative poems for recording the events that were thought to be worthy of recording and preserving. The narratives belonging to this category were mostly composed in the style of any popular literary movement in Malayalam. They have used literature primarily as a source for understanding social process.²⁷

The memories, stories and traditions of the people arise from first-hand knowledge and experiences. Tradition is a continuous process that undergoes transformations. Hence, the recording of these transformations is very essential.²⁸ Folklore, oral traditions, proverbs, popular memories all become very important sources.²⁹

Apart from the academic history, the men and women of subaltern groups cherish reminiscences, market situations like famine, festivals, rituals, customs and manners.³⁰ Legends and traditions also dominate in their memories including their life patterns. Sociological methods of conducting field work, linguistic analysis, studies in economics and anthropology are of great help in compiling local history.

Memory is the most important link that one can have with one's past and it is a way in which human beings interpret their past. Such interpretations are found

²⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, *On History*, London, 2012, p. 7.

²⁷ Arthur Marwick, *The new nature of History: knowledge, Evidence and Language*, Hampshire, 2001 pp. 185-186.

²⁸ C. Adarsh, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

²⁹ Raghavan Payyanadu, *Folklore*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2014, p. 6.; M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Malayalathile Natan Pattukal*, *op. cit.*; M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Folklorum Janasamskarapadanavum*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.; C. Adarsh, *op. cit.*, p. 287.; P.J. Vincent, A M Shinas, *Local History and Oral History: Cousins in Disciplinary Symbiosis*, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

³⁰ K.K.N. Kurup, *Pradesika Charithram Rachanayum Reethisasthravum*, Thrissur, 2018, p. 59; Vattaparambil Peethambaran, *Nattarivukalude Ullarakalilekku*, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

encapsulated in traditions, which are in a sense, memories synthesised into institutions. A very important source of information for smaller areas, were the local people, particularly elderly and educated individuals, who provided the authors with valuable information regarding families, important persons, events and incidents from their memories. In writing local history, we have to go beyond individual memory. We are not writing autobiographies or biographies.³¹ Memory is the core of oral history, from which meanings can be extracted and preserved.³² It collects memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews. Memories pertaining to a local, collective way of living, agrarian culture, belief systems, traditions, rituals, customary rites, value systems, arts and literature, protests, imagination and expectation, that form the basis of collective life, are extensively availed of in local historical writings. The accumulated lived experience of the people of a locality through ages, expresses itself as a way of living of the local collectives, which in turn, are firmly rooted in cultural diversity.³³

Local history is often preserved in public memory and the way to tap this is through oral history. The most important sources for writing local history are oral history and oral traditions.³⁴ Oral accounts are indispensable for writing the history of a people's collective memory in a particular locality. Oral accounts are indispensable for writing the history of a people's collective memories in a particular locality. The development of the writing of local history began in the 1960s and 70s, when oral history received more significance, Oral history is the recording, preservation and interpretation of historical information based on personal experiences and opinions of the speaker. It often takes the form of eye-witness evidence about past events, but can include myths, songs and stories passed down over the years through word-of-

³¹ K.N. Ganesh, *Towards Methodology for the History of the Locality*, Proceedings of the UGC National Seminar: *op. cit.*, p. 30; C. Adarsh: *op. cit.*, p. 144.

³² Donald A Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, London, 2003 p 19.

³³ P.J. Vincent, A. M. Shinas, *Local History and Oral History*, *op. cit.*

³⁴ K.N. Ganesh, *Towards Methodology*, *op. cit.*; P.J. Vincent, A M Shinas, *Local History and Oral History*, *op. cit.*

mouth.³⁵ In the most general sense, once the life experience of people of all kinds can be used as its raw material, a new dimension is given to history.³⁶ Recently, the use of video recording technique has expanded the realm of oral history beyond verbal form of communication and extends into the realm of gesture. Oral history relates historical studies to the human memory of a collective group, individual and community. It reveals more subjective aspects of historical experience.

Art and architecture are important aspects of local history. From a wider perspective, they shaped and reflected the cultural milieu, in which the artist had lived and worked and from which he had drawn his inspiration. Knowledge of the techniques of the painter creates a better view of the picture, that reveals life through form, the object through the subject and the meaning through suggestion.

We can find murals in many temples in Malabar. The temples of Ariyannur and Guruvayur are important temples noted for their architecture. The lofty walls were decorated with beautiful mural paintings.³⁷ All these works depict the inner urge of the artist that stresses unity in diversity. The wooden engravings would have been carved with much patience and attention. The techniques of such paintings differ from place to place, from people to people and from era to era. We accepted these compositions' history because they follow certain features that are helpful in distinguishing history from non-history.

Growth and importance of local history

Local history is very important for understanding the historical developments of a region from a micro perspective as well as for comprehending the regional and national histories. An early inroad to local history by academic historians began in the 1930s with the development of a sub-discipline called Urban History. The French

³⁵ C. Adarsh, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

³⁶ Paul Thomson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, London and New York, 1998, p. 24.

³⁷ C.R. Rajagopalan, *Kerala Samskara Polimakal*, Kottayam, 2017, p. 48.; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer: Trichur*, Thiruvalla, 1962, pp 71-72.; K.C. Krishnakumar, *Keralam Jillakaliloode*, Kozhikode, 2015, p. 123.

A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1983, p. 53.

Annales historian, Marc Bloch (*The Ile-de-France: The Country Around Paris*),³⁸ helped in developing the academic discipline of local history. Local history has been chronicled at different times and places for various purposes. The importance of local history received due attention with the appearance of the Annals school of historiography.³⁹

Historical works on their localities began to be written during the nineteenth century, and it became more popular only in the twentieth century. These were perhaps the first efforts in the field. When various occupational groups, service personnel or other social sections needed some right or authority regarding their profession or social status, it was customary for them to resort to some form of traditional account.⁴⁰ Thus local history was identified as the history of the working classes. Such history is concerned with ‘real life experience’ and ‘the texture of everyday life’.⁴¹ Local history can thus be traced to the last fifty years.

The historical writing of third world countries, including India, was formed under the colonial ideology.⁴² In India, the cycle of regional studies began with modernisation and westernisation, that had intensified in the 20th century. A local history movement has been gradually developing in India; serious efforts are being made to write the history of states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Though this has led to the rise of detailed and accurate histories of the state, the problem of exclusion and marginalisation continued. Interestingly, the state-based histories have similar characteristics of mainstream histories, just as states are being marginalised in the mainstream national history, the state historical accounts are manipulated to marginalise the localities.⁴³

³⁸ K.K.N. Kurup, *Pradesikacharithram*, : *op. cit.*, p. 13.

³⁹ R Rohini Krishnan, *Kavu as Desachinnangal (Sign post of a region) in Local history- A micro study on Chinnathoorkkavu, Kerala*, Moonam Kerala Charathra Conference Prabandhangal, Kottayam, 2016, p. 192.

⁴⁰ M.R. Raghava Varier, *Local History*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁴¹ M.V. Vishnu Namboodiri, *Folklore*, *op. cit.*

⁴² C. Adarsh, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

⁴³ Irfan Habeeb, Raina, Dhruv, *Situating the History of Science*, London, 1999.

Local history is an emerging area in historical research in Kerala. Our attention fell on this area very recently. Though locality was subjected to micro level studies by the Annals historians in 1930s in Europe, it had a late entry in the case of Kerala. A number of enthusiasts were collecting and publishing historical information on villages, towns and sometimes larger regions. Many such works have provided useful information, but are often mixed with myths and legends and sometimes guilty of fanciful constructions.⁴⁴ Many local histories were conceived as local versions of macro-histories, with emphasis on national or major regional events, rulers or ruling houses, major historical monuments in the area and so on. Another version of local history basically narrates the cultural heritage of the locality such as the temples, mosques, churches, festivals and associated rituals. Next variety can be called folkloristic, which concentrates on local knowledge, traditions and aesthetic expressions, sometimes focusing more on the indigenous as against the great traditions extolled in macro histories. A balanced history of Kerala representing its entire constituent regions is yet to be compiled. The Annals historians who made significant contributions to writing local history treated the locality itself as a totality, thus transforming local history into a variant of macro history. Punnathurnadu was insignificant in the political history of Kerala, until it acquired importance as a trading centre and as the epicentre of the revolutionary Guruvayur Satyagraha against untouchability.

In toponymy of the locality, a name is more than a noun or a mere symbol meant for identifying places. The names of places are another important source material for writing local history.⁴⁵ K. P. Padmanabha Menon, pioneer of the study of toponymy in Malabar, analyses a good number of place names with respect to prefixes and suffixes and compares them to toponymical conventions in South India.⁴⁶ The pre-Dravidians of ancient South India called their settlements as *ur*. The other group

⁴⁴ K.N. Ganesh, *The Experience of making a Local History*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ K.V. Krishna Ayyer, *Kerala Charithra Nirmanam*, Mathrubhumi Weekly Book No. 36 Lakkam 50, 1959, p. 10.; C. Adarsh, *op. cit.*, p. 28.; Vilakudy Rajendran, *Stalanamangal*, ed. Panmana Ramachandran Nair, in *Kerala Samskara Patanangal*, Kottayam, 2013, p. 187.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 197.; N.M. Nampootiri, *Indian Toponymy*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

people who arrived in ancient Tamizhakam, which included Kerala also, in the later period accepted the term *ur* for their regions without any changes. The term, *ur* was used to refer the area of permanent settlement centres.⁴⁷ We can see such place names like: Guruvayur, Palayur, Anjur, Thozhiyur, Tolur etc. in this *nadu*. The suffixes in names of places such as, *-kara*, *-tura* and *-turutu* are peculiar to Malabar.⁴⁸ Annakara, Chittattukara, and Mathukara are some of the names of places in this *nadu* and the place Kakkathuruthu is an island in this region. The name is a cultural product, based on specific geographical features or aspects of lived experience related to the landscapes. The word *kitangu* refers to wetland areas. In the political sense, the word *kitangu* is derived from fighting strategy during the Sangam period.⁴⁹ Venkitangu literally means ‘large moat’, where *ven* means vast and *kitangu* means trench or moat.⁵⁰ The settlement centres along the coastal region are known as *tura*. Most of these regions are fishing centres. There existed a possibility to develop these regions as commercial centres. Thus, a place’s name signifies human landscape and can be considered as the starting point of our understanding of the locality.

Names given to places provide a valuable source of information for the studies of human civilisation and culture. The name *Chettuvai* originated due to the position of the place.⁵¹ A small mud bank is reported to occur near the mouth of the River Chettuvai, giving rise to the name Chettuvai, where *vai* means mouth. Other places in Punnathurnadu show similar importance given to geographical features such as the existence of a tank or reservoir in areas that have place names ending in the suffix *-kulam* like Kunnamkulam, Brahmakulam etc. The term *Enamanam* refers to the basic

⁴⁷ N.M. Nampootiri, *Malabar Padanangal Samootirinadu*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2013, p. 27.; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, Kottayam, 1978, p. 234; K.V. Krishna Iyer, *Kerala Charithranirmanam*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 235.

⁴⁹ V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p 19.

⁵⁰ N.R. Gopinatha Pillai, *The Place Names Mentioned in Koka Sandesam, -An Etymological Study*, : *op. cit.*, p. 231.

⁵¹ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 237.; V.V.K. Valath, *Keralathile Sthalacharithrangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

facilities required for boat services.⁵² Gradually the place *Enamanam* transformed into the present-day name, Enamakkal.

There are place names that end with the suffix *-palli*. *Palli* has meanings other than ‘church’ or ‘mosque’. In some cases, it may indicate a village or an early tribal settlement.⁵³ There are a good number of *pallis* in the settlement complex and few of them could be identified as churches, mosques or non-Hindu shrines.⁵⁴ There is a place with the name Puthenpalli and another with the name, Perumpalli at Punnathurnadu. Names of places often reveal mineral deposits, fertility, flora, fauna, cultural practices that are both sacred and profane, artisanal settlements and such other information. The act of naming could be a political one. Some places may have derived their names later - due to a military conquest, a natural calamity, migration and consequent settlement of social groups and so on. The place Vedaranyam was later known as Porkkalam (battle-field) after war between the forces of Zamorin and Cochin.⁵⁵

Another step is to ‘explore the surface’ – identify all traces of the past, enumerate artifacts and map production details and social relations. The process of human interaction has to be brought out. In going beyond enumeration and classification, a historian has to interact with the local people. It relates to the explanation of transitions and transformations that have taken place in the locality.

The knowledge that the inhabitants of a region possess regarding their habitat, resources and immediate environment is vital.⁵⁶ This can be seen in agrarian

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁵³ T. Burrow and M.B. Emeneau, *A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary*, London, 1961, p. 269.; S.V. Subramanian, *Place names with Historical and Cultural Perspective*, in *Perspectives in Place name Studies*, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

⁵⁴ V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*; Vilakudy Rajendran, *Stalanamangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 204.; K. Sugathan, *Buddamathavum Jaathivyavasthayum*, Calicut, 2011, p. 73; K.V. Krishna Iyer, *Kerala Charithranirmanam*, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 64.; S. Jayashanker, *Temples of Thrissur district*, Kerala Thiruvananthapuram, 2006, p. 100.

⁵⁶ Raymond Gillespie & Mirle Hill, *Doing Irish Local History: Pursuit and Practice*, Liverpool, 1998, p. 210.

communities, in artisan communities and in the elements of social practices and some religious rituals. Agrarian communities like Pulaya and Cheruma and artisan communities like Assari, Thattan, Karuvan, etc. were seen in various places in this nadu. The description of these communities is given in the fourth chapter. The Jenmi system, slavery, marumakkathayam, and untouchability existed in this nadu. Each community has its own rituals, like krishnanattam, koothu, pallippattu, etc. The most important feature of knowledge is that it is based on practice and the link between knowledge and practice is very important in understanding the past. Exploration of the materialistic culture of people also provides some insight.

Local history should bring out submerged indigenous knowledge. Many proverbs orally spread in connection with climatic conditions and agrarian crops, like *Thiri muriyaathe thiruvaathira*, *Kumbhathil nattaal kudatholam chena*, etc. Local knowledge is a source of resistance because there are multiple histories in a society. These may exist as artisanal expertise, craftsmanship, medical practices etc. Indigenous knowledge which belongs to the locality, would be shared by all and would become the intellectual property of an individual or of a corporation and patented. A particular breed of cattle found only in a locality, a particular variety of rice grown only in a locality or an eco-friendly natural insecticide used traditionally may be lost to us and new custodians of such knowledge may emerge.

A history of the landscape will be followed by the history of the material and cultural life of the people. This will start from a reconstruction of the early settlement and livelihood patterns of people from the available sources and their transformation across space and time. The links of such settlements with other settlements and people belonging to other settlements, will throw light on forms of social and political power, both indigenous and external to the region. An evaluation of the ramifications of political authority in a region can be conducted. Punnathurnadu also came under the overall authority of the Zamorins before it was brought under the British rule. There is also the question of the emergence of forms of religious social power, which appears to have played a major role in the evolution of culture and politics of the local people. The transformation that the region had undergone under the British rule and the related

social, economic, and political consequences will have to be investigated. As a result, almost all nadus of the pre-modern times were transformed into the revenue division called taluks. Spread of western education and eradication of untouchability is also a result of this. Through local history, a village or town or a locality seeks meaning for its own changing character and newcomers can gain a sense of roots within personal historical knowledge.⁵⁷

Theories

According to Rao, Shulman and Subrahmanyam; experiences, perceptions and concepts regarding the external world, are articulated as performances and communication patterns, and often these performances such as songs, storytelling, dances and other public revelry act as mnemonic devices of retention and re-articulation of previous experiences.⁵⁸ Apart from this traditional lore, there was a set of compositions in the form of narrative poems about events, that were thought to be worthy of recording and preserving. The narratives belonging to this category were mostly composed in the style of popular movements like folklore. *Krishipattukal, onapattukal, kadhaganangal etc.* are some of these. Historical reproduction of production and circulation takes place within the inbuilt environment of social nature and previously-reproduced institutions, ethical codes and experiences.

A theory of rural settlement location is proposed by J. C. Hudson, which will explain changes in settlement distribution over time - a series of spatial processes that are similar to those found in plant ecology studies are postulated for rural settlement.⁵⁹ The occupied territory of a population expands and spreads, through which the settlement density increases with a tendency towards short-distance dispersal. Such a process brings about regularity in settlement patterns and results in the proliferation of rural population. Due to the peculiarity of the disbursed settlement pattern in Punnathurnadu, the village space is generally divided into large number of fields, and

⁵⁷ P.J. Vincent, A M Shinas, *Local History and Oral History, op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁵⁸ V.N. Rao, Shulman Dand, Subrahmanyams, *Textures of time*, New Delhi, 2001, p. 137.

⁵⁹ J. C. Hudson, 'A Location Theory for Rural Settlement', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 59, No. 2* (Jun., 1969), pp. 365-381.

each field is given a name with the result that each village register contains hundreds of field names.

Soja's view is that, the crucial category within the habitat is the landscape itself. There have been attempts to extend studies beyond geographical spaces and develop a theory of socially-constructed space.⁶⁰ The nature of soil, water, rocks and minerals, flora, fauna and other objects, not produced by human intervention provide the basis for the analysis of human landscapes. The habitat implied by a place's name is often the articulated combination of specific resources existing within or in the immediate surroundings of human settlement.

Malinowski asserts that myths serve to express, strengthen, and codify beliefs; they defend and uphold morality; they attest to the efficacy of rituals; and they provide useful guidelines for the general populace.⁶¹ Logan discussed the mythology underlying the megalithic monuments and clarified how Hinduism and its ideas about life after death play a role in them.⁶² Offerings of rice are made to Ariyannur kudakallus during the *Pallivetta utsavam* of the Ariyannur temple. The locals thought they were the creation of *yakshis*, or otherworldly creatures.

Blackie asserts that a location's shape, size, relative position—high and low, in front or behind—color, type of soil or rock it is made of, temperature it experiences, and plant that grows there are all visible features of any given area.⁶³ The rivers, lakes, wells, and waterfalls are among the other prominent elements of the natural landscape. There are numerous *chiras* and *manas* in Chiramanangadu, Punnathurnadu; the adjacent areas were *kadus*. This region is distinct from other cultural entities due to its unique geographic and other characteristics.

⁶⁰ W. Soja Edward, *Post Modern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Society Theory*, London, 1997, p. 76.

⁶¹ Mazharul Islam, *Folklore-The Pulse of the people*, New Delhi, 1985, p. 402.

⁶² M. Arun, Myths and Beliefs Related to Megalithic Monuments of Calicut District, in E Srijith (ed.), *Kerala Charithra Congress Prabhandhangal*, S P CS, 2014,

⁶³ K. Liji, *What is in a name? Historical Significance of Place Names of Koyilandy Taluk* (ed.), *Locale Speaks op. cit.*, p. 47.

The obvious physical feature of a place may be reflected in its name and geography have been benefited by toponymy. It has already been pointed out by Ramachandra Chettiar that the physical characteristics of a place will be noted by a new inhabitant of the place, and places will be named after such prominent peculiarities.⁶⁴ The appellation on the basis of region, was denoted by *Kadu* (forest). Chavakkad, Vadakkekad, Thaikkad, Pandarkkad, Vedakkad etc. are some such examples. Formation of human settlements is one of the great landmarks in history. The early settlements and indication of them in toponymy seem to be a very important factor.

As Van Hear argued, migration and its outcomes are shaped by resources that are available to the migrants and that in turn the capacity to mobilise such resources is largely determined by socio-economic background or class of such migrants.⁶⁵ In the 68th year of Christian Era, ten thousand Jews are believed to have come to Malabar.⁶⁶ Some of them settled at Palayur in Chavakkad taluk. During the ancient and Medieval period, the Jews prospered greatly and they attached themselves to trade-related activities. The local rulers were tolerant towards the Jews as they promoted this merchant class to progress in settlements.

Henry Maine tried to understand Indian village system from the perspective of an evolutionary social theory, according to which Indian's ancient institutions, linked to those of Europe by their common Aryan origin, became the kernels out of which, the social and political systems of modern Europe have emerged.⁶⁷ The *Swaroopam* was a political authority in Medieval Kerala, which was based on the organisation of a large number of small territorial units.⁶⁸ The *swaroopams* ascended

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Van Hear, N., 'Reconsidering Migration and Class', *International Migration Review*, 48(1), 2014, pp. 100-121, <https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12139>.

⁶⁶ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazeteer Thrissur*, *op. cit.*, p. 101.; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Keralasamskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁶⁷ Henry Maine, *Village Communities in the East and West*, New York, 1871, p. 45.

⁶⁸ M.R. Raghava Varier, *State as Swaroopam*, in R. Champaka Lakshmi, Kesavan Veluthat T.R. Venu Gopalan (eds.) *State and Society in Pre-modern South India*, Thrissur, 2002, p. 120.

the ladder of power in their principalities as sovereigns and sought to legitimise their socio-political status. While Vannilasserri merged with the Punnathur *Swaroopam*, Punnathur Raja got the full supremacy of this region i.e. from Pookaitha to Chettuvai.⁶⁹

The British administrator historians like Alexander Dow revived this old theory towards the end of the eighteenth century as part of their project to argue that it was the British who brought law and order to India.⁷⁰ In his words; “India was the seat of Empires and the nurse of the most abject slaves.” According to this theory, the Indian villages had some characteristic features: they are ‘extremely ancient’, ‘self-sufficing’, ‘changeless’, ‘blending of agriculture and craft’ and so on. From that glory past, a part of the produce found its way to the ruler in the shape of rent. This characteristic simplicity was the root cause of changelessness. Many notions in this characterisation are shared by a vast number of scholars, administrators and historians who worked on the Indian village system from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards. All Indian villages were regarded as having been originally constituted in a single (typical) form being, consequently, spoken of as archaic date and of Aryan parentage.⁷¹ So conceived, “the village community” was asserted to represent a group of persons or households who cultivated and owned their land in common; it was, in short, an important and widespread oriental survival of that “ownership is common” which was believed to have been universally antecedent to the development of individual property in later times.

The official view of the British administrators was mainly based on their quest for a local authority from whom rent could be collected. The question of ryotwari, Mirasi etc. was part of this project. Since the revenue collection was by the centralised power, the locality was conceived not as a unit of production but as part of a whole. The British understanding of the village community in the early years of colonial rule was mainly fiscal and administrative, though an occasional view of community

⁶⁹ P. Sankaranarayanan, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

⁷⁰ V.V.K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁷¹ M.R. Raghava Varier, *Local History*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

structure is not altogether absent.⁷² The revenue administration in the early Medieval South Indian state can be constructed by observation of the mode of collection of land revenue. The bulk of our evidences show that such exactions were made locally. It was the local groups such as the *ur*, *nadu*, *sabha* and *nagaram* that made the assessment and collection of the different levies. This is clear evidence of fact of the decentralised revenue system. On occasion, we also see local chiefs ‘feudatories’ making the collections. On the whole, we get the picture of a decentralised system of the fiscal administration, typical of a feudal, politico-economic formation.⁷³

The Indian history, constructed through the writings of oriental Indologists and imperialists who contemplated it as a dichotomy, propound a bifurcation into Aryan and Dravidian.⁷⁴ Orientalism provided the knowledge base for the construct that acquired its elements from a series of misconceived notions, such as a stagnant village community, hydraulic despotism, the Aryan theory and religiosity based on renunciation. The major error in European representation was characterisation of Indians as spiritual -an age-long error of pre-colonial times, that drew a narrative through the translations and commentaries of Vedic, Puranic, Sastraic texts, Imperial Gazetteers, Census Reports and other Indologies of the colonial period.⁷⁵ The knowledge systems of India’s civilisational heritage are a global asset. Democracy was the form of government and the nation-state was the form of state that was fostered and projected by the enlightenment of modernity and therefore, there was a search in India too, for an indigenous heredity of democratic rule. It was during this phase that topics like ‘local self-government’, ‘corporate life’, ‘village communities’, ‘local bodies and their functions’, the ancient Indian forms of Democracy and life became popular among scholars and historians. Significantly, there were important discoveries in the field of epigraphy.⁷⁶

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ M.R. Raghava Varier, *Local History*, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ Kesvan Valuthat, *The Political Structure*, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

⁷⁵ Rajan Gurukkal, M.R. Raghava Varier, *Cultural History*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Human societies are natural systems in which all the parts are interdependent, each serving in a complex of necessary relations to maintain the whole. Eric Miller's *Study of Village in North Kerala*, deserves special mention since the author dilates on several interesting problems like the patterns of settlements, complex nature of village communities, the interdependence of the caste and sub-castes of the village communities and the character of the dispersed settlements of Kerala.⁷⁷ His observations are helpful in proceeding further to the problems of village studies from a local history perspective. Village community in pre-colonial period, which is now extinct, can be reconstructed only with the help of the settlement registers which preserve the memory of that community, within the names of places and fields.⁷⁸ Following this, the Indian villages such as the patterns of occupation of their space by different sections, distribution of owning and working sections, service groups, craftsmen and other functionaries were discussed with special reference to specific regions.

The large number of toponyms stands out with a characteristic *jati* orientation. Occupational groups of the artisanal sections, weavers, oil-mongers, potters, toddy tappers etc. are seen in all settlements.⁷⁹ The lowest caste like Cherumar and Pulaya lives close to the fields.

Through analysis of names of places, we can reconstruct the history of Punnathurnadu from the Megalithic period to the recent past. The names of places reveal vital clues about religious beliefs, rituals, landscapes and settlements. These are one among the major sources that help us to reconstruct regional history. In this context, we understand the importance of local history and how historians include their own perspective concerning historical events.

⁷⁷ John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture*, London, 2011, p. 157.

⁷⁸ M.R. Raghava Varier, *Village Community in Pre-Colonial Kerala*, Mysore, 1994, p. 5.

⁷⁹ Vattaparambil Peethambaran, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF PUNNATHURNADU

The region of Malabar exhibits particularities in its socio-political, social and economic structure. The present chapter aims to depict the various aspects of the pre-colonial society and economy that existed in Punnathurnadu. Here the evil of untouchability, unapproachability and unseability were observed in the most irrational manner. At that time, society was mainly based on a land-lord-tenant relationship with a deeply entrenched caste system, as elsewhere in Kerala.

Habitations

The term 'habitat' refers to the natural environment in which humans survive. It includes the physical characteristics of the area a group of people live in, the natural resources that are actually or potentially available to them, the climate, the people's attitude, and other geographical elements to which they must adapt. When people decided to cultivate crops, they chose a new area to live in. Wide river valleys with their flood plains were best for crops, though some settlements were still located on the uplands. Some parts of the forest had to be cleared by cutting or burning down trees. A human settlement is an eco-system that takes root with its characteristic means of livelihood, technology and cultural expression and thus the habitat becomes the basis of its economic activities.¹ The history of the landscape will be followed by the history of the material and cultural life of the people. This will start from a reconstruction of the early settlement and livelihood patterns of the people and their transformation across space and time. The human habitat is formed due to the

¹ Ward and Conner, *Descriptive Memoir- Malabar*, Surveyor General's Department Calicut, 1906, p. 2; N. M. Nampootiri, *Malabar Padanangal – Samootirinadu*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2008, p. 320.

geographical variation of the region. Social relations in the habitat and the locality emerge from the character of production and production relations.

The settlement patterns in Indian villages are classified into three types: nucleated, hamlet and dispersed. The nucleated style has homes near to one another, separated by small alleys, and the village's fields encircling the settlement. Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, and several regions of South India are home to these kind of villages. Within a village, hamlets and other satellite villages are dispersed throughout the village's fields, in addition to the core settlement. The Middle and Lower Gangetic plains, as well as certain areas of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, are home to these settlements. Villages with tiny compounds can be observed in the scattered pattern. A house acts as the nucleus of the compound and this is the most significant nature of villages in Kerala.² The habitat pattern of Kerala is different from the rest of India. The boundary between one's property and another's property is not clearly discernible.

Some areas with highly productive agricultural land and good climate are characterized by dispersed settlements. The links of these settlements with other regions and people will be enquired into and analysed. The selection of a settlement area depended on various factors, including the availability of fresh water and other essential resources. It was gradually developed according to the nature of human occupation or the means of subsistence. Rivers and backwaters split the area of land between the sea and the high peaks into smaller sections. As a result, the residents had to start a new kind of habitation plan in the low-lying region, called *tura*. The *tura* included coastal villages, where the main economic activity was fishing. There was a large chain of fish-purification centres located near the sea coast at Orumanayur.³

² N. M. Nampootiri, *Studies in Malayalam*, Proceeding of the National Seminar on South Indian Places Names, Thiruvananthapuram, 1987, p. 138; N. M. Nampootiri, *Malabar Padanangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 5; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Keraladarsanam*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2011, p. 46.

³ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Orumanayur Panchayat, Chavakkad Block Vol. 81 Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur District, 1996.

The phrase *purayidams*, which literally translates to 'house sites', refers to places that were owned or inhabited by people starting in the ninth century.⁴ A village is made up of several *parambus* that are dotted with a variety of homes. The scattered settlement pattern of Punnathurnadu is the product of its distinct geographical features. Even the most individual form of labour is a social activity even if it is for individual benefit. In Kerala, generally this labour class is *adiyars* served under the feudal lord. Several of these related forms may really coexist as the habitat grows, and some of the relational forms may be more prevalent or significant in terms of location or the larger region. The *jathi-Janmi-Naduvazhi* system is a defining feature of the society under examination, which has been characterized as medieval or pre-colonial. Agricultural production in Punnathurnadu was organised in such a caste-based manner that it required the co-operation of upper caste Hindus, backward castes and scheduled castes, whose rights, duties and obligations were socially well-defined. There would be several strata within the village society, such as various proprietors, holders of various rights, rulers, their retainers, and so forth.

The houses adapted for different occupations by the lower classes are found to have been built very neatly, pleasantly situated under the shade of jack, coconut, areca and various other trees and are surrounded by hills and rising grounds covered generally with wood, having a beautiful, romantic appearance.⁵ The raw materials for ancient houses were merely stone, mud and wood. The majority of houses in Punnathurnadu had thatched roofs in olden days. They were built on a foundation made of stone, with walls made of mud and with roofs that had been thatched using leaves. The fronds of palms were used for thatching. People lived in huts of clay and roofs were supported by wooden posts. Some of the houses had hay-stacks as well.⁶

⁴ M. R. Raghava Varier, *Keralolpathi Grandhavari*, Kottayam, 2013, p.12; M. R. Raghava Varier, Socio Economic Structure, in P. J. Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, Kerala Gazetteer, Vol. II Part II Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 82; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2015, p. 56.

⁵ Rajan Gurukkal, M. R. Raghava Varier, *Cultural History of Kerala Vol. I*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990, p. 157.

⁶ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Chowannur Panchayat, Vol. 82, Chowannur Block, Thrissur, 1996; C. R. Rajagopalan, *Kerala Samskarapolimakal*, Kottayam, 2017, p. 104.

Villagers were differentiated according to both community and class. Since building or extending and improving a family home is a universal imperative, the house is a good indicator of a family's condition.⁷

Wealthy families used to construct the front wall of their house out of wood. Such houses usually had the granary in the middle of the home. They were called *arayumnirayum* (granary and wooden wall) and it was a mark of status as well as nobility.⁸ Different types of architectural styles known as *nalukattu*, *kottaram*, *banglaw* existed in Punnathurnadu. A good number of rich and prominent families built their houses in the *nalukettu* style. *Nalukettu* is a traditional style of architecture that is unique to Kerala. It was comprised of a quadrangular building with a *Nadumittam* or inner court yard, having rooms on all the four sides and an open verandah around the courtyard. Based on their placement in relation to the central yard, the rooms on the four sides are referred to as the *vadakkini*, *kizhakkini*, *theekini* and *padinhattini*, respectively.⁹ An altar-like platform built in the courtyard to grow holy basil was not only a sign of prosperity but also an indispensable and attractive part of *nalukettu*.

Different names were given to the houses of different classes: a Nambutirippad's house is called *mana*, a Nambutiri's is called *illam*,¹⁰ a Raja's is called *kovilakam* or *kottaram* or *edam*, a Variyar's is called *variyaam*, a Nayar's is called

⁷ Filippo Osella and Coroline Osella, *Social Mobility in Kerala*, London, 2000, p. 29; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Chowannur Panchayat, *op. cit.*; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralathile Rajavamshangal*, Kottayam, 2012, p. 21.

⁸ C. A. Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997, p. 141; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, Kottayam, 2015, p. 117.

⁹ *Ibid.*; C. R. Rajagopalan, *Kerala Samskarapolimakkal*, Kottayam, 2017, p. 110; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2015, p. 66; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 129-130; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, Kottayam, 1978, pp. 131-132; Balagopal T.S. Prabhu, Kerala Architecture, in P.J. Cheriyan (ed.), *Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 282.

¹⁰ K. Balakrishna Kurup, *Kozhikkodinte Charithram*, Kozhikkode, 2013, p. 42; Personal Interview with Mr. Sankaranarayanan Nampoothirippad, age 68, at Puliyanur Mana, Elavally in Thrissur District, dated on 12-11-2021; William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Vol. II, Madras, 1887, p. clxxx.

bhavanam or *veedu*, and the houses of lower castes were called *pura*.¹¹ The lowest castes like cheruma and pulaya lived in small windowless single-roomed mud huts, which were the temporary shelters made of cheap wood and thatched with palmyra leaves.¹² Rich people and poor people alike took great care to maintain their homes neat and orderly, notwithstanding their differences.

Society

Society is the association of people of various communities who live in the same geographical region. It is formed by the confluence of the various communities in an area. From the ancient period onwards Man lived within small groups. Those who lived on river banks and inside forests formed the first society. Rajan Gurukkal and Raghava Varier pointed out the spatial and cultural features of early societies and attempted to develop a theory of social formation on the basis of spatial and geographical characteristics.¹³ The Tamil South (Tamilakam), inclusive of Kerala, over a millennium between circa 500 BC and circa AD 500, is such a typical spacio-temporal entity for us to represent through the social formation paradigm.¹⁴ Forms of subsistence included hunting or gathering, herding-cum-shifting cultivation, plough agriculture and crafts production were there in Medieval period. Adapted to different ecosystems, these forms of subsistence were obviously unequal in terms of productive forces and productivity of labour.

Caste

The earlier tribal society had no caste and the community was organised on the basis of one's occupation. However, the religious, social, political and economic systems of the period had been facing structural changes after the 5th century A.D. on

¹¹ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*; William Logan, *Malabar Manual Vol. II, op. cit.*

¹² C. R. Rajagopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 104; T. K. Gopala Panikkar, *Malabar and its Folk*, New Delhi, 1983, p. 153; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal, op. cit.*, p. 65.

¹³ K. N. Ganesh, *Reflection on Pre- Modern Kerala*, Kottayam, 2016, p. 23; K. N. Ganesh, *State Formation in Kerala – A Critical Overview*, Bangalore, 2010, p. 17.

¹⁴ Rajan Gurukkal, *Social Formation of Early South India*, New Delhi, 2010, p. 205.

account of the waves of Aryan migration.¹⁵ The faith in caste system was very deeply enrooted in the life of the people at that time. In a broader sense, caste is seen as the cornerstone and core of Indian culture, playing a key role in the dissemination and propagation of Indian society.¹⁶ The caste system in Kerala came into being as a result of the Aryan colonies' position and influence.¹⁷ Caste was the central feature of the social life of the Hindus. It was determined only on the basis of birth. Caste established an endogamous society with essentially defined ritual rank and jobs that were customarily associated with each caste.

Civilization of Kerala in the early Middle Ages was divided into three primary groups: Brahmins, non-Brahmins, and *Paniyalar*. With the emergence of the Brahmin supremacy, agriculture was expanded and scattered villages were formed. The majority of the Brahmin settlements appear in the area of the Periyar basin. It depended on wetland paddy cultivation, which is possible in a fertile, alluvial region. Other such Brahmin settlements include places such as Guruvayur, Orumanayur, Kakkassery, Palayur, Puthumanassery, Peringad, Porkalam, Brahmakulam, Venmenad and Venkidangu *desams* in Punnathurnadu.¹⁸ Chempakassery mana, Chakkarappilly mana, etc. in Peringad, Chankulath mana, Mangalath mana, Eppurath mana, etc. in Kakkassery were the famous manas in this locality. The societal structure in the villages entailed formation of separate groups, classified according to the respective professions of the people. They practised different occupations accepted the established tradition and in the course of time these separate professional groups became separate castes and sub-castes.¹⁹

¹⁵ K. S. Singh, *People in India Kerala Vol. XXVII Part 1*, Anthropological Survey of India, New Delhi, 2002, p. 41; V. Rajeev, *Aryadhinivesavum Namboothiri samskaravum*, Kottayam, 2015, p. 16; K. Sugathan, *Budhamathavum Jathi Vyavasthayum*, Calicut, 2011, p. 115.

¹⁶ Nicholas B Dirks, *The Hollow Crown*, Ethnohistory of An Indian Kingdom, Bombay, 1987, p. 3; K. Sugathan, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ M. G. S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala*, Thrissur, 2013, p. 271; V. Rajeev, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁸ Survey and Settlement Registers, Desam No. 372-389, 398-411 and 424, *Ponnani Taluk*, RAK; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Orumanayur Panchayat, *op. cit.*,

¹⁹ K. N. Ganesh, *Kerala Samooha Padanangal*, Pathanamthitta, 2002, p. 17.

The caste system is considered to be a rigid form of stratification. Each group had its allotted place. The *desam* was further subdivided into tribal and caste groups, such as the Nambutiris' *gramam* (village), the Nairs' *tara* (foundation, street, village),²⁰ and the Tiyar caste's *Cheri* (assemblages, village, street). These divisions were made without regard to territorial units. Put another way, *cheri* refers to the areas that were inhabited by common people.²¹

This relation is primarily on the basis of land ownership pattern.²² The fertile, agricultural areas were ruled by Brahmins and the *naduvazhi* lords. The corporate managerial organs and the institution of caste were the major means that enabled the Brahmins to build a well-structured peasant society.²³ The Nair gentry were hereditarily fighters attached to the ruling chiefs and wielded local political power. They were originally captains of war. The position of Nairs in the ownership of land was just below that of Brahmins and Naduvazhis.²⁴ The military training of Nairs was compulsory and all children had to be trained in the martial art of fencing. With the training received, the Nairs gained requisite knowledge to carry out the tasks that the king envisaged for them.²⁵ Their military skills enabled the Nairs to defend themselves to assert their claim to titles and honours. They were able to defend their practically

²⁰ C. K. Kareem, *Kerala Under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan*, 1973, p. 134.

²¹ M. G. S. Narayanan, *Calicut: The City of Truth Revisited*, University of Calicut, 2006, p. 93; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

²² Abraham Vijayan, *Caste, Class and Agrarian relationship in Kerala*, New Delhi, 1998, p.19.

²³ N. M. Nampootiri, *Cultural Traditions in Medieval Kerala*, P. J. Cherian (ed.), 1999, p. 327; V. Rajeev, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

²⁴ F. Fawcett, *Nayars of Malabar*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 185; Krishna Nadar, *Socio Economic Background of the Military History of Travancore*, 1993, p. 24; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Prabhathakiranangal*, Kottayam, 2001, p. 69; P.K. Balakrishnan, *Jathivyavasthithiyum Kerala Charithravum*, Kottayam, 2008, p. 118; Krishnachaithanya, *Kerala*, New Delhi, 1972, p. 17.

²⁵ Margret Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest Transition to British Rule in Malabar 1790-1805*, New Delhi, 2003, p. 14; Shaeikh Zainudheen, *Thuhfathul Mujahiddi* translated by Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralam Pathinanchum Pathinarum Noottandukalil*, Kottayam, 2015, p. 48; Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar Vol. II*, New Delhi, 1988, p. 408.

incontestable position in society. They were well-versed in the use of weapons and infacts of agility and gymnastics.

The *Nazranis*, who were the next significant community in this region, were Christians. They were seen to be superior to Nairs and had a rank roughly equivalent to that of Brahmins in the caste hierarchy.²⁶ They lived around the Christian churches. Agriculture, trade and extraction of oil were the main occupations for earning their livelihood.²⁷ Some Jewish colonies seen in Chavakkad also played an important role in trade.²⁸ Early medieval records attest to the existence of Christian and Muslim villages along the shore, primarily engaged in trading.²⁹ Islam entered India by nonviolent means, frequently with the support of Hindu kings who were encouraged them to establish themselves there. As agriculture spread throughout the interior and coastal regions, they started to travel and settled near bazaars, primarily as merchants. They were crucial in obtaining and delivering a range of agricultural supplies to towns and coastal areas. The wealthy merchants conducted trade with distant places like Mecca, Surat and Bangal through their ships.³⁰ The documents from the eighteenth century also show that these communities were becoming landholders of various kinds. At the same time, the poor Muslims were tenant cultivators in Malabar, particularly in South Malabar.³¹

²⁶ S. C. Dube, *Indian Society*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 19.

²⁷ *Parish Directory*, St. Lazar's Church, Kottapadi, 2015, p. 21; St Sebastian's High School, *Souvenir -Centenary Celebrations*, Chittattukara, 2005, p. 28; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikal Kanda Keralam*, Kottayam, 1st Edition 2001, 4th Edition 2012, p. 408; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathente Prabhathakiranangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

²⁹ M. Vijaya Lakshmi, 'Malabarile Adhyakala Muslim Samooham', In P.B. Salim, N.P. Hafis Muhammed, M.C. Vasisht (eds.) *Malabar: Paithrukavum Prathapavum*, Kozhikkode, 2011, p. 93; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikal Kanda Keralam*, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

³⁰ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikal Kanda Keralam*, *op. cit.*

³¹ K.N. Ganesh, 'Agrarian Society in Kerala (1500-1800)', in P. J. Cherian (ed), *Perspectives on Kerala History, The Second Millenium*, Vol. II Part II, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 154.

We have to locate authentic evidence that would help us to understand the patterns of settlement in the region during the Medieval times. According to the Census report of the year 1891, Hindus accounted for 53% of the populace while Muslims accounted for 18%. Other communities accounted for 29% of the populace at various *desams* of Punnathurnadu.³² In 1901, the data shows that Hindus composed 59% of the population while Muslims accounted for 15%. Other communities accounted for 25% of the population.³³ The existing information on population shows that these sections, along with Hindus formed the majority of population in this area. The caste system and religiosity enveloped the entire locality while trends of transition from caste to communitarian identity developed everywhere at later stage.

Sub-castes

From the 14th century onwards, many sub-castes took root in Kerala. Several other groups are mentioned in the capacity of skilled workers with hereditary occupations.³⁴ With the expansion of village settlements, each professional group formed themselves into separate castes and their respective professions became hereditary. Thus, the division of labour became the basis for proliferation of castes and sub-castes in the Malabar region, as stated above. Among Hindus, *Nambutiris* were the main landlords. They received land as gifts from their royal patrons while their basic function was to handle priestly duties. Below the Brahmins, were the *ambalavasis* (temple servants). This class is divided into *Variers* (garland-makers), *Marars* (drummer) and others. Below the *ambalavasis*, are the *Ilayatu* who are priests to the upper caste Nairs. The *Ilayatu*, as downgraded Brahmins, enjoy superior social

³² Survey and Settlement Registers of Ponnani Taluk, *op. cit.*, RAK.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ T. V. Mahalingam, *South Indian Polity*, University of Madras, 1955, p. 381; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 275; K. N. Ganesh, *Malayaliyude Desakalangal*, Calicut, 2018, p. 166; M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Keralacharithram*, Sukapuram, 2011, p. 152; K.M. Anil, *Folklore: Janasamskrithiyude Verukal*, Kannur, 2018, p. 79.

status in comparison to the Nairs.³⁵ In response to these conditions, a few new occupational groups were established and assigned to various social hierarchy grades.

The *Thiyas* or *Ezhavas* formed another major sub-caste in Punnathurnadu. The word 'Ezhava' was used in third century B.C. They are a powerful community that has a distinct cultural tradition from ancient times and are found throughout Kerala. Although there are regional differences in their cultural customs,³⁶ the Ezhavas are essentially a class of cultivators; they were once coconut growers, and some of them held *pattams* in areas where food crops were grown. They depended on tapping toddy and agricultural labour for making a living.³⁷ Many *Ezhava* families have the lineage of excelling in the arts of war and also possess profound knowledge of indigenous medical science.

Ranked below them were the *Kaniyans* or the village astrologers. A *Kaniyan* was generally addressed by the title 'Panikker' and commanded the respect of all due to his knowledge of Sanskrit and astrology.³⁸ The *Kaniyans* were in great demand in villages for traditional services such as; prescribing auspicious moments for marriages and other ceremonies, fore casting horoscopes and making astrological predictions.

Next stood the *Kamala* or the artisans, who were belonged to the four categories. Goldsmiths, carpenters, black smiths and masons were found within this

³⁵ Krishna Chaitanya, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Francis Buchanan, *Francis Buchanante Keralam*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1981, p. 410.

³⁶ K. S. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

³⁷ *Ibid.*; Shaeikh Zainudheen, *Thuhfathul Mujahiddin*, *op. cit.*; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer Thrissur*, Thiruvalla, 1962, p. 241; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 200; K. Balakrishna Kurup, *Kozhikkodinte Charathram*, *op. cit.*, p. 52; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala History and its Makers*, Kottayam, 1987, p. 47; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 66; K. Sugathan, *Budhamathavum Jathi Vyavasthayum*, *op. cit.*, p. 206; E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1975, p. 392.

³⁸ K. S. Singh, *op. cit.*; E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. III, Delhi, 1975, p. 178; Personal interview with Mr. Ramesh Panikkar, Astrologist, Age 54, at his residence Elavally in Thrissur district, dated 18.05.2022; P.K. Balakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

category. Below the Kumbaran were the *Vannan* (washermen).³⁹ Below the *Vannan* were the *Panan* (barber-cum –musicians). They were the priests and barbers of the Ezhava. The *Panan* were also drummers.

The largest professional group was of those involved in the process of cultivation. The Cheruman or Pulayan were ranked next to the Panan. They were farm labourers. They used to receive their daily necessities (*alavu*), comprised of a measure of paddy, salt and chillies, from their masters. Once a *Cheruman* received the *alavu* from a particular patron he was obliged to work for a year for him.⁴⁰ The *Parayans* were class of basket-makers and agricultural labourers.⁴¹ Given that the drummer during *Cheruman* funerals and puberty ceremonies is typically a *Parayan*, the name may have something to do with the word *para*, which literally means drum. Though they formed the majority of the work force, their position was the lowest socially, culturally and economically.⁴²

Caste and sub-castes formed a part of the hierarchal social structure of Punnathurnadu. The society of that period witnessed the emergence of castes and sub-castes, who were all associated with separate professions and all these castes came up on the basis of the division of labour. Further, the castes and sub-castes formed a hierarchal social structure, which determined the social position. The Census Report of 1931, showed that Brahmins composed 3% of the population while depressed classes formed 20% and others made up 77% of Hindus in this region.⁴³

³⁹ M. R. Raghava Varier, *Madhyakalakeralam Swaropaneethiyute Charithrapatangal*, Kottayam, 2014, pp. 19-20; M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Keralacharithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁴⁰ K. S. Singh, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 134; M. R. Raghava Varier, *Madhyakalakeralam*, *op. cit.*, p. 31; M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Keralacharithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

⁴² K. Balakrishna Kurup, *Kozhikkodinte Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 38; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*; V. V. Haridas, *Samuthiri Kalathe Kozhikode: Kathayum Charithravum*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2009, p.44.

⁴³ *Survey and Settlement Registers*, Ponnani Taluk, *op. cit.*

Family

The basic unit of the social structure was the family. Usually, families followed the joint family structure, controlled by a senior male member of the family. In ancient India, a family consisted of parents, kids, grandkids, uncles, descendants, and other male collaterals.⁴⁴ The joint family structure is significant because the pre-colonial land system and the entire spectrum of social connections that were centered around it were primarily operated by the joint family as a social agency. The *karanavar* is officially in charge of overseeing and managing the joint property of the entire taravad, as well as providing for the junior members' education and any other needs that come with their social standing.⁴⁵ In general, the Christian and the Muslim communities follow the patriarchal system.⁴⁶ This meant that the family was dominated by a senior male member and inheritance was passed through the male line. The term 'patrilineal' describes the male lineage system in which wealth, property, rights, and surnames are passed down from father to subsequent generations. Thus, family relationships were continued by lines of descent from a person's male ancestors in such a system.

The system of inheritance and family organisation, known as *marumakkattayam* which literally means "descended through sister's children". The *nampidis* were a small community in the taluk of Thalappilly and nearby areas and they followed the matriarchal system.⁴⁷ This system pervaded the Nairs and other high caste Hindus until recently, with the exception of the *Nambutiris*.⁴⁸ Each member was entitled to maintenance from the taravadu property, which was their joint property.

⁴⁴ M. L. Bose, *Social and Cultural History of Ancient India*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 42.

⁴⁵ T. K. Gopal Panikkar, *Malabar and its Folk*, New Delhi, 1953, p. 18; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

⁴⁶ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

⁴⁷ Kanippayyur Sankaran Nambudiripad, *Ente Smaranakal*, Kunnamkulam, 1964, p. 264; William Logan, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 162; K. Balakrishna Kurup, *Kozhikodinte Charithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Rajan Gurukkal, M.R. Raghava Varier, *History of Kerala: Pre-Historic to the Present*, Hyderabad, 2018, pp. 93-94; B. Rajeevan, Cultural Formation of Kerala, in P.J. Cheriyan (ed.), *Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala*, Vol. IV, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 12.

The *taravadus* like Pulincheri Kayampilli at Tolur, Marath at Guruvayur, Kuzhuveetil at Eyyal, Palliyana at Annakara etc. were the famous Nair *taravadus* in this locality. The *Karanavar* was the supreme authority of the family and controlled everything. He was the ultimate decision maker in all matters.⁴⁹ After his demise, his eldest nephew would take over the position. But the sons of the *karnavar* were not entitled to inherit this right. The younger members were entitled to maintenance from the income of the *taravadu* from its lands. It was connected to the institution known as *sambandham*, the form of ‘marriage’ that was followed among the castes which followed *marumakkattayam*. This system placed no legal or ethical obligations on the ‘husband’ to care for his ‘wife’ and children.⁵⁰

In South Malabar, the women of dominant Nair families entered into relationships with *Nambutiri* Brahmins. The children of such relationships were maintained by the *taravadu* of the mother.⁵¹ In due course of time, the Nairs who had maintained close alliance with the *Nambutiris* adopted the custom of *sambandham*.⁵² Marriages were conducted based on the simple consideration of family nobility.

The Cherumas are grouped into families and essentially lack recognized racial chiefs to protect their rights and maintain their unity. However, there are some gatherings of elders that have a chief-like figure at their head and are given specific authority to decide cases and settle disagreements.⁵³ Vettuvas, the agrarian slaves who

⁴⁹ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer - Thrissur*, *op. cit.*, p. 220; Personal Interview with Mrs. P. K. Kamalam, Retired teacher, age 82, at her residence at Tolur in Thrissur District, dated on 15-11-2021.

⁵⁰ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 96; T. K. Gopal Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 17; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Prabhathakiranangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 71; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁵¹ Dilip M. Menon, *Cambridge South Asian Studies*, New Delhi, 1994 p. 11; P. K. Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 305; Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

⁵² T. O. Aleyas, *Syrian Manuel-Samagra Kerala Charithram*, Kottayam, 2015, p. 168.

⁵³ T.K. Gopal Panikkar, *Malabar and its Folk*, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

were also lived in the lower stratum. In Malabar, the Nayadis are a common outcast tribe.⁵⁴ Even a slave will not touch them since they are seen as being so filthy.

Customs

A significant part of cultural geography is custom. It is the same act performed by the same group of individuals so often that it starts to become recognizable as their style. A comparable word that is accepted by an individual is called a custom, whereas the majority of members of a specific ethnic group or culture adopt a particular act.⁵⁵ Customs and social practices were directly linked with the occupation of these artisans, which went a long way in making these groups essential to village life. The information available in social customs has also been used to shed some light on the position women in the society, marital relationships and celebrations, family organisations and social status.⁵⁶ The songs give us considerable details about the various customs observed. It is evident that many customary practices followed by the early Christians have also been influenced by the existing upper caste Hindu and Brahmanical customs and manners. Yet another striking factor is the Jewish tradition seen among them. Muslim communities were also used to follow local customs and usages.⁵⁷

Slavery System

To complete the picture of the social structure that was in existence, reference must be made to the institution of slavery. In Malabar, a considerable section of the agricultural labourers consisted of bonded labourers belonging to the lowest castes, who continued to be attached to their masters even after the abolition of slavery in 1854.⁵⁸ The slaves of Malabar were generally known by the name 'Chermars' and

⁵⁴ Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 413; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Kadapuram Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 81, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996.

⁵⁵ Majid Husain, *Human Geography*, New Delhi, 1994, p. 199; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer - Thrissur, op. cit.*, p. 216.

⁵⁶ Chummar Choondal, *Christian Folklore Vol 1*, Thrissur, 1988, p. 58.

⁵⁷ K. N. Ganesh, *Cultural Modernity*, Historical Explorations, Calicut, 2004, p. 271.

⁵⁸ Abraham Vijayan, *Cast, Class and Agrarian Relations in Kerala*, New Delhi, 1998, p.40.

they were engaged only in the cultivation of paddy field and plantations.⁵⁹ Thus slaves became an integral part of the production system in Malabar. It is reported that in the past, the upper castes, especially members of the Nair community, would treat people belonging to the lower castes like slaves and would even abuse them physically. Proper wages were not given to workers. Whatever was given by the upper caste master had to be accepted as wages and the lower caste had to be satisfied with whatever they received. As the slaves were considered to be out casts in society, their basic human rights were denied and they had no voice.

Slavery in Malabar was the most deplorable in the case of soil slaves, i.e., those who were employed as field hands. There were no free men amongst them. All were born slaves and they continued to remain so across generations.⁶⁰ They had no right of control on land and were put to work like beasts. The *Pulayar* and *Cherumar* who were the actual tillers, constituted the base of the society. The name *Pulaya* was derived from the word *pula*, that meant 'to pollute'. The name thus meant that the members of the *Pulaya* caste would pollute whomsoever came in contact with them or even approached them. The name *Cherumar* was derived from *cheru*, which meant 'small'.⁶¹ Slaves could be sold with or without soil and could be sold to places different from those of their birth or of their usual residence. Slaves were considered to be entirely impure and therefore they were compelled to keep a stipulated distance from their superiors. Rules were framed to perpetuate the practice of untouchability and the slave castes were compelled to obey these rulers. In the Chavakkad taluk, *Kanakkan*, *Vettuvan*, *Parayan* and *Pulayan* were considered as slave castes.⁶² Normally men and boys were used as slaves. When sold, the value of a slave, came

⁵⁹ J. Rejikumar, *Graeme's Report on the Revenue Administration of Malabar 1822*, Kerala State Archives Thiruvananthapuram, 2010 p. 39; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikal Kanda Keralam*, *op. cit.*, p. 410; E. Rajan, *Guruvayur Sathyagraham*, Kozhikode, 2014, p. 22; P. K. Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2012, p. 421; T. K. Gopal Panikkar, *Malabar and its Folk*, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

⁶⁰ Abbe J. A Dubois, *Hindu Manner Customs and Ceremonies*, London, 1906 p. 58; Kerala History Association, *Kerala Charithram*, Vol. II, Cochin, 1974, p. 56.

⁶¹ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

⁶² Valayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikal Kanda Keralam*, *op. cit.*, p. 411; P. T. Bhaskarapanikkar, *Bharata Vijnana Kosam*, Kottayam, 1990, p. 502.

up to 120 gold *fanams* for those between the age of 20 to 50 and among the *Pulaya* caste, the price was 60 gold *fanams* for those between the ages from 15 to 30.⁶³ At Manapuram a slave, when 30 years old, costs about 100 *fanans*; with a wife he costs double.⁶⁴

Unapproachability and untouchability prevailed in totality. When members of the upper caste would walk along public roads, the serfs were not allowed to pass through. To prevent this and to intimidate the serfs, the attendants who accompanied the feudal landlord used to make a peculiar sound. The serfs were supposed to take this sound as a signal and had to move away from the path of the landlord and stand at a specified distance that was considered to be safe. Though untouchability and unapproachability were earnestly followed, the feudal landlord and upper caste people were least bothered about such traditional practices in case of sexual advances towards low caste women.

Education

In ancient times, there were four main divisions of education systems in Kerala. They were *kudipallikutangal* for common people, while *gurukulangal* and *vidyapeethangal* were the centres of higher education. *Vedapathasalakal*, *sabhamathangal* and *salas* were solely for Brahmin students while *kalaris* provided physical education and military training.⁶⁵ Formal education normally began between the ages of five or seven. *Vidyarambham* is an important ceremony, when the parent would take their child to the nearby *ezhuthupalli*, where the teacher (*ezhuthasan* or *assan*) received the customary offering (*dakshina*).⁶⁶ The child would write the alphabet on rice. This was followed by *manalezhuthu* (writing on sand) where the

⁶³ J. Rejikumar, *Graeme's Report, op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁶⁴ Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, pp. 406-407.

⁶⁵ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Ativerukal*, Kottayam, 2012, p. 64; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram, op. cit.*, p. 165; Souvenir Committee, *Centenary Celebrations*, St. Sebastian's High School Chittattukara, 2005, p. 35; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal, op. cit.*, p. 243.

⁶⁶ K. N. Ganesh, *Culture and Modernity Historical Explorations, op. cit.*, p. 158; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram, op. cit.*, p. 164.

teacher would make the child write the first letters of the alphabet on sand.⁶⁷ Writing was done with the ring finger of the right hand.

Kutipallikootam and Ezhuthupalli

The old Malayalam word *pallikkootam* for school may be taken to mean that Jain Monks had prominent share in popularizing elementary education in the countryside.⁶⁸ The popular *savarna* culture of medieval Kerala was reflected in the curricula of pre-colonial education centers.⁶⁹ After the *vidyarambham* ceremony, the students must go to *kutipallikootam* every day. They would sit under the shade of a tree and would try to trace letters on the sand with their fingers. The *asan* would correct the errors of the students. At the initial stage, pupils would write on the sand on the floor. Later they would begin to write on palm leaves. *Narayam* was used for writing on palm leaves. Some palm leaves were bent with cord.⁷⁰

Punnathurnadu has a long history of education dating back to ancient times. During the prehistoric and early medieval eras, the area was home to important centers of study and culture. These schools were rudimentary structure i.e. they were small sheds erected with roofs made of coconut leaves. The pillars and beams were made of bamboo or coconut materials and had a slightly raised floor. The establishments served as important hubs for the start of elementary schooling. In the past, the majority of kids were required to attend these learning centers. The schools were run by individual teachers (*ezhuthuassan* or *assan*). Students of different age groups acquired

⁶⁷ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Ativerukal*, *op. cit.*, p. 65; Souvenir Committee, *Centenary Celebrations*, *op. cit.*; E. Sreejith, *Keralathile Vidyabhyasam Charithram – Varthamanam*, Kottayam, 2016, p. 39.

⁶⁸ M. G. S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala*, Thrissur, 2013, p. 343.

⁶⁹ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Arthat Panchayat, Chowannur Block, Vol. 82, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996; K. N. Ganesh, *Culture and Modernity Historical Explorations*, *op. cit.*; Souvenir Committee, *Centenary Celebrations*, St. Sebastian's High School Chittattukara, 2005, p. 36; E. Sreejith, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*; A. Sreedhra Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

knowledge in various subjects from these schools.⁷¹ In the beginning they studied literature and mathematics as well.

Gurukulangal

After completing their elementary education, students went to *gurukulas* for higher education. Usually, they would stay in their *guru's* home and would serve the *guru*. The period of education would be about twelve years. The *natacharyan* imparted training in the field of medicine and astrology.⁷² In those days, physicians would prepare medicines for their treatment with the help of students. The students did not pay any fees to their teachers but rendered physical service instead. After the completion of their education, the pupil would offer a small fee to his *guru* before leaving the hermitage for their homes.

Vedapadhasalakal and Sabhamadhangal

After the *upanayana* ceremony, the Namputiri boys were sent to the house of their *guru* for learning the Vedas. After the completion of their education, they joined the *sabhamadhangal* for their further studies. Having attained this education, they were capable of attending scholarly debates. Centuries before, a *sabhamadham* situated at Chowannur catered to the discussion of the Vedas.⁷³ Sri Kanipayur Sankaran Namputiri, one of the greatest scholars in Vedas, was born here. Temples were the centres of all cultural activities after the 8th century, and naturally educational institutions formed apart of temple establishments.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Ativerukal*, *op. cit.*, p. 65; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 164; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1983, p. 67; E. Sreejith, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

⁷² *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Arthat Panchayat, *op. cit.*,

⁷³ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Chowannur Panchayat, Chowannur Block Vol. 82 Thrissur District, 1997; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 163; Divakaran Kattakada, *Kerala Sancharam*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2015, p. 362.

⁷⁴ Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, Kottayam, 1959, p. 267.

Chavara Kuriakose Elias was a Syro-Malabar Catholic priest and social reformer. He ordered that each parish should establish educational institutions.⁷⁵ Accordingly Christians started *kutipallikkootams* that were attached to the parish. Reading, writing, mathematics and religious knowledge were included in their syllabus. There were some *pallikkootams* that existed in places like Palayur, Kottapadi, Thozhiyur and Chittattukara.⁷⁶ During that time, pupils from the lower caste were not allowed inside the common schools. Hence, they had to depend on the Christian institutions for education. All pupils, irrespective of their caste attended this school. Such *pallikkootams* provided good education. Students from neighbouring *desams* also attended the school. Gradually such institutions began to impart education to women also.

Muslim education was begun in Malabar with the arrival of Malik Ibn Dinar and his co-workers.⁷⁷ Primary religious institutions, called *othupallikkoodams* were established with the help of Muslim inspectors, who were appointed for the purpose. In the course of time, the curriculum of studies shrank and became limited to the Arabic language. In these schools, young students were taught reading, writing and certain portions of the Holy Quran. From very early time, *kutipallikkoodams*, *ezhuthupalli* and *othupallikkoodams* were started in this *nadu*.⁷⁸ Educational advancement brought about socio-economic changes in this locality.

⁷⁵ *Centenary Celebrations, op. cit.*, p. 37; St. Lazar's Church, *Parish Directory*, Kottapadi, 2015, p. 24.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; Coronation Memorial Upper Primary School, *Supplement*, Thozhiyur, 2023; Souvenir Committee, *Centenary Celebrations, op. cit.*; C. L. Johnson, *Charithrathilude*, Thirunna Smaranika, S t. Sebastian's Church, Chittattukara, 2010, p. 109; Souvenir Committee, *Centenary Celebrations, op. cit.*,

⁷⁷ M. Sumayya, 'Malabarile Muslim Mathavidhyabyasam', in P.B. Salim, N.P. Hafis Muhammed & M.C. Vasisht (eds.) *Malabar: Paithrukavum Prathapavum*, Kozhikkode, 2011, p. 218.

⁷⁸ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookodu Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 81, Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur District, 1996; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Kadapuram Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Choondal Panchayat, Chowannur Block, Vol. 82, Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur District, 1996.

Kalari

The *Kalari* technique combines scientific methods of attack and defense with a variety of physical exercises, all of which are used in real combat with a variety of weapons.⁷⁹ The village was merely an administrative unit. It was the foot soldier that played a vital role here. The importance that *kalaripayattu* acquired is to be traced to our geography. It provided military training and physical exercises for the youth, especially in Malabar. *Kalari* brought discipline to the life of the young generation. *Nambutiri* landlords and local chieftains maintained suicidal squads or warrior groups for the protection of their life and property and this tendency paved way for the growth of the *kalari* institution in society. The Punnathur *kovilakam* had twelve *kalaris* their own.⁸⁰ Panikkars were soldiers of the king's army. Thus, a key institution of the era was the *kalari*, where young people from the land were trained in military tactics.

In olden days each *kara* or village had its own *kalari*.⁸¹ That operated under the aegis of a guardian deity called *kalari Paradevata* or *Bhagavati*. The chief master (*asan*) of the *kalari* known as the *Guru* or *Gurukkal*, imparted training in the use of stick, sword, dagger, spear etc. The Mammiyur *kalari* was one of most prominent *kalaris* in this region. Here *kalari* education was provided in the subjects of *jyothisham* (astrology), *vaidyam* (medicine), *mantrikam* (magic) and *ayodhanakala*

⁷⁹ M. V. Vishnu Nampoothiri, *Natan Kalikalum Vinodangalum*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1993, p. 69; M. V. Vishnu Nampoothiri, *Folklore*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2012, p. 88; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Adiverukal*, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Prabhathakiranangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 67; T. K. Rajasekharan, *Kerala through the Ages*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1976, p. 52; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 165; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 244; P. T. Bhaskarapanikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 407; K. C. Krishnakumar, *Keralam Jillakaliloode*, Kozhikode, 2015, p. 170; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 288; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 120; Krishnachaithanya, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁸⁰ P. Sankara Narayanan, Punnathur Swaroopam, in P.K.A. Rahim (ed.) *Vannerynadu*, Sri. Kattumatam Narayanan Shashtipoorthy Celebration Committee, Perumpatappu, 1994, p. 130.

⁸¹ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, Kottayam, 2010, p. 354; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Adiverukal*, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Souvenir Committee, *Centenary Celebrations*, *op. cit.*; K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, T.K. Krishna Menon (ed.), Reprint 2022, p. 342.

(art of warfare). Sri Unnipanikkar was the main *kalariassan* of this *kalari*.⁸² The *kalaris* were treated as sacred places like the temples and in course of time, specialised rituals were conducted in the *kalaris*. The *kalari* buildings were constructed in a distinct manner within a specific area and there was a special corner in the building that was dedicated to God. The whole process of training was believed to be completed in the presence of the *kalaridaivom* or patron god. Another famous *kalari* centre was situated at Elavally, where Damodaran was the *kalariasan*. The branches of *kalari* centres continue to function in various parts of the *nadu*.

The *taravadu* of Cherai Panikkar was the most famous *kalari* in South Malabar.⁸³ We can see the institution at Cherai even today. Muhammadunni *gurukkal* was a famous *kalariasan* at Punnayurkulam. Under the leadership of this *gurukkal*, Navajeevan *kalari* functioned in this locality. Many students from abroad came here for *kalari* training.⁸⁴ This martial style was also taken up by Mappila Muslims, who started practicing it in Mappila communities. The Muslims trained in *kalarippayattu* are mentioned in the northern songs.⁸⁵ Heroes from the north, like Tacholi Othenan, had gone to this place to learn things never before known, like *melayamkollal* or *parunturack*.⁸⁶ This *kalari* has been noted in the northern ballad and other historical works.

Folk games

Traditional games that are casually passed down from one group to another are called folk games. The games served the same purpose that they have since the

⁸² Ramakrishnan Mammiyur, *Guruvayurile Vighrahavum Mammiyur Kalariyum*, Soveneer – Guruvayur Temple, 1974, p. 310.

⁸³ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Punnayurkulam Panchayat, *op. cit.*; K. S. Sasidharan, Cheraikalari, in P. K. A. Rahim (ed.), *Vannerynadu*, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

⁸⁴ Personal Interview with Raffy Malikulam, ward member, Punnayurkulam Grama Panchayat, age 62, at his residence Punnayurkulam in Thrissur District, dated on 10-01-2020.

⁸⁵ Hussain Randathani, Communal Harmony in the Mappila Folk Culture, in K. N. Ganesh (ed.), *Culture and Modernity Historical Explorations*, University of Calicut, 2004, p. 239.

⁸⁶ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Punnayurkulam Panchayat, *op. cit.*; K. S. Sasidharan, Cheraikalari, in P. K. A. Rahim (ed.), *Vannerynadu*, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

dawn of humankind. Folk games are linked with the *kalari* culture. In olden days, there were many types of folk games that existed in this region. These kinds of games were traditionally played for amusement and entertainment. The songs of folk games helped the children to develop their linguistic ability. There were separate games for children and adults. The principal village games were the *attakalam*, *talapandukali*, *akkuthikkuthu*, *kuttiyumkolum*, *ammanayattam* and *kabbadikali*.⁸⁷ Spectators also participated in folk games through institutions, instructions and inspirations. Throwing objects like balls or a square piece of wood at a fixed point was a common game in this region. In olden days, players themselves made the materials for playing. They used stones, marbles, balls, spinning tops, watches made of coconut leaves, pop-guns, puppets and so on. Punnathurnadu was known for its variety of sports and games. Each games event was like a festival, the spirit of which was widespread.

Pananpattu, *pulluvanpattu* and *nanthunipattu* were unique to this region. *Pananpattu* was sung by the members of *Panan* community who visited every house during the Malayalam month of *Karkkitakam* (July-August).⁸⁸ This process was considered helpful in getting rid of poverty (linked to a prostitute) and welcoming the goddess of prosperity in her stead. *Pulluvanpattu* is a form of serpent worship performed at the serpent temples.⁸⁹ Such temples consider the snake gods as their presiding deities. *Nanthuni* is a musical instrument and it is generally made use of by the *Mannan* community. They used to play *nanthuni* for their ritualistic ceremonies.

Economy

The economy of Medieval Kerala is termed to be ‘self-sufficient village economy’. Rajan Gurukkal argued that, the emergence of wetland paddy agriculture

⁸⁷ V. S. Bindu, *Nattuvazhi – Keraleeyarkku Nashtappetta Grameena Gruhathurathwam*, Kottayam, 2017, pp. 40-43; M. V. Vishnu Nampoothiri, *Natankalikalum Vinodangalum*, Kerala Thiruvananthapuram, 1993, pp. 87-90; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁸⁸ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookodu Panchayat, *op. cit.*; Aswathi Thirunal Gouri Lakshmi Bai, *Kerala Samskaram Oru Thiranottam*, Kozhikode, 2012, p. 55.

⁸⁹ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Punnayurkulam Panchayat, *op. cit.*; Aswathi Thirunal Gouri Lakshmi Bai, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Choondal Panchayat, *op. cit.*

with its systems of water management, agrarian technology, calendrical systems, form of utilisation of labour and land management provided a sharp break from the tribal economy and made a stratified agrarian order possible.⁹⁰ The agrarian society of Punnathurnadu was generally marked by unequal distribution of land and its productive utilisation.⁹¹ There is regional diversity in land tenure, forms of production and caste structures. Upper castes monopolised and maintained control over the land, while other castes remained almost wholly landless. Punnathurnadu had a predominantly agriculture-based economy. Paddy is the main food crop in this region. The predominant cash crops of the economy included coconut, areca nut, pepper etc. as mentioned earlier.⁹² Agricultural workers formed a major part of the work force, and improvements in their living and working conditions were directly connected with the development of agriculture. These also help them to improve their productivity, material well-being and cultural life. Various settlements, which comprised of Brahmins and skilled and non-skilled occupational groups and the exchange centres developed in the *nadu* as the result of the emergence of such a new economic pattern.

In the beginning of the twelfth century, almost the entire land of Kerala had come under the control of the *Nambutiris*.⁹³ The Brahmins' land, which continued to be separate units of production, served as the hub of the economy. These units needed permanent labour, therefore it stands to reason that a number of clannish families were always involved in food production and other necessary tasks.⁹⁴ The combined effect

⁹⁰ K. N. Ganesh, *State Formation in Kerala – A Critical Overview*, *op. cit.*, p. 35; M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram Part II*, *op. cit.*

⁹¹ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Porkalam Panchayat, Chowannur Block; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookodu Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Punnayurkulam Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Tolur Panchayat, Puzhakkal Block, Vol. 86, Thrissur District, 1996.

⁹² *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Elavally Panchayat, Chavakkad Block Vol. 81, 1996 Thrissur District.

⁹³ K. M. Panikkar, *Essays on the History and Society of Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2016, p. 185; Elamkulam P. N. Kunjanpillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 347; Sathyamurthy, *India Since Independence Studies in the Development of the Power of the State Vol. I*, Delhi, p. 143.

⁹⁴ Rajan Gurukkal, The Formation of Caste and Society in Kerala, Historical Antecedents in K. L. Sharma (ed.), *Caste and Class in India*, Jaipur, 1994, p. 395; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

of the increase in this area under cultivation and productivity was reflected in the comparatively higher rate of growth in agricultural production, which further raised the economic position of the people.

The traditional economic structure of this region was based on feudalism. Incessant warfare resulted in unsettled conditions and facilitated the transfer of substantial land to the hands of Brahmins and temples, which resulted in the growth of the *janmi* system. Sabhamadam Devaswam, Punnathur Devaswam, Chiralayam Raja were the land owners of this locality.⁹⁵ Each village was under the economic control of a *janmi* or resident aristocrat who was usually a Brahmin.⁹⁶ The village land known as *janmam* was at the disposal of the *janmi* who exercised the right to appropriate the surplus product from the land. The Brahmin lived under the patronage of a chief or a king, on the grand of tax-free land cultivated by his people. The farmers paid taxes to him instead of the king. Labour degradation and eviction were the punishments meted out to the *kudian*. Tenants under different types of leases held the lands owned by individual proprietors and huge temples.⁹⁷ The rent was transformed to be paid to the landlord in the form of services by common lease holders (*pattam*) and temple or royal servants. Although the term *pattam* refers to tenure, it is commonly used to refer to a share of the produce given to the overlord. The *janmis* received produce such as coconuts, plantain fruit, rice, *panam*, and other items.⁹⁸

The *parambus* did not have labourers attached to them. Daily wage labourers were necessary for the work of cultivation in the *parambus*. During the 10th and 11th centuries, paddy had been a common measure of value and decided the price of commodities. For each six *para* of paddy, one *para* was given as the share to labourers. This was not a mere barter system. The measures like *nazhi*, *para*, *uri*, etc. were universally accepted in Kerala. The measurement is based on the quantity of

⁹⁵ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Chowannur Panchayat, *op. cit.*

⁹⁶ Sathyamurthy, *India Since Independence*, *op. cit.*; Elamkulam P. N. Kunjanpillai, *Studies in Kerala history*, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

⁹⁷ K. N. Ganesh, *Agrarian Society*, P. J. Cherian (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 130.

⁹⁸ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookod Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Punnayurkulam Panchayat, *op. cit.*

grains as per the size of the vessels.⁹⁹ The higher units of *itangali* and *para*, had continued to be in force in Punnathurnadu till recently. They are mentioned in connection with rice and paddy. The same traditional pattern is illustrated in the measuring units of grains and liquids also.

2 alakku = 1 ulakku

2 ulakku = 1 uri

2 uri = 1 nazhi

They had also continued unaltered until recent times. Weights like *kalancu*, *palam*, *tulam* etc. were also used in the region. The equation is $100\text{ palam} = 1\text{ tulam}$.¹⁰⁰ The units of *tulam* and *palam* are employed in relation to arecanut. Paddy was a standard of value and medium of exchange in smaller transactions. Often part of the commodities given as wages to the labourers would be taken to markets to be exchanged either for money or for other articles. This means that money reached the lower strata of the society also. Rather of aggressive slaves, a class of daily wage workers grew in the evolving *parambu-purayidam* economy, and the growing use of money was a major contributing factor in this development.

The role of caste in the integration of the landlord whose mechanisms of appropriation depended on extra-economic coercion was extremely crucial. The ruling class's revenue from crafts and agriculture increased significantly, which was the main economic impact of the caste system.¹⁰¹ Through hereditary transmission of skills and caste, handcrafted products made by artisans were devalued, thus reducing wage-costs generally.

Different things have acted as money through the ages and coin is one among them. Coins were noted for their durability and acceptability. The rates of interest are

⁹⁹ K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 5; V. V. Haridas, *Samuthiri Kalathe Kozhikode: Kathayum Charithravum*, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39; Ward and Corner, *Descriptive Memoir - Malabar*, *op. cit.*

¹⁰¹ Kesavan Veluthat, *Early Medieval in South India*, *op. cit.*, p. 95; Irfan Habib, *Interpreting Indian History*, Shillong, India, p. 19.

mentioned in the inscriptions of ninth and tenth centuries in South India.¹⁰² A coin is merely a piece of metal having definite shape and weight, that bore recognised symbols on its face, impressed on it by a responsible authority.¹⁰³ *Kasu* was also the common name for money in Malayalam. It has been observed that *kasu* was struck in copper, silver and gold. *Panam*, *virarayan*, *putiyapanam*, etc. were circulated in some areas of Malabar.¹⁰⁴ During the age of Zamorin, circulation of coins found acceptance in Malabar. A number of coins including *Virarayan panam*, have been mentioned in *Kozhikkodan Granthavari*.¹⁰⁵ According to McKinsey manuscript the new *viraraya panam* was minted by the Zamorin in 1791 AD.¹⁰⁶ *Putupanam* and *panam* were used in southern parts of Malabar.¹⁰⁷ Roman coins in both gold and silver, as well as Indian or possibly local punch-marked silver coins, were found in Eyyal in 1946.¹⁰⁸ The coins that were found at Eyyal are preserved as museum pieces in the city of Thrissur. Usually, copper *panam* and such coins of lower value show that they were used in smaller transactions and by common people. The agrarian economy encouraged a number of merchants who had previously been concentrated in bazaars to take up agriculture. Each relationship generated by production and distribution is a social relation.

¹⁰² R. S. Sharma, *Early Medieval Indian Society*, Kolkata, 2003, p. 127.

¹⁰³ D. C. Sircar, *Studies in Indian Coins*, Delhi, 1968, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ N. M. Nampootiri, *Malabar Padanangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 355; K. K. N. Kurup, *Kavalappara Papers*, ed. Regional Archives Kozhikkode, 1984, p. 159.

¹⁰⁵ V. V. Haridas, *Samoothirikalathe Kozhikkode – Kadhayum Charithravum*, *op. cit.*, p. 36; N. M. Nampootiri, *Malabar Padanangal*, *op. cit.*; V.V. Haridas, *Madhyakala Kerala Charithram*, Kottayam, 2022, p. 161.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ M.G.S. Narayanan, *Vanjeri Grandhavari*, ed. *Ola 75, puram 2*, Calicut, 1989, p. 198.

¹⁰⁸ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazeteer Trischur*, *op. cit.*, p. 76; T. R. Venugopalan, *Sampathum Adhikaravum Thrissuril Ninnulla Oru Kazhcha*, Thrissur, 2012, p. 31; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 7; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikalum Sahithyakaranmarum*, Kozhikkode, 1954, p. 46; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithra Kavadangal*, Kottayam, 2011, p. 82; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 45; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 278; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Kadangode Panchayat, Wadakkancheri Block, Vol. 83, Kerala State Planning Commission, 1996; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikal Kanda Keralam*, 1st Edition 2001, 4th Edition 2012, p. 42.

The multi-crop agrarian settlements resulted in the formation of multicultural settlements in Punnathurnadu. Land was the basic element for the development of the production relations and power structure during the period. The hierarchical structure of the Medieval society was composed of various sections of people. The real authority over the relations and procedures of production as well as the exchange of output was divided between castes and sub-castes. As a result, this region witnessed a complex division of occupational groups. Their social and economic relations were bound by traditions and customs with land as the centre of activities. They were all related to the production process in the society either directly or indirectly.

Occupation

The emergence of caste originated in the division of labour in early societies, leading to social differentiations on the basis of the status of an occupation in the productive process. In addition, a number of other groups that are now referred to as sub-castes in Kerala are listed as skilled laborers with inherited professions.¹⁰⁹ One of the main characteristics of the Medieval agrarian order was the development of gradation rights, which led to the formation of ties of reliance based on strict caste hierarchy and occupational groups.¹¹⁰ *Kollan*, a blacksmith, *Asari*, a carpenter, *Tattaaan*, a goldsmith, *Chakkalan*, an oil presser, *Musari*, a bronzesmith, *Kaniyyan*, the village astrologer, *Velan*, a traditional healer, *Vannan*, a washerman, *Panan*, a traditional singer, *Tiyyan*, a toddy tapper, and the agricultural groups of *Pulayan*, *Parayan*, and *Kanakkan* were the mainstays of the village community.¹¹¹ They all pursued their respective hereditary occupations, in which they were not disturbed by

¹⁰⁹ M. G. S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala*, *op. cit.*; T. V. Mahalingam, *South Indian Polity*, *op. cit.*; M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram part II*, *op. cit.*, p. 146; V. Rajeev, *Aryadhiniveshavum Nampootiri Samskaravum*, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

¹¹⁰ K.N. Ganesh, *Agrarian Society in Kerala (1500-1800)*, in P. J. Cherian (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 150; Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple and the Early Medieval Agrarian System*, Sukapuram, 1992, p. 67; Rajan Gurukkal, *Myth Charithram Samooham*, Kottayam, 2013, p. 386.

¹¹¹ M. R. Raghava Varier, *Village Community in Pre- Colonial Kerala*, Mysore, 1994, p.15; M. R. Raghava Varier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram Part II*, *op. cit.*; P. K. Balakrishnan, *Jathivyavasthithiyum Kerala Charithravum*, *op. cit.*, p. 142; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Arthat Panchayat, Chowannur Block, Vol. 82, 1996, Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur District; T. R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 100-101; C. Achuthan Menon, *The Cochin State Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 349; V. V. Haridas, *Samuthiri Kalathe Kozhikode: Kathayum Charithravum*, *op. cit.*,

competition from members of other classes. They were found to be the best workmen in every village.

Services of the blacksmiths and carpenters were essential for the ruling sections. The *Kollan* occupational group was one of the most extensively dispersed, which amply demonstrates the widespread usage of iron implements in the towns. Among the other occupational groups, carpenters are found to be distributed across all the *desam* units. In agricultural activities, the services of carpenters were essential, either directly for supplying implements and tools used in tilling, sowing, weeding, reaping etc.

Goldsmiths and bronzesmiths were skilled workers who produced expensive luxury items. Their services were required to a greater extent by the wealthy section of society who could channelise a surplus amount of money for luxury. The raw material for this Medieval industry was controlled by the landowning groups. Traditional pieces of gold and silver jewellery, that were extensively used for the marriage ceremonies, connected the goldsmith to the social life. The extensive uses of bronze vessels were found in temples, palaces and in rich households.

The oil-presser service group, denoted by the term *chakku*, which translates to 'an oilpress', is one of the widely dispersed service groups. Ensuring the supply of coconut and gingelly oil was their duty. Another occupational section called *Velan* were traditional physicians while their womenfolk functioned as midwives in rural settlements, much before the proliferation of modern medicine and hospital facilities. The non-Brahmanical groups included another separate *jati* of *Panan*, the traditional singer of songs or bards. They were also engaged in making umbrellas. The *Mukkuvas* or the fishermen were another industrious class. A vast area of this *nadu* is situated close to the sea. The old hierarchy continued in the relations of production and was reflected and legitimised in the *Jati* system in the most comprehensive manner. At the village level, a peasant's essential spending on tools, products, and services was decreased by the availability of the services of hereditary village artisans and

servants.¹¹² With the exception of the growth of sub-castes brought about by the development of the division of labor, the agricultural village system persisted without experiencing any significant changes. As a result, the mechanism could carry out various tasks in accordance with the various historical periods and could endure historical changes. Among the names given to places a large number of toponyms stand out with a characteristic *jati* orientation. *Tampuranpadi*, *Nayarangadi*, *Assarimoola*, *Karuvanpadi*, *Manapadi* etc. are the names given to fields in Punnathurnadu. The places such as *Mannanparambu* and *Mannathikadavu* reveal the presence of the respective community.¹¹³ The *jati*-oriented field names are pointers to the presence of the respective *jati*, i.e., occupational groups in villages and therefore, their importance in the study of village communities cannot be denied.¹¹⁴

They may have varied from village to village. The integration of means of subsistence forms, seems to have resulted in the formation of different forms of occupational groups and the possible development of their settlements. The various types of occupational groups and possible formation of their settlements were in the region of Punnathurnadu in the early times. The people of this region did not sustain their livelihood simply from the resources of the region alone, but also from outside. The social division of labour that emerged in this region was possible because of links that the region had with other parts of Malabar, as stated above.

Primitive form of Worship

Kavu is a Dravidian noun, that probably evolved from the word *kaval* which means 'protection' or 'security'. Worshipping nature has been an integral part of human society. Protection and security along with prosperity is associated with the very concept of god in all human societies.¹¹⁵ The common people built the *kavus*, before the emergence of Brahminical hegemony. In a large number of villages, the

¹¹² Kesavan Veluthat, *Early Medieval in South India*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

¹¹³ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Orumanayur Panchayat, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁴ M. R. Raghava Varier, *Village Community*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹¹⁵ A. Mohammed Maheen, *Exploring Kavu: A Space for Indigenous Culture and Ecological Wisdom*, Explorations in South Indian History, Kottayam, 2014, p. 275.

gramadevatas have no temples at all; they are lodged in the open air under the shade of a big tree.¹¹⁶ Such deities are mostly the lesser powerful gods like Subramanian, Ayyappan, Vettakorumakan and Bhagavathi or Bhadrakali.¹¹⁷ A substantial number of communities like potters, *Parayas*, *Mannans* and various other communities are associated with the *kavu*. They perform various traditional dance forms like *teyyam*, *thira*, *pootham*, etc. and other rituals in association with the *kavu* on the occasion of religious festivals.¹¹⁸ Karuvanthala is an important *kavu* located at Venkidangu in Punnathurnadu. *Bharanivela* is the main festival in this *kavu*. It is conducted on the day of the star *Bharani* during the Malayalam month of *Kumbam*.¹¹⁹ *Sarkkara-payasam*, *pushpanjali*, *chuttuvilakku* and *kuruti* are the main offerings in this temple. *Kutirakali* and *ezhunellatt* for *Putukavil Bhagavati* are the main attractions. Kottukurumba Bhagavati *kavu*, one of the eighteen and half *kavus* in Kerala also celebrates the festival on that day. One week before, the beginning of the annual festival of a *kavu*, the *velichappad* (oracle) or the *bhootham* (ritual dancers), visit each and every house of the village for the *parayeduppu*. The eldest woman of each house welcomes him with a *nirapara*, holding a *nilavilakku*.¹²⁰ On the day of the festival, the *kalavelas* from different *desams* and local units would come to the *kavu*, accompanied by the ceremonial beating of the drum to participate in the carnival. A large number of people also took part in this festival.

¹¹⁶ A. Venkita Ramanayya, *An Essay on the Origin of the South Indian Temple*, Madras, 1930, p. 4; V. T. Padmaja, *Exploring Kavus: The Primitive Mother Goddess Worshiping Centres of Kerala*, ed. In M. R. Manmathan *Archaeology in Kerala Past and Present*, Calicut, 2007, p. 164; D. D. Kosambi, *Myth and reality Studies in the formation of Indian Culture*, Mumbai, 2016, p. 70; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 282; Krishna Chaitanya, *Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 89; K. Sugathan, *op. cit.*, p. 93; Balagopal T.S. Prabhu, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

¹¹⁷ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 151; P. T. Bhaskarapanikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 449; Chelanattu Achutha Menon, *Keralathile Kaleeseva*, Kottayam, 2015, p. 19.

¹¹⁸ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookkode Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Elavally Panchayat, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁹ P. G. Rajendran, *Kshetravinjanakosham*, Kottayam, 2013, p. 261.

¹²⁰ Personal Interview with Mr. P. C. Vasu age 71 Member of Celebration Committee, Kottukurumbakavu Peruvallur, dated on 20-02-2022, at his residence, at Peruvallur in Thrissur District.

Sacred groves are also associated with snake worship. The snake is one among the oldest and most widespread mythological symbols. The *naga* was the patron deity, perhaps an aboriginal cult object of the place. The *sarpakavu* is a customary, sacrosanct, and natural area that is close to traditional dwellings.¹²¹ Generally at the centre or at the side of the sacred grove, is the *chittrakudakallu* or images made of laterite. There is typically a representation of the *Naga Raja* in the region, and it is thought that snakes live there. The most renowned *kavus* in this *nadu* are Sree Nagattankavu at Parappur and Sree Nagayakshikavu at Chavakkad. It is believed that the day of the star *Ayilyam* in the month of September, is the auspicious day for snake worship.¹²² On the day, many people from neighbouring areas come to this *kavu* and submit their offerings. The serpents are occasionally appeased with songs and dances known as *nagampattu* or *pambanthullal*, and puja is performed at least once a year. The *sarpakavu* is revered by all castes, and entry is prohibited until after proper rituals.

According to tradition, only those belonging to higher castes were allowed to enter inside the temples. A *keezhkavu* existed in all the temples. Lower caste people conducted their *poojas* in these temples. Their celebrations took place in such temples. A native tradition of tree and stone worship and bloody sacrifices existed but no written records about it have been preserved. *Kavus*, *moorthisthanangal*, *deivamtara*, etc. were indications of the ancient society.¹²³ The lower caste people in this area ardently desired their rights for conducting their religious rituals. For this purpose, they built a small *tara* on this land and installed a stone to represent the deity. They believed that the deity will protect the *vayal* resulting the *tara* to be known as

¹²¹ P. K. Gopal Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 145; N. Ajithkumar, *Kerala Samskaram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2004, p.171; N. M. Nampootiri, P.K. Sivadas, *Kerala Charithrathinte Nattuvazhikal*, Kottayam, 2009, p. 479; S. Jayashankar, *Temples of Thrissur District*, Directorate of Census Operations, Kerala Thiruvananthapuram, 2006, p. 461; P. T. Baskarapanikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 145; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Keralasamskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 40; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 192; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 37; V.V.K. Valath, *Keralathile Sthalacharithrangal: Thrissur Jilla*, Thrissur, 2016, p. 38.

¹²² Samuel Mateer, *Njan Kanda Keralam*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2005, p. 412.

¹²³ N. M. Nampootiri, *Malabar Padanangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

vailitara.¹²⁴ This deity was revered in the open air. There was no structure for protecting the deity. A century ago, the discrimination policy of the upper caste people against the lower caste people was more pronounced and harsher. This feeling of being oppressed ultimately led to the formation of the *vailitara*. These practices were seen in the various parts of Punnathurnadu in places like Brahmakulam, Puthumanassery etc. Folk arts like *kalakali*, *karinkalikoottam*, *teyyam*, *thira* etc. are performed here during festivals.

Temples

There were three kinds of *kshetras* like *grihakshetra*, *desakshetra* and *gramakshetra*.¹²⁵ The temples which are established by each family for their private use and located near their residence, are known as *grihakshetras*. The Alukkal temple, the *grihakshetra* of the Punnathur *nampidi* was situated near the Punnathurkotta.¹²⁶ The height of the *gopuram* (tower) and the large *nadapura* of this temple are considered as symbols of royalty. For the protection and prosperity of this *nadu*, Punnathur Raja consecrated *Brahmarakshassu* in this temple.¹²⁷ Successors of Punnathur *nampidis* were the *uralas* of this temple. Punnathur Raja granted half of the Brahmawam property for the administration of this temple. *Desakshetras* were the place of worship of the natives of a particular *desam*. But the *gramakshetras* catered to religious needs of the people included in different *desams* of the *grama*.¹²⁸ While looking at the Guruvayur temple we can see that in the earlier stages it was known as *gramakshetra*. These temples can be seen in the house of the *Brahmins* or *Kshatriyas*. The second and third types were built by *gramas* or *desas*, for worship by the people. The temples which could be included into any one of the three categories

¹²⁴ Personal Interview with Mr. M. V. Mohanan, age 71, Secretary Vaili Celebration Committee, at his residence Brahmakulam, Thrissur District dated on 18-03-2020.

¹²⁵ Kunhikuttan Thampuran, *Keralam*, Tirur, 2017, p. 60.

¹²⁶ P. G. Rajendran, *op. cit.*, p. 142; P. Sankaranarayanan, in P. K. A. Rahim (ed.), *Vannerynadu*, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

¹²⁷ A. Vini, *Thalappilly Swaroopam Samskarika Sambhavanakal*, Kottayam, 2018, p. 161; P. Sankara Narayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam*, *op. cit.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

in the same period are known as *rajyakshetras*. As years passed, a number of changes took places, and the Guruvayur temple turned into a *rajakshetra*.

Talis were temples that followed the Sanskrit tradition. In this sense, it occurs in the compound word *tali-sanketam* or *kshetrasanketam* as distinguished from *grama sanketham*.¹²⁹ It occurs as a suffix, as in the case of *Parambum Tali*, situated in a village named Mullassery at Punnathurnadu. Most of the *talis* are shrines dedicated to Siva, where the idols were very high and massive. The *Parambum Tali* Siva temple is primarily dedicated to Lord Siva and is counted one among the 108 Siva temples of Kerala. It was also one among the eighteen and a half *tali* temples (*pathinettaratali*) in Kerala.¹³⁰ This is an ancient temple which was built before 1095 AD. It is situated on the top of a hill. *Poojas* are conducted thrice daily in this temple. *Jaladhara*, *sarkkara-payasam* and *pal-abhishekam* are the main *vazhipats* (rituals) and all are popular. The deity is six-feet high including the *peedam* and faces west. There are many prominent temples like the Punnathur Siva temple, the Kozhikkulangara Bhagavati temple, the Parthasaradhi temple and the Vedakkad temple.

Sree Kozhikulangara Bhagavati temple is a famous temple of Punnathur *Nampiti* at Chavakkad.¹³¹ A legend continues that the goddess appeared to the Punnathur *Nampiti* in his dream and informed him about her presence. As instructed by the goddess, he built a temple on the eastern side of the tank. On the day after the construction of the temple was completed, a *velichappat* (oracle) belonging to *komaratt* came there and demanded the sword of the goddess. *Nambiti* who was doubtful about the genuineness of the *velichappat* asked for proof that he was in fact, the oracle of the goddess. Immediately the *velichappat* jumped into the tank and came out with the sword of the goddess in his hand.¹³² Thereafter he was appointed as the

¹²⁹ A. Govinda Wariar, *Studies in the Term Tali*, Kerala Society Papers Vol. I & II, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997, p. 205.

¹³⁰ S. Jaya Shankar, *op. cit.*, p. 461; Kanipayyur Sankaran Nampootiripad, *Aryanmarude Kutiyettam, Keralathil*, Kunnamkulam, p. 273.

¹³¹ Kanipayyur Sankaran Nampootiripad, *Aryanmarude Kutiyettam, Keralathil, op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹³² S. Jaya Shankar, *op. cit.*, p. 450.

oracle of the temple. This sword is still stored in Komaratt House, and it is carried in a procession to the temple on the day of the star *Bharani*. The Vedakkad Sree Bhagavati temple is situated at Porkkalam in the district of Thrissur. According to ancient legends, it is said that Lord Parasurama chose this dense forest area for his deep penance.¹³³ He brought some pious Brahmins and made them settle there for continuing the great legacy of Vedic knowledge. The *melkoyma* of this temple was the Punnathur *Nampidi*.¹³⁴

In Kerala, as in other parts of South India, temples were the centres of social life.¹³⁵ The rise of temples was invariably related to the establishment of Brahmin settlement in Malabar. The temples, in due course of time, developed as socio-economic and cultural centres of Kerala in the Medieval period. The temples of a region were linked with *nadus* and *nagarams*. This relationship was seen during the eighteenth century. The Guruvayur temple was included in this trinity.¹³⁶ The new temple culture paved the way for basic changes in society. The temples transformed themselves to fully-developed institutions, which controlled the social life of people and new socio-economic relationships emerged, centred around the temple.¹³⁷ The rituals and worship in temples were linked to the production process in the agrarian society.

It is to be noted that as elsewhere, Punnathurnadu is also not free from caste restrictions. As stated above, peculiar social institutions like untouchability, unapproachability, unseeability existed in this region too. As time went on, as an impact of modernisation there emerged were organised resistance against caste domination and rigidity. The lower class people together with the reformers took the lead in some of the satyagrahas like Guruvayur.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 100; Personal Interview with Mr. Baburaj, Member, Temple Celebration Committee, Vedakkad, age 68, in Vedakkad temple on 18.05.2022.

¹³⁴ P. G. Rajaendran, *op. cit.*, p. 1104.

¹³⁵ K. M. Panikkar, *Essays on the History and Society of Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2016, p. 185.

¹³⁶ K. N. Ganesh, *Kerala Samooha Padanangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹³⁷ Chathanath Achuthanunny, M. R. Raghava Varier, *Kokasandesam*, Sukapuram, 2007, p. 25.

Guruvayur Satyagraha

Guruvayur was situated in Ponnani taluk in South Malabar.¹³⁸ This area was under the jurisdiction of the Punnathur Raja since the fourteenth century onwards.¹³⁹ The Guruvayur Satyagraha was an important milestone in the history of the social reform movement in South Malabar.¹⁴⁰ By mooting for entry into the temple at Guruvayur, the Congress was trying to create a focal point for all Hindus in Malabar. The temple could be approached from all sides, but entry was restricted to upper castes alone after a certain point on each side. The *Tiyyas* were allowed permission to go only till the *Thiyyarampalam*. It was situated in the east *nada*, hundred meters away from Guruvayur temple.

The Guruvayur Satyagraha was one of the most significant campaigns associated with the effort to abolish untouchability (1931-32).¹⁴¹ On November 1, 1931, the Kerala Provincial Congress launched the Satyagraha with the goal of granting entry to the Guruvayur temple to followers of all branches of the Hindu religion.¹⁴² The leader of the Satyagraha was K. Kelappan, popularly known as Kerala

¹³⁸ Dilip M. Menon, *Cambridge South Asian Studies, op. cit.*, p. 108; E. Rajan, *Guruvayur Sathyagraham*, Kozhikkode, 2014, p. 18.

¹³⁹ E. Rajan, *op. cit.*, 2014, p. 99.

¹⁴⁰ K. C. Krishnakumar, *op. cit.*, p. 121; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam: Keralavum Bharathavum*, Thrissur, 2015, p. 102.

¹⁴¹ M. G. S. Narayanan, *Guruvayur Oru Charithravalokanam*, Soveneer - Guruvayur Temple, 1974, p. 50; V. V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam*, Kozhikode, 2008, p. 69; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal, op. cit.*, p. 177; Gracious Benjamin, *Charithra Vinjanakosam*, Kottayam, 2009, p. 352; Krishnachaithanya, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57; A.K. Pillai, *Guruvayur Sathyagraham*, in P.K.M. Rahim (ed.), *Vannerynadu, op. cit.*, p. 251; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Keraladarsanam, op. cit.*, p. 76; V.V. Haridas, *Madhyakala Kerala Charithram, op. cit.*, p. 81; V.V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam*, Kozhikode, 2008, p. 69.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*; K. C. Krishna Kumar, *op. cit.*, p. 124; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Adiverukal, op. cit.*, p. 92; C. H. Kunjappa, *Guruvayur Kshethrapravesha Satyagraham*, Souvenir Guruvayur Temple, *op. cit.*, p. 318; K. N. Ganesh, *Exercises in Modern Kerala History, op. cit.*, p. 178; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam, op. cit.*, p. 102.

Gandhi,¹⁴³ and the captain of the Volunteer Corps, A. K. Gopalan.¹⁴⁴ Demanding the right to entry into the temple he embarked on a fast until death. On the intervention of Gandhiji, he stopped his fast on the 12th day.¹⁴⁵ Nenmini Parameswaran Bhattathirippad, Mekkattukulam Pallikutty and Pankutty Karuvan in Punnathurnadu participated actively in the Guruvayur Satyagraha.¹⁴⁶ Since the temple was regarded as a part of the Zamorin family's lands, control of it was taken over by a court of wards in 1916, and by 1928, he was in charge of overseeing it. The Madras High Court established a distinct administrative framework and affirmed the Zamorin's authority two years later.¹⁴⁷ He took a resolute stance in response to the request for permission to enter the shrine.¹⁴⁸ The Zamorin ordered the temple to be closed from 1st January in protest against the Satyagraha.¹⁴⁹ This decision was resented by all Hindus and other religious leaders. The Satyagraha was suspended during the closure of temple and it was begun again when the temple was re-opened on 28th January 1932. A referendum was organized among the Hindus of Ponnani taluk shortly after the Guruvayur Satyagraha was suspended to find out what the locals thought about

¹⁴³ Balan Poothery, *Guruvayur Temple and Sri Guruvayurappan's Miracles*, Kondotty, 2018, p. 89; E. Rajan, *Guruvayur Sathyagraham*, *op. cit.*,

¹⁴⁴ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Survey of Kerala History*, Kottayam, 1967, p. 316; Gracious Benjamin, *Charithra Vinjanakosam*, *op. cit.*; K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadum Pravasavum- Oru Charithranweshanam*, Vatakara, 2015, p. 74; C. H. Kunjappa, *op. cit.*; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam*, *op. cit.*; Krishnachaitanya, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

¹⁴⁵ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*; Balan Poothery, *op. cit.*; P. Laina, The Politics of Constructive Programme: The Temple Entry Movements in Kerala, in E. Sreejith (ed.), *Kerala Charithra Congress Prabhandangal*, Kottayam, 2014, p. 178; K. C. Krishnakumar, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

¹⁴⁶ *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Thaikkad Panchayat, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Chowannur Panchayat, Chowannur Block Vol. 82, Thrissur District, 1996.

¹⁴⁷ Pepita Seth, *Heaven on Earth*, New Delhi, 2009, p. 33; E. Rajan, *op. cit.*, p. 106; V.V. Haridas, *Madhyakala Keralacharithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 151; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, *op. cit.*, p. 177; Gracious Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*; V. V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam*, *op. cit.*; E. Rajan, *op. cit.*, p. 151; K. R. Vaidyanathan, *Srikrishna-The Lord of Guruvayur*, Bombay, 1992, p. 19; K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadum Pravasavum- Oru Charithranweshanam*, *op. cit.*, p. 74; A.K. Pillai, *op. cit.*, p. 249; V.V. Haridas, *Madhyakala Keralacharithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

allowing visitors to enter the shrine.¹⁵⁰ A little over 70% of respondents said they were in favor of allowing *Harijans* to enter the shrine. The Guruvayur Satyagraha played a great role in moulding public opinion towards progressive insights. This Satyagraha failed to achieve its immediate objective, it had helped in creating a positive attitude towards the eradication of untouchability,¹⁵¹ and also mobilised the masses and gave them access to the political movement.¹⁵² However, the waves of Satyagraha affected the people at Guruvayur and neighbouring *desams*.

The oppressed Harijans and other backward classes received a message of hope in 1936 with the Travancore Declaration of Temple Entry. In August 1939, the Madras Hindu Temple Entry Disabilities Removal Act was passed. A decade later the Madras Temple Entry Authorisation (Amendment) Act enabled all classes of Hindus to enjoy the right of entry even into temples that had been constructed for the benefit of particular sections of the Hindu community.¹⁵³ The reform was expanded to the Malabar region by the Madras Temple Entry Act of 1947. Untouchability was outlawed by law at the start of independence, and those who continued to practice it risked punishment. Thus, the historic campaign in Kerala to end untouchability produced tangible outcomes.¹⁵⁴ The country's public opinion became strongly pro-abolition of untouchability and pro-entry into temples as a result of the Satyagraha campaign.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*; E. Rajan, *op. cit.*, p. 206; Krishnachaithanya, *op. cit.*, p. 57; A.K. Pillai, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

¹⁵¹ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 316; Gracious Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 352; V.V. Haridas, *Madhyakala Keralacharithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

¹⁵² K. N. Ganesh, *Exercises in Modern Kerala History*, Kottayam, 2012 p. 179; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam*, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIO CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS OF PUNNATHURNADU

The study focuses on the socio-cultural and religious conditions that Punnathurnadu witnessed during the Medieval period. This chapter will also delve into the religious harmony among the three existing religions namely Hinduism, Christianity and Islam in this region. Festivals are integral part of social life. The Zamorin gave priority to the fairs and festivals in his kingdom. The first part of this chapter deals with the religious co-existence and the second part details the festivals of various communities. In Punnathurnadu, the festivals and ritual ceremonies are not only social events, but they were intertwined with religious significance as well.

Religion

The religions of India are as numerous, as diverse and as incompatible with each other as are the various races that inhabit the country.¹ In ancient times, India was considered as the homeland of Hinduism. Later this country witnessed and welcomed the emergence of new religions. Buddhist and Jain influence in India can be identified through sculptures and inscriptions. In the Medieval period, there was expansion of trade and commerce. This paved the way for the increase of foreign contact and led to the emergence of different religions on Indian soil. Thus Christianity, Judaism, Islam and other religions came to India.

The extensive sea coast, that was served by a number of sea ports exposed Kerala to diverse influences from countries and cultures across the sea and helped in the evolution of a composite and cosmopolitan culture. Owing to its geographical peculiarities, Kerala is regarded as a secular place. Ancient Kerala is accredited with

¹ Charles Sandford, *Studies in Indian Society Culture and Religion*, Delhi, 1988, p. 132; M. L. Bose, *Social and Cultural History of Ancient India*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 183.

an initiation of a relationship in the case of heterogeneous religions. Alongside Brahmanical Hinduism, West Asian religions like Christianity, Islam, and Judaism were also quite popular in Kerala, especially in the coastal towns.² Kerala evolved into a hub for the synthesis of all Indian philosophical systems and religions, including the major global faiths, even in prehistoric times.³ While Hindus represented a definite majority, Christians and Muslims each formed a strong minority. Every religion's spirituality was rooted in its holy texts and the actual locations of gatherings for prayer. Since ancient time onwards Punnathurnadu was famous for its religious harmony.

Hinduism

The temples and allied institutions deserve special notice as the nuclei of a religion and culture. Punnathurnadu was a region with a Hindu majority from olden times. The presence of many temples and sacred groves was a feature of this region. The structure of large temples, both ancient and modern, is the same everywhere. It would not be out of place to discuss the religion of the Malabari people here, as the topic of religion and temples—houses dedicated to religious worship—are so closely related.⁴ The temples with their paintings, decorative motifs and limited sculptured panels were theatres that encompassed all arts by themselves. It inculcated *bhakti* through the stories of epics and *puranas*, that were told and enacted inside the temple. The gurus of the *bhakti* cult popularized the worship of Hindu gods and goddesses, including Vishnu, Siva, and other deities. Temples known as *ambalams* or *kshetrams* are devoted to Ganapathi or Vigneswara, as well as to the higher deities of the Hindu pantheon, including Siva and Vishnu, and their consorts and incarnations.

² Kesavan Veluthat, *Early Medieval in South India*, New Delhi, 2011, p. 258; Malayinkeezhu Gopalakrishnan, *Keralam Lokacharithrathiloode*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2014, p. 28.

³ A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, Kottayam, 2010, p. 74; Rajkumar, *Literary and Cultural Perspectives on Ancient India*, New Delhi, 1999, p. 183; T. O. Aleyas, *Syrian Manuel Samagra Kerala Charithram*, Kottayam, 2015, p. 76; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1983, p. 5.

⁴ K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Written in the form of notes on Visscher's Letters from Malabar Vol. 4*, New Delhi, 1986, p. 1.

The Sri Krishna temple at Guruvayur is one of the most holy temples in South India.⁵ This temple was constructed in the Kerala style of architecture. The mural of this temple is also very famous. *Kokasandesha*, written in 15th century is the foremost among *kavyas* that refer to Guruvayur as Kuravayur.⁶ Sri Guruvayurappan is the manifested form of Lord Vishnu, the master of Vaikunta, the ruler of all the fourteen worlds.⁷ The temple faces towards the east with two *gopurams* (towers), one in the east (*kizhakkenada*), and another in the west (*padinjarenada*). It is square in shape and bounded by a tall laterite wall on the east and south. On the western side, on the northern side, are tiled buildings housing and feeding pilgrims, together with Brahmin bathing shelters and a tank. The roofs of the temple, the *nalambalam* around it, and the *chuttambalam* in the outer courtyard—where the *Puranas* are recited and explained—are all made of copper. The towering, bell-shaped *dwajastambam*, or gold-tipped flagstaff, is a striking feature. The newly-developed temple got substantial amount of land as grants from the *nattutaiyavar* and other local landlords. Apart from rent-free lands, the Guruvayur temple received 8000 pagodas in cash annually towards the expenditure incurred by ceremonies.⁸ The temple had extensive landed property as well as gold and other valuables in abundance, contributed by rulers and other devotees. According to popular belief, some centuries ago there were 72 *illams*

⁵ A Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer Trichur*, Thiruvalla, 1962, p. 240; P. V. Krishna Varier, *Guruvayur Kshethram – Chila Aithihyangal*, Mathrubhumi Weekly Book No. 36, 1959, p. 9; V. V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam*, Kozhikode, 2008, p. 65; V. V. Haridas, *Zamorins and the Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, New Delhi, 2016, p. 217; K. C. Krishnakumar, *Keralam Jillakaliloode*, Kozhikode, 2015, p. 123; Balan Poothery, *Guruvayur Temple and Sri Guruvayurappan's Miracles*, Kondotty, 2018, p. 15; P. G. Rajendran, *Kshetravijnana Kosham*, Kottayam, 2000, p. 409; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 19; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Keraladarshanam*, M.R. Thampan (ed.), Thiruvananthapuram, 2011, p. 72; V.V. Haridas, *Madhyakala Keralacharithram*, Kottayam, 2022, p. 79.

⁶ P.G. Rajendran, *op. cit.*, p. 411; V. V. K. Valath, *Keralathile Sthala Charithrangal Thrissur Jilla*, Thrissur, 1981, p. 237; K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadum Pravasavum – Oru Charithranweshanam*, Vatakara, 2015, p. 73; Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Kokasandesam Stanza 34*, Kottayam, 1958, p. 48; Rajalakshmi Manazhi, *Poornavatharam*, Palaghat, 2021, p. 30; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Guruvayur Oru Charithravalokanam*, Souvenir Guruvayur, 1974, p. 46; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Kozhikkode: Charithrathilninnu Chila Edukal*, Kozhikkode, 2011, p. 137.

⁷ Balan Poothery, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁸ Inam Registers (Chavakkad Taluk) Regional Archives Kozhikkode.

(Namboothiri families) in the vicinity of the temple who exercised the right over the temple as *uralars* (trustees). These families seven were still in existence in the 17th century.⁹ Due to the salinity of the surrounding soil and the sparse population, all of the priests who served in the temple were originally from elsewhere. In course of time, these *illams* became extinct one by one, till at last only one among them, Mallissery, remained.¹⁰ Around the temple are the homes of the Zamorin, Mallisseri *Nambutiri*, Eralpad Raja, Punnathur *nambidi*, and other upper caste members, as well as the *uralars*.¹¹ The Zamorin was vested with the control of the area north of Guruvayur and enjoyed safe access to the temple. Mallissery *Namputiri* and Punnathur Raja administered the temple as representatives of the Zamorin.¹² All the properties belonging to these extinct families gradually became properties of the Devaswam.

In every big temple, there were two *koymas* –*purakoyma* and *akakoyma*. The *purakoyma* is entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the temple and its property against external aggression. The *akakoyma* was the pivot around which functioned the regular *poojas* as well as special ones. The Kakkad *Karanavar* was the earliest *purakoyama*. Following him, the position was held by the Punnathur chieftain.¹³ The Zamorin, who was the overlord of the land in those days, assumed suzerainty of the temple from AD 1855.¹⁴ The Zamorins became staunch devotees of

⁹ Pepita Seth, *Heaven on Earth*, New Delhi, 2009, p. 34; The seven families were Chomana, Jnelliyyur, Trithala, Tathamangalam, Pillanazhi, Arimpur and Mallissery.

¹⁰ *Voice of Guruvayur*, Guruvayur, 1969, p. 24; Divakaran Kattakada, *Kerala Sancharam*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2015, p. 366; Pepita Seth, *op. cit.*, p. 34.; E. Rajan, *Guruvayur Sathyagraham*, Kozhikkode, 2014, p. 105; Elamkulam P.N. Kunjanpillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, Kottayam, 1970, p. 196.

¹¹ C. A. Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997, p. 481.

¹² Divakaran Kattakada, *Kerala Sancharam*, *op. cit.*; Pepita Seth, *op. cit.*; According to a member of present Punnathur family, there is a belief that they too were once one of the Ooralans, but that they surrendered their rights.

¹³ K. K. N. Kurup, *Sree Guruvayoorkshethram: Puravruthavum Charithravum*, Kozhikkode, 2014, p. 58; K. V. Krishna Iyyer, *The History of Guruvayur*, Guruvayur, 1986, p. 132.

¹⁴ K. V. Krishna Iyyer, *The History of Guruvayur*, *op. cit.*, p. 133; Rajalakshmi Manazhi, *Poornavatharam*, *op. cit.*, p. 31; *Voice of Guruvayur*, *op. cit.*

the Lord. The patronage given by the Zamorins to Guruvayur temple was significant as the temple lay in the Ponnani region where constant conflict took place.¹⁵

There were five *desams* including; Guruvayur, Tiruvenkidam, Mammiyur, Thamarayur, Anjiyur and sixteen sub temples namely; Edathedam, Anjiyur, Thamarayur, Sreekandapuram, Mannur, Kuzhikkad, Thathamangalam, Ayyankulangara, Chingankavu, Narayanankulangara, Kuruvayurngala, Mammiyur, Thiruthi, Thiruvenkidam, Paluvai and Maruthayur, under the jurisdiction of the Guruvayur temple.¹⁶ A well-organised Devaswam and some sub temples are other special characteristics of the Guruvayur temple.

The sincere efforts of many saints have helped to convert Guruvayur into one of the most renowned pilgrimage centre. Professor K. V. Krishna Iyer has written about the mystic experiences of the five great saintly devotees who lived in the 16th and 17th centuries namely, Vilwamangalam Swamiyar, Manavedan, Melpathur, Puntanam and Kururamma.¹⁷ These great persons wrote their literary works at the Guruvayur temple.

Vilwamangalam Swamiyar were ardent devotees of Guruvayurappan. Manavedan, a Zamorin king was an ardent devotee and a scholar who enhanced the glory of Guruvayur.¹⁸ Although he enjoyed the opportunity to rule for only three years, his activities were appealing to all. His artistic talents eventually inspired him to combine music, dance and poetry to create a dramatised version of Lord Krishna's

¹⁵ K. N. Ganesh, *Reflection on Pre-Modern Kerala*, Kottayam, 2016, p. 79; K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadvum Pravasavum*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

¹⁶ E. Rajan, *op. cit.*, p. 101; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Guruvayur Oru Charithravalokanam*, Souvenir Guruvayur, 1974, p. 47; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam: Keralavum Bharathavum*, Thrissur, 2018, p. 100; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Keraladharshanam*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

¹⁷ M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam: Keralavum Bharathavum*, *op. cit.*; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Guruvayur Oru Charithravalokanam*, *op. cit.*, p. 49; K. R. Vaidyanathan, *Sri Krishna: The Lord of Guruvayur*, Bombay, 1992, p. 15; P. G. Rajendran, *op. cit.*, p. 413; E. Rajan, *op. cit.*, p. 101; Balan Pootheri, *op. cit.*, p. 18; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Keraladharshanam*, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.

¹⁸ Balan Poothery, *op. cit.*, p. 76; V. V. Haridas, *Zamorins and the Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, New Delhi, 2016, p. 218; V. V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rastreeyam*, *op. cit.*; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Keraladharshanam*, *op. cit.*

life and death. This gave him the impetus for the creation of the art form- *Krishnanattam*. Melpathur Bhattathiripad was a great Sanskrit scholar and poet.¹⁹ He completed the composition of the Sanskrit hymn *Narayaneeyam*.²⁰ It is faithfully recited by all Hindus even now and they hope to attain salvation by the regular recital of the same.

Poontanam *Namputiri*, was a native of Nenmini in Valluvanad.²¹ While on his way from Calicut to Guruvayur, he was set upon by robbers at Kundotti and in response to his appeals, Lord Krishna, himself appeared.²² Poonthanam composed the long poem *Jnanapana* glorifying Lord Krishna.²³ It was written in his mother tongue. Even today the *Jnanapana* by itself is more than sufficient to acclaim his greatness. Kururamma was married into the Kurur family. After her marriage, she came to be known as 'Kururamma'. She was a childless woman who had been widowed at a very young age.²⁴ She had only one aspiration, that of seeing God and serving Him, which she achieved in her lifetime.

The Punnathur fort is situated 2 kilometres from Guruvayur and is also known as *anakkotta*.²⁵ The elephants owned by Guruvayur devaswam are being looked after here. There are 65 elephants here now. Guruvayur Padmanabhan and many other

¹⁹ V. V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam*, *op. cit.*, p. 73; Kamala, *Sree Guruvayurappan*, Guruvayur, 2017, p. 12.

²⁰ Balan Pootheri, *op. cit.*, p. 54; E. Rajan, *op. cit.*, p. 109; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Keraladharshanam*, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.

²¹ P. G. Rajendran, *op. cit.*, p. 413; K. V. Krishna Iyyer, *Zamorin of Calicut*, Calicut, 1938, p. 296

²² K. V. Krishna Iyyer, *Zamorin of Calicut*, *op. cit.*, p. 296; V. V. Haridas, *Zamorins and the Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 218; C. G. Nair, *Guruvayur Kshethram Aithihyangalil*, Souvenir Guruvayur Temple, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-35.

²³ Balan Pootheri, *op. cit.*; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam*, *op. cit.*, p. 100; Kamala, *op. cit.*, p. 12; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Keraladharshanam*, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

²⁴ Kamala, *op. cit.*, p. 13; E. Rajan, *op. cit.*, p. 113; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam*, *op. cit.*, p. 101; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrakarante Keraladharshanam*, *op. cit.*

²⁵ V. Murali, *Guruvayurkshethram*, ed. P. B. Salim, *Malabar: Paithrukavum Prathapavum*, Kozhikkode, 2011, p. 316; Divakaran Kattakada, *Kerala Sancharam*, *op. cit.*, p. 336; K. C. Krishnakumar, *op. cit.*; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Keralathile Rajavamshangal*, Kottayam, 2012, p. 63.

renowned elephants are the special inmates of this centre. A team of specially trained people headed by a veterinary doctor has been posted for the care of elephants. A museum now provides an opportunity to see and revel at the sight of extraordinary and rare artefacts that had been offered to the temple by ardent devotees. In library there are many religious books written in diverse languages like Malayalam, English, Hindi, Tamil etc. Besides the invaluable collection of *thaliyolagranthams* (books written on palm leaves), there are *granthams* meant for dispelling doubts within this library.

Folk beliefs play very important role in our local knowledge. These beliefs are linked with nature, society and culture. When human beings feared natural powers, they began to worship these powers. Before religions came into existence, various beliefs occupied a place of importance in this *nadu*. These beliefs encompassed all aspects of human life i.e., birth, death, illnesses and customs. Most Hindus cultivated the holy basil (known as *tulasi*) in their houses and offered daily prayers and sacrifices to the plant. They considered *tulasi* to be the wife of Lord Vishnu, and revered it accordingly.²⁶

In Hinduism, Siva is revered alongside Brahma and Vishnu as the other half of the *trimurti*, or trinity.²⁷ Evidently non-Aryan practices, such as *naga* worship and ancestor worship, had also been widely practiced. Rituals rooted in the relationship between Man and nature had great importance in the primitive culture. This is indicated in all kinds of traditional performances in each religion.²⁸ They are attempts made by men in association with supernatural beings to fulfill their wishes. The *mantric* and *tantric* modes of worship prevail in all temples. Puzhakkara Chennas Namputiripad was the *tantric* of the Guruvayur temple. He authored the book *Tantrasamuchayam*, which was an attempt to codify the rituals of various temples in

²⁶ Abbe J. Dubois, *Hindu Manner, Customs and Ceremonies*, London, 1906, p. 652; Personal interview with Mr. Jayaprakash Kunnathully, age 76, Committee member Sree Durga Temple Elavally, at his residence Parakkad in Thrissur District, dated on 18-12-2019.

²⁷ William Logan, *Malabar Manual Vol. I*, Delhi, 1887, p. 187.

²⁸ Raghavan Payyanadu, *Folklore*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2014, p. 372.

Kerala.²⁹ There are a number of *poojas* performed every day between 1 am and 5 am. The daily rituals in the temple and association of social responsibility to maintain the rituals increased religious merit and devotion.

Most of the folk arts in India have a religious origin. They evolved as part of the cosmic communication with the Gods. The spiritual union with God was achieved by praising the glory of God through songs, *bhajans*, dance-dramas, tableaux and other art forms.³⁰ The temple-centric arts of architecture, sculpture, painting, recitation, music, dance and drama integrated with religious rituals. The *kuttampalam*, which is the stage where dances and dramas were performed in every temple.³¹ Among the performing arts of Kerala, the fairly well-known forms are the dance-drama, *Kathakali*, *Krishnanattamkali*, *Cakyar Kuttu* and *Ottamtullal*. All these art forms exist in continuity with literature in their traditional performances.

Krishnanattam is singular, literally and figuratively. From the time of its inception to the present day there has been only one set of players for this unique art form. Manavedan became the Zamorin king in the year 1685. He composed the Sanskrit poem *Krishnageethi*, on the lines of the *Sreekrishna Charitha*, for enacting in the temple.³² The actor has to dance according to the rhythm and the music provided behind him. This performance was known as krishnanattam. It began to be staged in

²⁹ K. K. N. Kurup, *Sree Guruvayoorshethram: Puravrutthavum Charithravum*, *op. cit.*, p. 55; E. Rajan, *op. cit.*, p. 106; P. C. K. Nampootiripad, Chennas Narayanan Nampootiripad, in P. K. A. Rahim (ed.) *Vannerynadu*, Sri. Kattumatam Narayanan Shashtipoorthy Celebration Committee, Perumpatappu, 1994, p. 69; Aswathi Thirunal Gauri Lakshmi Bai, *Kerala Samskaram Oru Thiranottam*, Kozhikode, 2012, p. 166.

³⁰ Durga Das Mukhopadhyay, *Folk arts and Social Communication*, New Delhi, 1994, p. 26; V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*, p. 230; Divakaran Kattakkada, *Keraleeya Gramangalilude*, Kottayam, 1968, p. 288.

³¹ Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple and Early Medieval Agrarian System*, Sukapuram, 1992, p. 66; P. K. Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarikacharithram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2012, p. 495; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, Kottayam, p. 96.

³² P. T. Bhaskara Panikkar, *Bharatha Vijnanakosam*, Kottayam, 1990, p. 552; S. K. Vasanthan, *Nammal Nadanna Vazhikal- Kerala Charithrivum Samskaravum*, Thrissur, 2006, p. 163; S. Achuthawarrier, *Kerala Samskaram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2012, p. 94; Martha Bush Ashton Sikora, Robert P. Sikora, *Krishnanattam*, New Delhi, 1993, p. 20; A. C. G. Raja, *Krishnanattam*, Souvenir Guruvayur Temple, *op. cit.*, p. 182; V. V. Haridas, *Zamorins and the Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 218; V. V. Haridas, *Samoothirikalathe Kozhikkode-Kathayum Charithravum*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2009, p. 92; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, Kottayam, 1978, p. 109; Krishna Chaitanya, *Kerala*, New Delhi, 1994, p. 126; V.V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam*, *op. cit.*, p. 65; Aswathi Thirunal Gauri Lakshmi Bai, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-105.

the temple regularly as an offering to the Lord. The chiefs of other principalities who were on terms of friendship with the Zamorin also invited the troupe to their palaces. The courtesan's mansion was as significant an institution as the chieftain's palace and the Brahminical temple of the age.³³ Not only wealth and power but poetry and art were also placed at feet of the courtesans. The performing year began with six months of training and the troupe was sent to the Guruvayur temple, as a dedication to the Lord for a performance of nine days. For eight days, plays were acted in serial order from *avataram* to *swargarohanam*.³⁴ But on the ninth day, the *avataram* was acted to end the series as an auspicious sign to indicate that the Lord is still with us.³⁵ Krishnanattam was a synthesis of musical instruments, songs, dance and acting.

Kathakali is a globally-renowned art form that belongs to Kerala. It is the revised version of Ramanattam. Costumes, choreography, acting, music and rhythm combine in this art form to make it a sublime form of art. One of the special characteristics of kathakali is that there is no oral acting involved. The actors present the characters and events through *mudras*, viz. gestures and expressions using the face, hands and eyes, with the help of background singers.³⁶

Koothu was the performing art of Punnathurnadu that had developed around the temples of this region following the Sanskrit tradition. It is a solo performance and a combination of prose and poetry. It has been traditionally performed by the *Chakyar*

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 94; T. K. Rajasekharan, *Kerala Through the Ages*, Govt. of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1976, p. 50; P. T. Bhaskara Panikkar, *op. cit.*; S. K. Vasanthan, *op. cit.*; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookkodu Panchayat, Chavakkad Block Vol. 81, Kerala State Planning Commission, Thrissur, 1996.

³⁴ V. V. Haridas, *Samoothirikalathe Kozhikkode – Kathayum Charithravum*, *op. cit.*, p. 92; C. G. Nair, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38; E Rajan, *op. cit.*, p. 112; Pepita Seth, *op. cit.*, p. 132; The 8 episodes are : *Avatharam*– Incarnation, *Kaliyamardan*– the suppression of Kaliya, *Rasakreeda*– the play of Rasa, *Kamsavadha*– The killing of Kamsa, *Swayamvara*– Marriage, *Banayudha*– The fight with Bana, *Vividha Vadha*–The killing of Vividha and *Swargarohana*– The Ascent to Heaven; V.V. Haridas, *Kshethram*, *Uthsavam*, *Rashtreeyam*, *op. cit.*; Aswathi Thirunal Gauri Lakshmi Bai, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

³⁵ V. Subramania Iyer, *Origin and Technique of Krishnanattam*, Souvenir , Sree Guruvayur Temple, *op. cit.*, p. 384.

³⁶ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 98; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 253; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 45; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, Kottayam, 1978, p. 111; Krishna Chaitanya, *op. cit.*, p. 128; Aswathi Thirunal Gauri Lakshmi Bai, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

community.³⁷ This was mainly enjoyed by the upper classes of the society. This art was purely regional. It was to be performed on the day of the *Rohini nakshatra* in the Malayalam month of *Vrischika*. The Govindapuram Vishnu temple was the *gramakshetram* of the renowned Vanneri and this temple has been mentioned in *Kokasandesam*.³⁸ In koothu, the artists were called *chakkianmar* and the *nannaimar* were the female counter parts of *chakkainmar*. Neelakandan and Sastrasharmman were the main *Chakkainmar* in this region and they performed Koothu in this temple.

Koodiyattom is a traditional Sanskrit drama that originated in Kerala. Usually, only the koothambalam, a temple theater, is used for its performances. The performing artists are members of the *chakkiars* and *nangiars*, two distinct cultures that depend on temples. To the accompaniment of *mizhavus* (pot-shaped drums covered in animal hide), *edakka* (a small percussion instrument played with a stick), *kurunkuzhal* (a small wind instrument similar to the shehnai), and *kuzithalan* (a small pair of cymbals), the *chakkiars* are actors and the *nangiars*, who are part of the Nambiar community, play female roles.³⁹

³⁷ C. R. Rajagopalan, *Kerala Samskarapolimakal*, Kottayam, 2017, p. 27; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 259; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 48; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 107; Krishna Chaitanya, *op. cit.*, p. 124; K. Sugathan, *Buddha Mathavum Jathivyavasthayum*, Calicut, 2011, p. 119; Aymanam Krishna Kaimal, Traditional Performing Art Forms, in P.J. Cheriyan (ed.) *Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 100; Aswathi Thirunal Gauri Lakshmi Bai, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

³⁸ P. G. Rajendran, *op. cit.*, p. 417; S. Jayashankar, *Temples of Thrissur district*, Directorate of Census Operations, Kerala, 2006, p. 419.

³⁹ Durga Das Mukhopadhyay, *Folk arts and Social Communication*, *op. cit.*, p. 107; C. R. Rajagopalan, *Kerala Samskarapolimakal*, *op. cit.*; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 98; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 61; Aswathi Thirunal Gauri Lakshmi Bai, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

Christianity

The visit of St. Thomas, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is credited by the Syrian Christian community in Kerala with bringing them to faith.⁴⁰ According to legend, the apostle landed in AD 52 in Maliankara, which is next to Muziris,⁴¹ and converted Hindu families, who belonged to the high caste. During his extensive travels, he established seven churches or Christian communities in different parts of Kerala. The places where he established such communities were Maliankara, Palayur, Kottakkavu, Kokkamangalam, Quilon, Niranam and Nilakkal.⁴² In fact nowhere had the apostle constructed churches as places of worship. He had instead erected crosses at each of these seven localities.

The Jewish connection with India is well established, whether through the settlement of small Jewish communities on the west coast or through the participation of Jewish traders in commerce across the Arabian sea between India and Arabia.⁴³ Jews have been integrated into Kerala society from very early times, in addition to Christians. Cranganore, known as Muziris to the Jews was the only sea port in India known to the outside world. The story goes that the Jews arrived on the Kerala coast

⁴⁰ S. Murali, *South Indian Studies*, Delhi, 1998, p. 115; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Church*, Palayur, 2013, p. 9; P. T. Bhaskra Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 559; T. R. Venugopalan, *Sampathum Adhikaravum Thrissuril Ninnulla Oru Kazhcha*, Thrissur, 2012, p. 238; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 139; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli*, Parish Directory, St. Thomas Archdiocesan Shrine Palayur, 2013, p. 41.

⁴¹ T.R. Venugopal, *op. cit.*, p. 239; William Logan, *Malabar Manual Vol. 1*, *op. cit.*, p. 202; T. O. Aleyas, *op. cit.*, p. 86; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 10; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli*, *op. cit.*; Krishna Chaitanya, *op. cit.*, p. 58; Balagopal T.S. Prabhu, Kerala Architecture, in P.J. Cheriyan (ed.), *Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala* *op. cit.*, p. 255.

⁴² Jose Chittilappilly, *op. cit.*, p. 14; Shamsullakhadiri, *Pracheena Malabar*, Calicut, 2012, p. 32; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 54; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 92; P. K. Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2012, p. 191; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 51; Balagopal T.S. Prabhu, *Kerala Architecture*, *op. cit.*; K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala, Vol. II*, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

⁴³ Benjamin J Israel, *The Jews of India*, New Delhi, 1982, p. 60; T. R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 238; Balagopal T.S. Prabhu, *Kerala Architecture*, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

in AD 68, fleeing religious persecution back home, and settled at Cranganore in the first century of the Christian period.⁴⁴ The rulers of Kerala were sympathetic to those migrants and were kind enough to grant special privileges to the Jewish trading community.⁴⁵ As Christianity expanded and the Jews faced harsh persecution at home, more waves of emigrants may have arrived in later years. According to Moses Pereira De Paiva, one of four commissioners appointed by the Amsterdam Jews, between seventy and eight thousand Jews moved to Malabar around 370 CE.⁴⁶ Even before Christ, Jews had settled in different parts of Kerala. Paloor is not far away from Cranganore. They settled at Paloor (Palayur), Pullut, Madayiand Maliangara.⁴⁷ These places are looked upon even today as the earliest of the Jewish settlements in Kerala. St Thomas came to India in search of the flourishing Jewish community. It is believed that this Jewish presence might have attracted St Thomas, who himself was a Jew, to come to Palayur.⁴⁸

One of the seven founding churches of Malabar is said to have been the St. Thomas church at Palayur.⁴⁹ The group holds that St. Thomas the apostle delivered a sermon at this same location. However, there exists a mound near the modern Catholic church, which was supposedly the site of the original Jewish synagogue, though it has not been clearly proven. According to Moses Pereira De Paiva, there was also a Jewish

⁴⁴ A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 44; K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadam Pravasavum*, *op. cit.*, p. 17; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli*, *op. cit.*, p. 13; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 12; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29; Malayinkeezhu Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 28; K.M. Anil, *Folklore: Janasamskrithiyude Verukal*, Kannur, 2015, p. 65.

⁴⁵ K. K. N. Kurup, *The Legacy of Islam (Kerala)*, Kannur, 2006, p. 84.

⁴⁶ Benjamin J Israel, *The Jews of India*, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁴⁷ A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 94; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala History and its Makers*, Kottayam, 1987, p. 68; C. Adarsh, *Vibhavanakal Vinimayangal – Kodungalloorinte Vyavaharika Bhoomisastram*, Sukapuram, 2013, p. 239; T. O. Aleyas, *op. cit.*, p. 86; P. T. Baskara Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 729.

⁴⁸ S. Murali, *South Indian Studies*, *op. cit.*, p. 115; P. M. Jussay, *Jews of Kerala*, Calicut, 2005, p. 22; George Menachery, *Palayuril Athbutham*, Thrissur Diocesan Centenary Commemoration 1887-1987, Archepatchial Archives, Thrissur Diocese, 1987.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 133; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 92; T. O. Aleyas, *op. cit.*, p. 66; Ravindran, *Ente Keralam*, Kozhikode, 2012, p. 76; K. C. Krishnakumar, *op. cit.*, p. 123; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

synagogue and ten families in this settlement.⁵⁰ It was situated on a hillock and the place came to be known as Jewish hill (see Appendix 4.11).⁵¹ Apart from the Jew's Hill at Chavakkad, there are no longer any indications of Jewish communities in these areas.⁵² Palayur was a famous religious centre of the Jains as well.

After the Jews left Palayur, a member of the *Tiyya* caste is reported to have received a nearby plot of land from them, provided that he would burn a lamp there every day in honor of the synagogue.⁵³ Until recently, everyone complied with the custom. Found on Jew's Hill, a granite slab with a lengthy inscription written in worn-out *vattezhuttu* is currently on display in the Deputy Thahsildar's office (see Appendix 4.12).⁵⁴ Like the Christians who came before them, the Jewish immigrants enjoyed considerable economic success and gained a number of beneficial rights from the local authorities.

Despite having an alien origin, the Christian faith gradually gained acceptance as a native religion. In due course of time, the Christians of different localities constructed small church buildings to assemble and pray. Some Christians at Parappur requested the Punnathur *Raja* and the Manakkulam *Raja* to construct a church in the region. As the result, a church built at Parappur for sixty four tenancy in 1731.⁵⁵ Thus,

⁵⁰ T. R. Venugopalan, *op. cit.*, p. 234; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli, op. cit.*, p. 52.

⁵¹ George Menachery, *op. cit.*; Jose Chittilappilly, *op. cit.*, p. 14; Divakaran Kattakada, *Kerala Sancharam, op. cit.*, p. 371; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikalum Sahithyakaranmarum*, Kozhikkode, 1954, p. 46; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli, op. cit.*, 2020, p. 52; Raphy Neelamkavil, *Desam Chollithanna Kadhakal*, Cochin, p. 70.

⁵² Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikalum Sahithyakaranmarum, op. cit.*; A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History, op. cit.*; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁵³ K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadam Pravasavum, op. cit.*, p. 17; Jose Chittilappilly, *op. cit.*, p. 13; C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, pp. 478-479; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 63; Raphy Neelamkavil, *op. cit.*; Raphy Neelamkavil, *Charithrathilekkoru joothashilarekha*, *Rashtradeepika*, daily, 28th Jauary 2010, p.4.

⁵⁴ C.A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 479; Jose Chittilappilly, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14; Raphy Neelamkavil, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ *Grama Vikasana Rekha* Tolur Panchayat, Puzhakkal Block, Vol.86, Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur District, 1996.; N. C. Jose, *Thirunna Charithram*, Souvenir St. John Nepumcian Forane Church, Parappur, 2023, p. 18; George Menachery, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

it was on the very spot where the apostle had erected the cross in Palayur,⁵⁶ that the present huge stone cross is situated, in commemoration of the first cross. The modern church was a tiled building, that measures 86 feet in length and 34 feet in breadth. The construction of the new church was completed in 1607. During the military adventures of Tipu Sultan (1790-92), the church was badly damaged. Later the British took over the administration of Malabar after defeating Tipu Sultan, and the church was repaired and renovated.⁵⁷ The novelty of Palayur is that the present church with all its ancient architectural features was built in the same spot where the first church had stood. The Christians were well-settled and well-integrated in the socio-political structure here. They were treated as equals all along and had been assigned very important roles in the economic and social life of this region.

There exists a cultural and historical museum also here. This museum, because of its unique and antique exhibits is well-frequented and renowned. The important and interesting exhibits one can see in this museum include the umbrella stone which is supposed to be of the Great Stone period, statues carved out of solid granite that weighing tonnes, ancient roof tiles manufactured by the tile factory which was run by the Basel Mission in olden times, large containers moulded out of bronze, ornaments and dresses used by Christians of olden times, hanging lamps, glass lamps, hand bell used at the altar, sacred statuettes made out of ivory, wood and cement, sacristies pulpit for the priest to deliver sermons during mass, crowns, candle sticks, rickshaw pulled by people and ancient prayer books in Syriac language.⁵⁸ Copper plate inscriptions are also kept in this museum. It is written in AD 1606 (Kollavarsham 781). It shed light on real estate business, markets, cash based economy.⁵⁹ This

⁵⁶ Jose Chittilappilly, *op. cit.*, p. 11; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Sancharikalum Sahithyakaranmarum*, *op. cit.*, p. 46; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Prabhathakiranangal*, Kottayam, 2001, p. 23; Ravindran, *Ente Keralam*, Kozhikode, 2012, p. 76.

⁵⁷ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 95; Jose Chittilappilly, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

⁵⁸ Personal interview with Mr. Babu C.M., Trustee, St. Thomas Archdiocesan Shrine Palayur, Age 58, dated 27.05.2022 at Palayur, Thrissur District

⁵⁹ T.R. Venu Gopalan, *op. cit.*, pp. 342-344, Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-31.

historical-cultural museum helps people to understand the historical background of the St. Thomas Christians.

Another small Christian community existed here known as the Malabar Independent Syrian Church. They separated from Jacobites in 1772 and their headquarters are situated at Thozhiyur.⁶⁰ The Right Rev. Kattumangat Mar Curilos was the founder of the Thozhiyur church. In 1772 he was appointed as metropolitan to the office of Bishops.⁶¹ In 1774 when he was very old, he appointed his younger brother as the *rampan* or the second Bishop of Thozhiyur under the name of Coorilos, bestowed with all powers.⁶² At that time Hydroskutty Moopper was the *karyasta* of Punnathur Raja. When related his sad history, Hydros Kutty Moopper promised to secure for him all possible help from the hand of Punnathur Raja.⁶³ The Raja gave hundred acres of land to this church in the form of reward. The church has about thousand members and has six churches under its aegis viz. Thozhiyur, Anjoor, Chalisseri, Porkulam, Pazhanji and Kunnamkulam.

Christianity was founded by Jesus Christ in Jerusalem. After the crucifixion and subsequent resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ, his teachings attracted more followers and believers. The existence of a single God who created the cosmos is the cornerstone of Christian doctrine. St. Thomas, a disciple of Jesus Christ, landed at Chettuvai and travelled through Palayur. The Christian communities maintain that the apostle preached in the church and uphold tradition. It is reported that St. Thomas strolled past the Taliyil Devaswam temple and struck up a discussion with a few Brahmins taking a dip in the temple tank. The pond where the residents of Palayur performed their morning bath and rituals in ancient times was known as

⁶⁰ P. T. Baskara Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 563; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookkodu Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 8, *op. cit.*; T. O. Aleyas, *op. cit.* p. 310.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*; Revenue R. Dis. Book No. 101 SL No.13, *Thozhiyur Church*, RAK, p. 18.

⁶² *Ibid* p. 20; T. O. Aleyas, *op. cit.*; *Supplement*, Coronation Memorial U P School, Tozhiyur, 2023, p. 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*; Thozhiyur Church, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

Thaliyakkulam.⁶⁴ The Brahmins explained to him about the gods worshipped by them and asserted that they could make the gods do their will through their powerful *mantrams*. St Thomas then asked them to call upon their gods. According to mythology, St. Thomas pushed the Brahmins to ask their gods to let them suspend the water they were dousing themselves in over their heads. The proposal was sneered at by the Brahmins, but when the apostle commanded the tank's water to rise and take the shape of a column, they were immediately persuaded and baptized.⁶⁵ There is also a well adjacent to *taliyakkulam*, which is believed to be as old as the pond itself. During the ancient times it was from this well, that the natives drew water for their daily rituals and other ceremonies. Thus, the well came to be known as *pooja kinar* or the well of rituals.

Christian folklore contributed to entertainment and devotion for the Christian community. *Margamkali* and *rampanpattu* are the two literary works within the Keralite traditions.⁶⁶ The most important and perhaps the earliest of their compositions are known as *Margamkalipattu* which relates the glorious deeds of St. Thomas during his journey in Cola and Kerala territories.⁶⁷ *Margamkali* is one of the old group dances among the Christian community of Kerala. This art form is very popular among the *Knanaya* Christians.⁶⁸ St. Thomas serves as *margamkali*'s main protagonist. Different stanzas of the *margamkali* song describe his arrival in Kerala, his missionary work, the miracles he performed, the friendship and hostility of the people he worked with, the persecution he endured, the chapels and crosses he

⁶⁴ Parish Directory, St. Joseph's Parish Shrine, Pavaratty, 2016; C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 478; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Church*, Palayur, 2013, p. 10.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13; George Menachery, *op. cit.*; C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*; St. Sebastian's High School, *Souvenir -Centenary Celebrations*, Chittattukara, 2005, p. 77; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 154; Jose Chittilappilly, *Palayur Palli*, *op. cit.*, 2013, p. 43.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 52; T. O. Aleyas, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁶⁷ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 141; P. T. Bhaskara Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 560; P. K. Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram*, Kerala Thiruvananthapuram, 2012, p. 491; Aswathi Thirunal Gauri Lakshmi Bai, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

⁶⁸ Assa Chackochan, *Margamkali- Oru Christava Kalaroopam*, ed. M. V. Vishnu Nampoothiri, *Christian Folklore, Vol. 1*, Kannur, 2004, p. 14.

established at various locations, etc. The dance form follows a circular path, in a clear imitation of the traditional, native, choreographic structure and has been inspired by the indigenous characteristics of the folk dances of the region.⁶⁹ The word *margam* represents Christ, so the performance also known as Margamkali.⁷⁰ It is divided into two parts and the first part is a dance of twelve performers before a lighted lamp. In this portion the *nilavilakku* (lamp) signifies Jesus Christ and the twelve performers represent his twelve disciples. The second part of the dance form is a physical exhibition of the dancers with a weapon called *paricha*. Sometimes both the portions are performed separately. The main theme of the dance is *Marthomacharitham*. This art form helped to convey the message of Christianity to the audience.

People's religious, social, and artistic lives are greatly influenced by music. *rampanpattu* (448 lines) deals with the arrival and subsequent missionary activities of St Thomas in India.⁷¹ In *Rampan Pattukal*, the early Christians of Palayur and such other places came to be called *Thomamakkal*. It also describes the seven churches founded by St Thomas.

Pallipattu means the songs about the church which is the place of worship of Christians. These songs describe the construction of a church, blessing of the cross, narratives about the patron saints and the related festivals. Such songs were sung on different occasions. Christians used to compose songs according to their traditions and such songs are valuable historical records.⁷² Each composition used to closely follow the prevalent socio-political situations. The songs were probably composed and popularised owing to the large population and influence of Christians.

⁶⁹ Chummar Choondal, *Christian Folklore Vol. I*, Thrissur, 1988, p. 196.

⁷⁰ Assa Chackochan, *op. cit.*, p. 13; A.K. Nambiar, *Surviving Folk Arts and the Social Analysis of their Origin and Development*, in P.J. Cheriyan (ed.), *Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala op. cit.*, p. 50; Aswathi Thirunal Gauri Lakshmi Bai, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*; M. A. Vettom Mani, *Puranic Encyclopaedia*, Kottayam, 1974, p. 628; Chummar Choondal, *Christian Folklore Vol. I, op. cit.*, p. 196; P. K. Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram, op. cit.*

⁷² *Ibid.* p. 52; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 144.

Islam

Islam came to the coastal towns of Kerala as early as in the time of the Prophet himself. Islam probably started in Kerala as a result of marine trade and commerce, and the *Mappila* people are descended from these early Indian Muslims.⁷³ The local rulers gave all possible assistance to the Arab settlers and encouraged their settlements in coastal and interior towns. The caste-ridden society of Kerala was receptive to the Islamic values of equality and fraternity. According to their origin story, the *Mappilas* originated when the Perumal converted to Islam in the ninth century.⁷⁴ They are said to have landed first at Cranganore and established the first mosque at the place. This mosque is known as Cheraman Juma Masjid. Thus, early in Kerala's history, Islam too made its way there.⁷⁵ They settled in the Malabar coast for trading purposes, and the natives called them *Mappilas*. In South Malabar, *Mappilas* composed the largest community. Gradually, the *Mappilas* migrated to the interior regions from the coastal towns and settled down as cultivators and traders. Buchanan takes care to distinguish between the coastal *Mappilas* who were engaged in trade and were quite industrious.⁷⁶ Majority of Muslims were boatmen, fishermen and labourers of every description. The people engaged in fisheries used to live beside the backwaters and canals. An estuarine fish farm is proposed to be established in the Chavakkad taluk, Kadappuram.⁷⁷

⁷³ Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala- A Study in Islamic Trends*, Madras, 1976, p. 51; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 31; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 29; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁷⁴ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 185; Shamsulla Khadiri, *Pracheena Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 37; K. N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Ennalekal*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2015, p. 216; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁷⁵ R. N. Dhar, *History of India- Social and Economic*, Delhi, 2010, p. 87; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁷⁶ K. N. Ganesh, *Advances in History Essays in memory of Pro. M. P. Sridharan*, Calicut, 2003, p. 193.

⁷⁷ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer: Trichur*, Thiruvalla, 1962, p. 292; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Kadappuram Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 87, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1996.

Islam is divided into several sects, but the two main ones are Sunnis (those who follow the *Sunnah*) and Shias (those who were Ali's supporters). The *Mappilas* belong almost entirely to the Sunni sect of Mohammedanism.⁷⁸ Later they shifted to the interior parts of Malabar. According to K. N. Panikkar, *Mappilas* were compelled to relocate to the interior taluks of Malabar as a result of growing conversion and European influence in the region starting in the 16th century.⁷⁹ This migration, accompanied by the establishment of mosques and religious centres, acted as a stimulus for the spread of Islam. Mosques with the names of the corresponding *amsams* could be found in Palayur and the nearby Chavakkad *amsams*. Kuttungal lies roughly a mile to the west of the latter, and a quarter of a mile to the east of the former. The relics of Muslim saint Haidros Kutti are interred in a *jaram*, or mausoleum, in Manatala *desam* that is connected to the old mosque. For those who practice Islam, it is a particularly sacred location. This historic mosque has straightforward but elegant architecture. The whitish structure includes four minarets, a dome, and green borders all around. The mosque's interior is identical to other mosques. The Mappila community in the area holds great reverence for both of them. His death site is marked with another *jaram* close to the Chavakkad mosque. Various elements, such as the divine, sacred aspects, faith, a supernatural being, or some form of ultimate transcendence that will offer rules and power during the believer's lifetime, may or may not be found in different faiths. The remainder of the population respected and trusted the Mappilas as a trade class. The Muslims coexisted peacefully and amiably with adherents of other faiths. Muslims commanded great respect from the Hindus because they controlled all business and trade in this area.

Muslims believe in the 'Days of Judgment', when good deeds and bad deeds will be evaluated and people will be sent to either heaven or hell based on their actions while they were on earth. The recitation of the credo (*kalima*), the need to give alms (*zakkath*), the five daily prayers (*niskaram*), fasting during Ramadan, and the completion of the Hajj, or journey to Mecca, are the five cardinal principles of Islam.

⁷⁸ C. A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁷⁹ K. N. Panikkar, *Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprising in Malabar 1836-1921*, Delhi, 1989, p. 51.

These five core tenets of Islam must be followed by every Muslim.⁸⁰ Friday prayers, known as *Juma Namaz*, are scheduled to take place at the community mosque. The Friday prayers at the *jamat* are led by the Muslim priest, referred to as the *kazi*, whose duties also include registering marriages, reading the Friday sermon, and mediating disputes pertaining to religion and politics. The *Mullah* conducts the prayers in the small mosque.

Mappilappattu (Mappila songs) is the poems and songs, most of them dealing with religious topics and the history of Islam.⁸¹ These songs have a distinct cultural identity, while they simultaneously remain closely linked to the cultural practices of the region. It is an important cultural contribution of Mappila community to the culture of Kerala.⁸² In the beginning, *Mappilappattu* may have been passed down from one generation to the next orally. *Mappila* literature abounds in these poems and songs are known by such terms as *kissappattu*, *malapattu*, *padapattu*, etc. The themes of these folk songs are those held close by commoners such as anecdotes from the Prophet's life and wars fought during the formative years of Islam apart from other religious aspects.⁸³

The *mailanchipattu*, the *oppanapattu* and the *ammayipattu* belong to the category of *Mappila* folk songs dealing with love and marriage and they are sung in chorus during marriage festivities.⁸⁴ The song and dance performances are popular among the Muslims of Malabar and are a source of societal entertainment. The women stand in a circle around the bride who sits in the centre and sing the *oppana* to the accompaniment of rhythmic clapping of hands.

⁸⁰ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 68; P. T. Bhaskara Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 247; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer: Trichur*, *op. cit.*, p. 215; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 200; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁸¹ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 145; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁸² P. K. Abdul Kalam, *History and Dress of Mappila Muslims of Malabar in Kerala*, South Indian History Congress, 36th Annual Session Proceedings, Puducherry, 2016, p. 865; K. C. Krishnakumar, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

⁸³ S. M. Mohamed Koya, *Mappilas of Malabar – Studies in Social and Cultural History*, Calicut University, 1983, p. 96.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 97; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

The folk arts like *aravana*, *duffumuttu*, *kolkali*, etc. are performed as a matter of entertainment by the *Mappila* community.⁸⁵ In *aravana*, the participants sing songs in varying pitches to the accompaniment of the beating of *aravana* (drum). Likewise, is the folk play known as *duffumuttu*, which also involves singing alongside beating of drums. The *kolkali* is the most important among the *Mappila* folk arts and is almost a martial play. The participants of this play, who are given special training in *kalaripayattu*, assemble themselves in a ring and sing *Mappila* songs in varying pitches, while simultaneously performing with short sticks held in their hands. The performers move in a circular path according to the rhythm of the songs sung.

Festivals

Kerala has a rich tradition of its own with respect to festivals and fairs. There are many types of festivals like national festivals, regional festivals, religious festivals, that are celebrated all over Kerala. Through the celebration of such festivals, people experience happiness and also helps in maintaining religious harmony. The festival season extends from the Malayalam month of *Thulam* (October-November) to the month of *Medam* (April-May) in a year. The celebrations range from celebrating the day of consecration of temples, asterisms that mark the birth of gods, auspicious months of religious significance. Hindu holidays are primarily associated with the changing of the seasons and the harvest, but they also have a strong connection to mythology, epics, and folklore, which frequently show a deep philosophical and religious significance. The three main festivals celebrated by the Kerala community—Onam, Vishu, and Tiruvathira—deserve special consideration.⁸⁶

Onam

Among the Malabari traditional festivals, Onam is the most significant. It falls during the Malayalam month of *Chingam* (August-September). Kids take pleasure in collecting flowers to create floral carpets, which are a characteristic element of this joyous time of year. During the Onam season, the granary would be filled with the

⁸⁵ K. K. N. Kurup, *The Legacy of Islam*, Kannur, 2006, p. 15; Aswathi Thirunal Gauri Lakshmi Bai, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

⁸⁶ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 68; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer: Trichur*, *op. cit.*, p. 211; T.K. Gopala Panikkar, *Malabar and Its Folk*, New Delhi, 1983, p. 30.

harvested crop. Therefore, it symbolised prosperity and richness for the society as a whole. The story behind the Onam festival is that once a year, on the day of Tiruvonam, Mahabali, the mythical ruler of Kerala who was driven to the underworld by Vishnu in the guise of Vamana, is permitted to return to Earth. The time of the main harvest commemorates the golden, prosperous age of King Mahabali.⁸⁷ This festival is celebrated at Guruvayur every year with grandeur. *Utradam kazchakulaveppu* is a very significant part of the festivities. On the day of *utradam*, after *Siveli*, the main priest dedicates the first harvest of bananas to Lord Krishna at the helm of the flagpole. The devotees also revel in the glory of dedicating their first harvest of bananas to Lord Krishna. On the occasion, elders of the family gift every member with new clothes (*onappudava*). The *onasadya* that is the traditional feast is another important aspect of the festival. Usually, Malayalis partake of their *onasadhya* on plantain leaves.

Vishu

Vishu, the second-most important harvest festival marks the new year as per the Malayalam calendar. Vishu falls on the first day of the month of *Medam* (April-May), and the peculiarity of this day is that the duration of the day and the night are same.⁸⁸ Vishu is celebrated to commemorate the victory of Lord Vishnu over the Asura chief Narakasura. Devotees arrange *vishukkani* on the night before Vishu in every home. Each member of the family wakes up and sees the *vishukkani* the first thing in the morning. After seeing the *vishukkani*, the patriarch or matriarch of the family gifts money to all the younger members and servants, employed by the family. Rich families provide the laborers rice or paddy, and they also give them gifts of fruits,

⁸⁷ Peethambaran Vattaparambil, *Nattarivukalude Ullarakalilekku*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2014, p. 65; Krishna Chaitanya, *op. cit.*, p. 191; P. T. Bhaskara Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 322; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 72; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 165; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 66; M. V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vijnaneeyam*, Kottayam, 1996, p. 102.

⁸⁸ M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vijnaneeyam*, *op. cit.*, p. 74; K. K. N. Kurup, *Sree Guruvayurkshethram*, *op. cit.*, p. 132; F Fawcett, *Nayars of Malabar*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 97; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer: Trichur*, *op. cit.*, p. 212; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 166; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 27; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

vegetables, and other items. On the day of Vishu, the sanctum and the mandapa are decorated with flowers and lamps in the Guruvayur temple.⁸⁹ At 2.30 am, the main priest opens the sanctum and unveils the *kani* to the Lord. Later, the *kani* is shifted to the main mandapa for the devotees to see the same. Receiving *vishukaineettam* from the main priest is considered to be a lucky moment by the devotees. Thousands of devotees throng the Guruvayur temple on the eve of the Vishu itself and form a long queue to get a glimpse of the Lord and *vishukani* in the early hours of the morning.

Tiruvathira

The third main festival is the Tiruvathira, which falls in the Malayalam month *Dhanu* (December-January). According to popular belief, it is a celebration of the passing of our mythological Cupid, Kamadevan.⁹⁰ It is connected with the fertility of the land. In later times, this festival was observed by *Nair* women in honour of Lord Kama, the god of love. They sing particular songs about the god of love when they splash water in their bathtubs. On this day, womenfolk do not eat the regular rice-based meals but consume only wheat instead. Ripe plantains with a delectable concoction of arrowroot powder and jaggery go well with this.⁹¹

Sreekrishna Jayanthi or Ashtami-Rohini

This festival marks the birthday of Lord Krishna, the eighth incarnation of Vishnu.⁹² It is celebrated at all places where Krishna is worshipped and in the places associated with his childhood. The devotees spend this day at the Guruvayur temple,

⁸⁹ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 75; Krishna Chaitanya, *op. cit.*, p. 193; F. Fawcett, *op. cit.*, p. 299; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 166; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 28; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Krishna Chaitanya, *op. cit.*, p. 193; Aswathi Thirunal, *op. cit.*, p. 221; M. V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vinjaneeyam*, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

⁹¹ F. Fawcett, *op. cit.*, p. 300; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer: Trichur*, *op. cit.*; P. K. Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 324; V. S. Bindu, *Nattuvazhi: Keralaleeyarkku Nashappetta Grameena Gruhathurathwam*, Kottayam, 2017, pp. 45-46; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*

⁹² Balan Poothery, *op. cit.*, p. 57; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer: Trichur*, *op. cit.*, p. 211; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Keralasamskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 76; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 29; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

adhering to the customs of the temple, by chanting names of the Lord and singing *bhajans*. Special *pujas* and processions are held on this day. *Appam* and *panchasarapayasams* are special offerings made to Lord Krishna on this day. As usual, a lot of devotees congregate at Guruvayur to celebrate the festival. *Balagokulam* is a special procession associated with this day. During the occasion, *rasalila* dances are performed in imitation of the youthful Krishna's moonlight dances with the *gopis* (cow-girls).

Local festivals

In Punnathurnadu, each temple even one of the least importance has its own particular feast, recurring at intervals during the course of the year and besides these local fests, there are also many others that are generally observed everywhere, during specific periods.

Alukkal Vavela

The Alukkal temple is situated in the Pookkode *desam* at Chavakkad taluk. In Punnathurnadu, the festivals begin with the celebration of the Alukkal *vavulsavam*. The proverb *alukkleduthal palakkalvare* denotes the wide range of festivals that occur during the season in this region.⁹³ Alukkal *Vavela* begins nine days before the new moon day, in the Malayalam month of *Thulam*.⁹⁴ The celebration of this festival was conducted merely half days of Mamankam festival.⁹⁵ The Guruvayur Devaswam provides elephants to this festival free of cost. In connection with this festival, there was a great procession to the *kovilakam* to the accompaniment of the *panchvadyam*. Usually, *aarattu* takes place on the last day of the temple festival.

⁹³ C. R. Rajagopalan, *Nattarivukal*, Kottayam, 2004, p. 37.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*; P. Sankaranarayanan, *Punnathur Swaroopam*, ed. In P. K. A. Rahim, *Vannerynadu*, *op. cit.*, p. 129; P. G. Rajendran, *op. cit.*, p. 142; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Pookode Panchayat, *op. cit.*

⁹⁵ A. Vini, *Thalappilly Swaroopam Samskarika Sambhavanakal*, Kottayam, 2018, p. 161.

Shashti

Skanda-Shashti for Lord Muruga is celebrated with special *poojas*. This festival is celebrated on the shashti day in the Malayalam month of *Thulam* (October-November). Parampanthaly Sree Subrahmanya Swami temple is the main centre for this celebration. The main customs of this celebration include *kanalattam* (walking on red hot ashes) and *shoolamkuthal* (affixing a lance through devotees' cheek). *Shashti* is celebrated in some Subrahmanya temples in this region.⁹⁶ These customs are considered as offerings to God. As part of this festival, all Hindu devotees participate in this custom after fasting for about seven to fourteen days. *Vel* is considered as the weapon of Lord Muruga. Hence, he is known as Vel Muruga. After the customs of *shoolamkuthal* and *kanalattam*, they go to the Parampanthaly Sree Subrahmanya Swami temple in a procession. During the procession, people carry *kavadi* on their shoulders, and dance to rhythmic music.⁹⁷ *Kavadiyattam* on *shashti* festival attracts a large number of devotees. There are twenty *kavadiyattams*, come from different areas in the region, visit the shrine and take blessing of Murugan on the day. After reaching the temple, they remove this *shoolam* from their cheeks and apply some *bhasmam* (holy ash) on their wounds. *Bhasmam* is known to be the favourite article of Lord Muruga.

Guruvayur Ekadasi

The Guruvayur *Ekadasi* festival is conducted during the Malayalam month of *Vrischikam* (November-December).⁹⁸ It is believed that it was on this day that Lord Krishna advised Arjuna in the *geethopadesam* to not shirk from the duty of fighting

⁹⁶ S. Jayashankar, *Temples of Thrissur District*, *op. cit.*, p. 462; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer: Trichur*, *op. cit.*; Personal interview with Mr. M. K. Gangan, age 74 Member of Sree Subrahmanya Swami temple Committee Chittattukara on date 03-11-2018 at his residence at Brahmakulam at Thrissur District; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 196; Chummar Choondal, *Janajeevithavum Kalakalum*, Kannur, 2003, p. 93.

⁹⁷ P.K. Gopalakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 497.

⁹⁸ K.K.N. Kurup, *Sree Guruvayurkshethram*, *op. cit.*, p. 130; P. G. Rajendran, *op. cit.*, p. 412; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer Trichur*, *op. cit.* p. 340; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Keralasamskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 78; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 20; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

against unrighteousness.⁹⁹ It is celebrated as a huge festival in the temple. The celebration begins a month before the actual festival, with a ceremonial lighting of the *chuttuvilaku* (lamps placed around the temple) performed in the temple by various associations and institutions. The spiritual discourses begin from the first day of the month of *Vrishchikam*. The temple opens on this day for *Nirmalya darshan* at 3 am and is closed only at 9am. On the day of *dwadasi*, there is a custom of offering a token amount called *dwadasipanam* in the *koothambalam*. On *Guruvayur ekadasi*, a memorial is conducted in honour of the *Gajarajan Guruvayur Kesavan*. On *Ekadasi*, after completion of the *pooja* at night, the famous *Ekadasivilakku* is taken out on a grand procession, accompanied by elephants signalling the finale of the festival. An annual musical concert, *Chembai Sangeetholsavam* is also conducted in memory of Sri Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, the renowned Carnatic music maestro. The concert lasts for fifteen days and veteran musicians as well as amateurs are allowed to take part in it. The concert series also ends on the *ekadasi* night.

Utsavam

In every Hindu temple, there is an annual fest held in honour of the presiding deity in addition to minor celebrations on certain festival occasions. The main festival of the temple called *utsavam*, begins on the day of the *Pooyam* star sign in the Malayalam month *Kumbham* (February) and continues for a period of ten days.¹⁰⁰ The *anayottam* (Elephant race), that is held in the evening of the day of the *kodiyettam* marks the beginning an *utsavam*. The race begins from the Manjulal. The elephant that enters the *kizhakke gopuram* and touches the flag staff first at the end of the seventh round is declared the winner. The festival ends on the tenth day with an *aarattu* when the deity is bathed in the temple tank.

⁹⁹ Kamala, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁰ Balan Pootheri, *op. cit.*, p. 45; K. V. Krishna Iyer, *The History of Guruvayur*, Guruvayur, 1986, p. 149.

Festivals of Christians

Christmas and Easter are the major Christian festivals celebrated all over the world and the Christians of Kerala also celebrate the same with due ceremonies.¹⁰¹ Christmas, observed on December 25th, honors the birth of Jesus Christ, the divine Son who took on human form and whose teachings serve as the cornerstone of Christianity. Creating Christmas cribs (*pulkkoodu*), exchanging cards and gifts, adorning trees with lights and lamps, and going to midnight mass are all common traditions. Easter is the festival that commemorates the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, which is described in the New Testament, as having occurred on the third day after his burial, following his crucifixion by the Romans at Calvary.¹⁰²

Many new churches were established since the advent of Christianity. However, as there was no certain knowledge about the exact days when most ancient saints had been martyred, the dates of commemoration differ from place to place and particularly between the various separate branches of Christianity. Thus there are annual feasts (*perunnaal*) celebrated in each church, in honour of the respective patron saint of each parish. Hence different parishes celebrate such *perunnaals* that last for a week on different days. St Thomas Day is celebrated every year on the third of July, in memory of the martyrdom of St Thomas. It is colloquially known as *Thorana*. This *thirunnal* takes place during the monsoon month of July and heavy rains on the day of the festival is a usual occurrence. Thousands of people come to Palayur from different places to take part in this festival. *Tharppana thirunnal* is held on 15th July in memory of the miracle the apostle had worked at *thaliyakkulam*, following which he had baptised the earliest Christians. The flag hoisting of this *thirunnal* is held on third July, on St Thomas Day. Following this, until the *thirunnal* of July 15th, there will be special celebrations and ceremonies every day.

¹⁰¹ Chummar Choondal, *Christian Folklore Vol. I, op. cit.*, p. 235; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 35; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 81; M V Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vijnaneeyam, op. cit.*, p. 102.

¹⁰² P. T. Bhaskara Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 253; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 35.

St Joseph's festival at Pavaratty attracts thousands of devotees every summer. The *valayeduppu* procession is held at night and the pomp and show of fireworks are famous in this region. *Thulabharam* is conducted at the Catholic church in Pavaratty.¹⁰³ Devotees often donate vegetables, coins or rice, in a quantity that is equal to their own weight, to the church. This is called *thulabharamthookkal*. A *vazhipadu* is the practice of offering something to the church while *nercha* refers to fulfilling promises made to the church after receiving a much-awaited blessing.

Processions are an important event in festivals. They have religious and social significance. Processions are stipulated according to a formally accepted pattern. Processions begin from inside the church, circumambulate the church, following which, the procession moves through the festooned streets. Huge crosses made of gold and silver are carried by the trustees of the church. This is followed by people carrying colourful flags with emblems of the cross at the forefront of the procession. Following the flags, multi-coloured royal umbrellas, known as *muthukkuda*, are carried by devotees on either side. Images or statuettes of the patron saint of the church are carried in well-decorated wooden cases, locally known as *roopakkudu*, are carried behind the flag bearers. Devotees and spectators standing on either side of the procession cheer, welcome the procession and extend felicitations.

Festivals of Muslims

Worldwide Muslims celebrate three major festivals: Ramadan, Bakrid, and Muharam. On these days, special prayers are conducted in the mosque. Eidul Fitr (Ramzan) is the gayest of Muslim festivals.¹⁰⁴ The term 'Ramzan' describes the thirty-day fast that starts as soon as the month's new moon is visible and ends until the next one appears. In olden days, all Muslims would gather in the mosque at night. Various

¹⁰³ Chummar Choondal, *Christian Folklore Vol. 1, op. cit.*, p. 234; St. Joseph's Parish Shrine, *Parish Directory*, Pavaratty, 2016, p. 20; Personal interview with T. L. James, age 78 *Trustee*, St. Joseph's Parish Shrine Pavaratty, at his residence at Pavaratty in Thrissur District, dated on 20-05-2022.

¹⁰⁴ P. Thomas, *Festivals and Holidays of India*, Mumbai, 1980, p. 43; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer Trichur, op. cit.* p. 215; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 173; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 84; M V Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vijnaneeyam, op. cit.*, p. 102.

spiritual discourses are held by Muslim scholars during the time and the practice continues to this day. Every believer observes the fast religiously. From sunrise till sunset, a good Mappila abstains from even ingesting his own poop; only then may he consume food. The first day of the following month is dedicated to Eid celebrations, which come after the fast with a large feast known as *cheriyaperunal*. The Prophet taught that giving away a certain percentage of one's income to the underprivileged is known as *Zakat*, or charity.

Another major festival celebrated by the *Mappilas* is the Bakrid or *valiyaperunal*, which takes place in the third month after Ramzan. It commemorates Abraham's sacrifice of his son in obedience to a command of God.¹⁰⁵ If a *Mappila* has the means, he is required to sacrifice a billygoat or a bullock and share the meat with his friends, family, and the underprivileged. Bakrid is a day for feasting and visiting friends and relatives. All are expected to don new clothes for the festival while women apply *henna (mehendi)* and deck themselves in their finest ornaments.

On the first day of the first month in the Islamic calendar, we celebrate the Islamic New Year. On the tenth day of this month, people celebrate the holiday of Muharram.¹⁰⁶ This is a celebration of the prophet Mohammed's birth. On this day, after the special prayers, Muslims conduct a procession. Children, especially boys are the main participants of this procession. Cultural programs are conducted in every mosque.

Nercha

The biggest manifestation of the Hindu-Muslim rift in *Mappila* folk culture is found in the rituals related to saints and mystics.¹⁰⁷ A large number of devotees

¹⁰⁵ M V Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vijnaneeyam*, *op. cit.*, p. 101; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer Trichur*, *op. cit.*, p. 215; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 37; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

¹⁰⁶ A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 37; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 84.; M V Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natoti Vijnaneeyam*, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

¹⁰⁷ K. N. Ganesh, *Culture and Modernity: Historical Explorations*, University of Calicut, 2004, p. 237.

participate in *Jarram nercha* at Malabar. *Nerchas* are two types: those conducted on behalf of the character of a folk festival and conducted as a ritual.¹⁰⁸ All of the major Malabari cities commemorated the anniversaries of the *Auliya* (saints) with tremendous fanfare and grandeur.¹⁰⁹ As with Hindu festivals, this celebration starts with the planting of a flag-staff, or *kodiyettam*. It is believed that *nerchas* involved making a pledge to God directly and that they can make or mar a person's fortunes. As a result, the ritual framework used for all *nerchas* was taken from Malabari folk deity worship.

The Manathala *nerchas* were the most well-known *nerchas* in Punnathurnadu. Even though the celebrations followed a nearly identical format, the saints they honored were not the same. Every year, the people of Manathala Shahid, also known as Hydros Kutty Moopan, celebrate the *nercha* of this man, who is thought to have been Tipu's lieutenant. Both Muslims and Hindus pray to him as their patron saint.¹¹⁰ This *nercha* is a famous annual festival that is celebrated on the 13th, 14th and 15th days of the Malayalam month of *Makaram* (January-February).¹¹¹ During the *nercha*, a replica of the *Jaram* (tomb) is paraded around the streets. Fifteen days prior to the event, the *nercha* festival is declared, known as *muttumvili*. It is an invite to all inhabitants of the area for the festival.¹¹² Traditionally, they sang the *Maulood* in both mosques and homes. The Manathala mosque is splendidly decorated during the annual festival. This festival goes on for four days with varied programs. It provided spectacular entertainment, featuring a procession with elephants, musical

¹⁰⁸ K. Hussain, *Social and Cultural Life of Mappila Muslims of Malabar (1800- 1921)*, Unpublished Thesis Department of History, University of Calicut, 1997, p. 215.

¹⁰⁹ P. P. Abdul Razak, *Colonialism and Community formation in Malabar: A study of Muslims of Malabar*, Unpublished Thesis Department of History, University of Calicut, 2007, p. 26.

¹¹⁰ V. Kunhali, *Sufism in Kerala*, Calicut, 2004, p. 107.

¹¹¹ Dasan, Hydroskutty Mooperum Manathala Nerchayum, in P. K. M. Rahim (ed.), *Vannerynadu, op. cit.*, p. 158; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer Trichur, op. cit.*; K. K. N. Kurup, *Chavakkadam Pravasavum, op. cit.*, p. 105.

¹¹² *Ibid.*; Divakaran Kattakada, *Kerala Sancharam, op. cit.*, p. 371; K. C. Sivadas, *Manathala Chandanakudam Nercha*, Article Published in Malayala Manorama daily, on 29-01-2023.

performances, fireworks, along with *duffmuttu* and *kolkali* performances. *Mappilas* participated in large numbers for such annual *nerchas*. It thus became a village festival that saw the participation of different religious communities. Along with the *nerchas*, several songs are composed and recited in honour of martyrs. It was a chance to go shopping for toys, clothes, candies, kitchenware, and farm equipment. The combination of these factors led to the popularity of *nerchas* in Malabar.

The festivals of the locality indicate the way in which religion had coalesced with the society. As noted earlier, most of the festivals were agrarian in character and controlled by the temples, as a result of their control over land. The temple served a practical purpose in the context by bringing people together in close quarters and creating a sanctified environment of joy and pleasure within a system of unequal relations. Festivals and fairs being an outpouring medium of beliefs and emotions, form an intrinsic part of Punnathurnadu. Each community celebrated their own festivals and holy days. By ensuring group solidarity, it assisted society in resolving conflicts.

Ceremonies

Each religion had its own ceremonies. There was a powerful faith behind each ceremony. The ceremonial observance of religious obligations in the form of offerings, supplications, prayers and communion with a protective, generative deity was a source of spiritual and psychological satisfaction for the followers of different religious faiths. The performances offered much more than the specific end product of a mysterious divine protection. Even among *desams*, ceremonies differed, even down to the most insignificant details. Feasting occurs at different periods: birth and naming of a child, coming of age initiations, marriages, funerals and other occasions in connection with sacrifice.¹¹³ Rural societies use folk art forms in ceremonies and other rituals. Without folk performances, no social ceremony commemorating a birth, marriage, or funeral is complete. Both the marriage ceremony and the birth of a child

¹¹³ Chummar Choondal, *Christian Folklore, op. cit.*, p. 235.

are marked by the singing of songs. Every important milestone in life is marked by conducting special ceremonies across all castes and communities.¹¹⁴

The following ceremonies are still observed by the people: *sradha*, *chorunu*, and *namakaranam*. The *namakaranam* or naming ritual usually takes place 28 days following the child's birth. *Chorunu* or giving rice for the first time takes place in the sixth month of the child. This ceremony is also performed in temples. Most people of Punnathurnadu preferred to conduct these ceremonies at the Guruvayur temple. *Sradha* is the practice of honouring the departed souls of one's forefathers through making offerings. Every year people perform this ceremony for the departed members of their family. Worshipping or praying for one's ancestors is an ancient tradition observed among all communities. This ceremony reflects the faith about death after life. Hindus celebrate the *vavubali*, an important ritual associated with ancestor worship, on new moon days.¹¹⁵ From ancient time onwards, the famous *vavubali* was conducted at the Panchavadi *kadappuram*.¹¹⁶ This *kadappuram* is situated about five kilometers away from the Alukkal temple. The Palayur Siva temple was another centre where *vavubali* is conducted. Every year, people from Venmenad and surrounding areas would arrive at the temple pond for *vavubali* on the day of *karkkitaka samkranti*. On the day preceding *vavubali*, the devotees observe fast and go to the temple to offer prayers on behalf of their departed forefathers.¹¹⁷

Christianity borrowed some religious practices from Hinduism. *Muppittu* Sunday is an important ceremony at the Palayur church in Punnathurnadu. This is celebrated on Sundays following the 10th of each month. The centre of all activity of this day is the *Thaliyakkulam*, where the apostle, St Thomas, had performed the first miracle. The special features of this day are processions undertaken from the church

¹¹⁴ Raghavan Payyanadu, *Folklore*, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

¹¹⁵ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer Trichur*, *op. cit.*, p. 210; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Keralasamskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 41; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-193; K.M. Anil, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

¹¹⁶ Grama *Vikasana Rekha*, Punnayur Panchayat, Chavakkad Block, Vol. 81, Kerala State Planning Board, Thrissur District, 1996

¹¹⁷ C. R. Rajagopalan, *Nattarivukal*, *op. cit.*; St. Joseph's Parish Shrine, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

to *thaliyakkulam* and the ceremonial introduction of rice to the palate of infants. Common community baptisms are held at *thaliyakkulam*, where infants hailing from different parishes are baptised.¹¹⁸

The ceremony *sradham* (celebration of death anniversary) is one of them. The *sradham* of Chungath Parekkat Varathachan (a priest in Kottapadi church) is a famous ceremony at St Lazar's church at Kottapadi in Punnathurnadu. After the completing the daily rituals, the priest worked for the downtrodden section of society in that region. He died on 8th June 1914. Attached to this church, is the mausoleum, where rest the remains of Varathachan.¹¹⁹ Special prayers are said and food is served to all on that day. Many devotees in this region take part in this ceremony.

Myths

Prose narratives known as myths are accepted as accurate accounts of historical events in the civilization in which they are told.¹²⁰ It is a story that is simple on the one hand, and a narrative that represents the unifying principles that societies are structured around on the other. Dogmas are embodied in myths, which are typically sacred and connected to religion and rituals.¹²¹

Myth is the invisible storage of experiences and memories accumulated by mankind. The term myth comes from the Greek word *mythos*.¹²² In Greek, *mythos* had a simple meaning, viz. story. History from all throughout the world demonstrates that the early phases of civilization were marked by an uncritical belief in the fantastic and supernatural. Mythical superstitions and customs have a significant impact on the way of life in Malabar.¹²³ The Guruvayur temple is as old as the beginning of the *Kaliyuga*.

¹¹⁸ St. Joseph's Parish Shrine, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹¹⁹ *Shradhacharana*, Supplement, St. Lazar's Church, Kottappadi, 2015, p. 3; George Menachery, *op. cit.*, p. 138; St. Lazar's Church, *Parish Directory*, Kottapadi, 2015, p. 23.

¹²⁰ Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History – Some Interpretations*, New Delhi, 2010, p. 259.

¹²¹ M. V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Folklore Nikhandu*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1989, p. 628; M.V. Vishnu Namboothiri, *Natotivijnaneeyam*, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

¹²² E. Banargy, *Mythum Malayala Novalum*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2010, p. 1.

¹²³ Gopala Panikkar, *Malabar and its Folk*, New Delhi, 1983, p. 54.

According to folklore, at the celestial ascendance of Lord Krishna, Dwaraka was submerged in the ocean and the idol of Vishnu, which was worshipped Krishna, floated away in the ocean. This idol carried by both Devaguru and Vayu deva was installed at Guruvayur.¹²⁴ It is also believed that Viswakarma built the temple, as per the advice of Gurudev and Vayudeva. It was named after the well-known Krishna temple that is situated there; as its name suggests, *Guru* and *Vayu* are thought to have founded it. The Hindu Puranas describe *Vayu* as the God of Wind and *Guru* as the Preceptor of the Devas.¹²⁵

The place Peruvallur is situated 10 kilometres away from Guruvayur. Here exists a myth that is connected to rainfall called *nettantekuri*. In olden days this village was situated on the banks of the river. Kokkur *karanavar* used to help people cross the river on his boat. Before beginning the boat service, the *karanavar* would pray to the Parappuzha Goddess and would place a lighted lamp on the stone. This stone is known as *Parappuzha nettan*. Later there was a great scarcity of rainfall. This led the villagers to gather around and ponder about possible remedies. At last, they decided to prepare *payasam* to be offered to *Parappuzha nettan* and distribute it among the villagers. This event occurred on the fifteenth day of the Malayalam month of *Edavum*, and the village received plenty of rain.¹²⁶ The people of this locality continue this custom every year.

Ancient Hebrew myths have accepted Christianity and Islam without much difference.¹²⁷ Mythology is a collection of religious ideas and rituals. The ordinary

¹²⁴ P. G. Rajendran, *op. cit.*, p. 138; V. V. K. Valath, *op. cit.*; V. V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam, op. cit.*; Divakaran Kattakada, *Keraleeya Gramangaliloode, op. cit.*; p. 364; Pepita Seth, *Heaven on Earth, op. cit.*, p. 26; Kamala, *Sree Guruvayoorappan The Saviour of all*, Guruvayur, 2017, p. 10; Balan Poothery, *op. cit.*; S.R.D Sastrikal, *Sree Guruvayurappan-The Lord of Universe*, Souvenir, Guruvayur Temple, *op. cit.*, p. 384; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 46; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Charithrathilninum Chila Edukal, op. cit.*, p. 138.

¹²⁵ S.R.D Sastrikal, *op. cit.*, p. 385; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹²⁶ Personal interview with Mr. Nalin Babu, Instructor, Mural painting, Guruvayur Deveswam, age 54, at his residence Peruvallur, dated on 20-08-2022.

¹²⁷ E. Banargy, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

characters of myth originated from gods. Normally, they are gods themselves or ritual heroes.

Epiphany

The feast of Epiphany (*pindikkuthy thirunnal*) is the commemoration of the baptism ceremony of Jesus Christ. It is celebrated thirteen days after Christmas. i.e. on 6th January.¹²⁸ This feast is known as *Danaha Thirunnal*. This festival is celebrated with great pomp at St Sebastian's church in Chittattukara. People cut down a *pindi* (core within the plantain stem) from their estates. It is erected on the ground decorated with coconut leaves and illuminated with indigenous oil lamps.¹²⁹ Another narrative behind *Pindikuthi Thirunnal*, that was popular among the Latin Christians, connects the celebration to the arrival of the three wise kings, who had come from the east to pay their respect to the newborn baby Jesus. The illuminated *pindi* is supposed to act as a signpost for the kings. The antiquity and grandeur of this *thirunnal* remain fresh in the minds of people.

Most Catholic churches celebrate the feast of St Sebastian (*ambutirunnal*) which falls in the month of January. It is believed that Saint Sebastian is the patron saint of curing and preventing epidemics. Saint Sebastian was the army commander of the Roman emperor, Diocletian, in AD 284.¹³⁰ An event is closely connected with the celebration of this feast. In olden days, the people at Punnathurnadu had been dying in large numbers every year due to communicable diseases like small pox, cholera and other epidemics. The entire parish started special prayers addressed to the saint, who is believed to be the defender from all infectious diseases. During such calamities the statue of St Sebastian used to be taken in a procession around the entire

¹²⁸ Chummar Choondal, *Christian Folklore, op. cit.*, p. 230; C. L. Johnson, *Danahayum Danahatirunnalum*, Smaranika, Campidi Tirunnal St. Sebastian's Church, Chittattukara, 2013, p. 63.

¹²⁹ C. L. Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 65; Personal interview with Mr. P.D. Jose, *Trustee*, St. Sebastian's church Chittattukara, age 65 at Chittattukara church in Thrissur District dated on 20-02-2020.

¹³⁰ Antony Vazhapiilli, *St. Sebastian's Feast, Narbona*, St. Sebastian's Church, Chittattukara, 2006, p. 21.

locality, as a result of which the epidemic is said to have miraculously subsided.¹³¹ This is called *Ambutirunnal* which has influenced a wide range of devotees both Christians as well as non-Christians.

Growth of a Unique Culture

Each locality has its own culture. It requires the training and refinement of the human mind, tastes and manners. The content of culture can be best analysed through the study of its component parts like customs, traditions, religion, people, literature and art.¹³² Heritage was cultivated and created by human effort. The place Chavakkad is a famous religious centre at Punnathurnadu. In ancient times, the Guruvayur temple which is situated in the Guruvayur *amsam* was a part of the Chavakkad Panchayat. Thousands of devotees from across the world flock to this region cutting across the boundaries of land, language, caste and creed, to experience the divine presence of Lord Krishna. Religious harmony prevailed in Punnathurnadu. The presence of pilgrims also influenced socio-economic conditions of this region.¹³³ Culturally, the *nadu* divisions are coterminous with the different dialectical regions in traditional Kerala. The social-geographical base of the Medieval *nadu* divisions, and their village communities are the human elements of the dialects of Malayalam.

Where else could one find such a vast population of followers of the three major global faiths living side by side. Interreligious communication and activities are positively affected by the fact that Hindus, Christians and Muslims live inter communally.¹³⁴ The living and working conditions compel the members of the different communities to be associated together in regular and normal patterns. Segregating sections of residence for separate religions was not practised in Kerala. In Malabar, adherents of Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism reside in nearby plots. Regardless of religious or caste barriers, the complete integration of the people of

¹³¹ *Palli Nalagamacharithram*, St. Sebastian's Church Chittattukara; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

¹³² Mazharul Islam, *Folklore-The Pulse of the people*, New Delhi, 1985, p. 14.

¹³³ Divakaran Kattakkada, *Keraleeya Gramagalilude*, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

¹³⁴ K. N. Ganesh, *Kerala Samooham: Innu Naale*, Kottayam, 2012, p. 75; Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, *op. cit.*

Malabar has been greatly aided by the non-separation of the various religions and castes.

An interesting blending of indigenous and foreign architectural styles, the latter being mainly seen in the basilican pattern that is visible in Christian churches. There are also several ancient mosques in this *nadu* built in the indigenous style. The labourers of this region have shown their extraordinary finesse in the construction of temples, shrines and mosques. The presence of Hindu temples, Muslim mosques, and Christian churches close to the villages helped Punnathurnadu's peaceful community life (see Appendix 5). Some of these churches' main entrances have an open-air cross as a tribute to the custom of placing the *balipitha* or *dipasthambam* next to the Hindu temple's entryway.¹³⁵ In addition to the above mentioned features some churches also have flag staffs imposed as in the Saint Thomas church at Palayur, similar to the Hindu temple's *dhwajastambam* has that are used during flag-hoisting ceremonies (*kodiyettu*). The hoisting of the flag symbolises the beginning of annual festivals and the practice is followed both in churches as well as in Hindu temples. This region's unique settlement pattern has aided in the development of shared political and cultural traditions among the populace. Families aligned their settlements on the basis of their occupation. Though the Syrian Christians, Jews and Muslims had diverse reasons for their settlements in this region, there prevailed a peaceful co-existence and mutual tolerance of different religious and secular ideologies.

The king Manavikraman, was a man of high intellectual calibre and a great patron of scholars and intellectuals. Every year he would organise a meeting of the Brahmin scholars in and around his kingdom at the famous Tali temple.¹³⁶ The winner in each section was rewarded a *panakizhi* - (a purse of gold coins). At the end of this

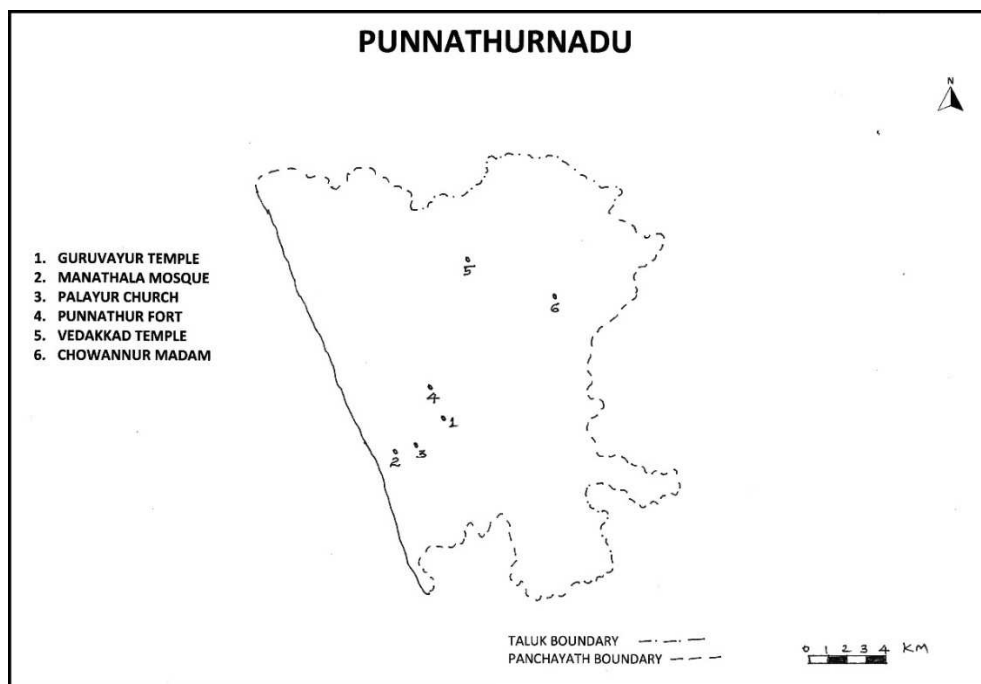
¹³⁵ Francis Buchanan, *Francis Buchanante Keralam*, C.K. Kareem (Trans.), Thiruvananthapuram, 1981, p. 68.

¹³⁶ Sankunni Kottarathil, *Aithiyamala*, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikkode, 2010, p. 84; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Adiverukal*, Kottayam, 2012, p. 68; Gracious Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 912; K. K. Adoor, Ramachandran Nair, *Kerala State Gazetteer Vol. II- Part II*, Kerala Gazetteers, Thiruvananthapuram, 1986, p. 68; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam, op. cit.*, p. 104; P. C. K. Namboothiripad, Chennas Namboothiripad, in P. K. M. Rahim (ed.), *Vannerynadu, op. cit.*, p. 67; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 66; V.V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam, op. cit.*, p. 54.

session, Mangattachan would declare the name of the winners, who would be given cash awards.¹³⁷ Payyur Bhattathiris were the court poets of king Manavikraman. Their *illam* was situated in Vedakkad at Porkkalam.¹³⁸

Figure 10

Cultural and Religious Centres of Punnathurnadu



*Not to scale

Kakkassery Damodara Bhattathiri had become an undisputed scholar and a master in poetics. When the boy was only three, he had lost his father. Every morning, the little boy used to feed the crow in his courtyard. To the astonishment of everyone around, he identified each crow that came to eat the *kaviam* (rice prepared under

¹³⁷ P.C.K. Namboothiripad, Chennas Namboothiripad, in P. K. M. Rahim (ed.), *Vannerynadu*, *op. cit.*, p. 67; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Kozhikkodinte Kadha*, Kozhikode, 2017, p. 105; V. V. Haridas, *Kshethram, Uthsavam, Rashtreeyam*, *op. cit.*, p. 54; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Adiverukal*, *op. cit.*, p. 68; K. C. Krishnakumar, *Keralam Jillakaliloode*, *op. cit.*, p. 166; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam*, *op. cit.*; A. Sreedhara Menon, *The Legacy of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 67; V. Kunhali, *Calicut in History*, Calicut, 2004, p. 51.

¹³⁸ A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 159; *Grama Vikasana Rekha*, Porkalam Panchayat, Chowannur Block, Thrissur District, Kerala State Planning Board, 1997; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam: Keralavum Bharathavum*, Thrissur, 2018, p. 106.

religious rites). Hence, people began to refer to him as *Kakkaserri* (*kaakka* in Malayalam means crow). Bhattathiri and later the *illam* also came to be known as by the name Kakkassery *illam*.¹³⁹ The boy was an intellectual prodigy. He took to the studies of the *vedas* and *upanishads* at the age of six. The *brahmachari* became recognised by every scholar in the land and he was ready to accept the challenge of the great Udhdhandan. When the time and date of the event was announced, Kakkassery Bhattathiri set off for Calicut with a group of Brahmins. The duo held forth heated arguments on various topics in various subjects like the *vedas*, *vedanta*, *sastras*, the *puranas*, poetics and others. Throughout the competition Bhattathiri managed to maintain a lead. Udhdhandan was nearly defeated. Bhattathiri's intellectual primacy was acknowledged by every scholar who was present at the venue and the king announced Bhattathiri the winner. As was the custom he honoured the winner by presenting him the hundred and eight purses of gold coins. Even later, Udhdhandan and Kakkassery Damodara Bhattathiri encountered each other at various venues and every time success would favour Kakkassery Bhattathiri. He went on to attain supreme spiritual attainment over time.¹⁴⁰

The *patinettarakavikal* (eighteen and a half poets) were the court poets of the Zamorin.¹⁴¹ Damodara Bhattatiri of Kakkassery was one among them. He composed the Sanskrit drama *vasumati manavikrama*, which tells the tale of Manavikrama's union with Vasumati, Mangattachan's daughter.¹⁴² He was a good orator and also a member of Brahmin association at Kozhikode Manavikrama's court. At that time, the

¹³⁹ P. G. Rajendran, *op. cit.*, p. 193; Raphy Neelamkavil, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

¹⁴⁰ Sankunni Kottarathil, *Aithiyamala*, *op. cit.*, p. 88; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Adiverukal*, *op. cit.*; Kanippayyur Sankaran Nambudiripad, *Ente Smaranakal*, Kunnamkulam, 1964, p. 52; Gracious Benjamin, *op. cit.*; Raphy Neelamkavil, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

¹⁴¹ S. Achutha Warriar, *Kerala Samskaram*, *op. cit.*, p. 94; S. K. Vasanthan, *Nammal Nadanna Vazhikal*, *op. cit.*, p. 230; M. G. S. Narayanan, *Charithram Vyavaharam: Keralavum Bharathavum*, *op. cit.*; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Prabhathakiranangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 74; V. V. Haridas, *Samuthirikalathe Kozhikode*, *op. cit.*, p. 85; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 295; V. Kunhali, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

¹⁴² A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, *op. cit.*, p. 92; Velayudhan Panikkassery, *Charithrathinte Prabhathakiranangal*, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

custom prevailed that those who became a scholar got the honorific title *Bhattathiri*. Both the Revathi pattathanam and the *patinettera kavikal* accorded political legitimacy to the Zamorin for his power and his urge for expansion of his territories.¹⁴³

Religions in this *nadu* are a mixture of different faiths, most significantly Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Various tribal traditions also co-exist along with other religious faiths. The amity, that existed between different religions in ancient and Medieval period. Every ruling and religious authority tried to improve their status by conducting certain rituals, festivals and ceremonies. Several festivals were celebrated here along with the expansion of agriculture. These are conducted during the harvest season. Rural people actively participated in village festivities, regardless of their caste, creed, or religion. These folk festivals demonstrate the strength of unity and oneness and are an expression of a shared culture and heritage. The natives celebrate all religious festivals like temple festivals, church festivals and *chandanakudam nerchas* with equal fervour.

¹⁴³ N. M. Nampootiri, *Malabar Patanangal, op. cit.*, p. 484.

CONCLUSION

Malabar had been ruled by several *naduvazhi swaroopams* during the pre-colonial period. They had their traditional powers. As the source materials are too scanty in drawing these aspects of Punnathurnadu, the study has been mainly carried out with the help of field observations and interviews. More over Archaeology, Anthropology and Geography also helped us to understand the different stages of the evolution of the human life of the area under study. Archival documents like village Registers and the Punnathur estate record greatly helped the study. Evidences in the forms of customs, traditions, and oral folklore also helped the present study to a great extent.

The geographical features of a region give rise to unique features in the spheres of toponomy, history, languages, folklore and traditions. Changes and developments in these spheres reveal several interesting facets. Historical analysis is conducted with respect to the geographical, topographical and physiographical evidences available in an area. The agricultural settlement of Punnathurnadu was mainly based on its particular geographical factors. Punnathurnadu consists of lowland and midland region. Most part in Chavakkad taluk are in lowland. All panchayats in Thalappilly Taluk, Eastern part of Elavally panchayat in Chavakkadu taluk, Eastern part of Kunnamkulam municipality, Tolur panchayat in Thrissur taluk in midland. The lowland soils mainly consist of sand and silt deposits due to riverine alluvium. Coconut plantations are commonly found here. In contrast, the Midland region is more densely populated. There is mainly cultivation of crops like rice, coconut, banana and other vegetables.

The names of places were offered a rich source of information for the understanding the facts of human culture and civilization of the past. The names given to places are one of the basic source materials to understand about the history of a land and its people. They are as old as the flora and fauna, geographical peculiarities,

occupation, topography, cultural traits and settlement patterns. The growth of settlements depend the nature of the land and resources available in a *nadu*. The early settlements and the indication of them in toponyms seem to be a very important factor. We focus attention towards the names of places in this area, like Kunnamkulam, Chiramanangad, Venkidangu etc. owing to their topographical nature and peculiarity of their form and meaning. The names like Guruvayur, Vedakkad, etc. reveal crucial information about the religious beliefs and rituals. Quite a few names throw some light on the belief in supernatural beings.

We have depended on the toponyms collected from the names of fields in the area. By studying the names that are reflective of the natural formations in the area, we are able to understand the geographical layout that existed in the past. The identification of pre-historic sites, like Eyyal, Kakkad, Porkkalam etc. are extremely essential in the case of this area, in order to provide fruitful result. B K Thapar discovered a number of megalithic monuments at Porkkalam near Kunnamkulam. The iron implements and pottery help us to relate them to the iron-using phase and their involvement in agriculture. Burial sites of Ariyannur and Chiramanangad are also seen in this area. These sites made their appearance in pre-Iron Age and continued to thrive. It reveals that there were different groups of people settled in the area, such as, agricultural labourers, traders and people from foreign countries. The density of settlements of a particular group of settlers and their relation to the habitat are seen to be interrelated. Human habitation of this area can be traced back to the Stone Age period. Large scale distribution of megalithic remains and their burial tombs in perfect condition, that are visible in Punnathurnadu suggests that, they were not merely nomads or pastoralists.

The type of soil and seasonal variations influenced the agricultural practices. Different types of paddy cultivation such as *virippu*, *mundkan*, and *puncha* were practiced. The cultivation of paddy was done in the river plains, waterlogged areas and marshy lands. People used seeds and agricultural implements according to the climate and geography of their region. At the same time, garden crops were also cultivated in the region. Travel accounts, *Sandesakavyas*, *Grandhavaris*, Estate

Records and Settlement Registers provide information regarding the agricultural practices that existed in the region.

Patterns of nucleated villages, temples, settlements of trading communities, artisans and administrative institutions are of vital importance. Exercising control through power is very essential for the prosperity of trade. This area was renowned in trade and agriculture mainly because of its geographical peculiarities and political conquests, leading to the rise of a *nadu* like Punnathurnadu in this region. Though the process of migration occurs throughout history, the dimensions and characteristics are specific to a particular time and region.

In early times, Chavakkad was a well-developed trading centre. The geography of this region is an integral part of its history and this particular locality was surrounded by small rivulets. William Logan's Manual on Malabar gives ample evidence to prove the significance of geography. Chettuvai was the most important seaport in the Malabar Coast which became the part of global trade. The growth of a port city, depends upon the volume of trade it carried out with the outside world. Port towns also acted as a centre of long-distance trade. Small rivers, streams and ponds are the main water bodies of the region. The backwaters, locally called as *kayals*, lie parallel to the sea-coast, inter-connected by canals. A significant amount of fresh water flows into the lake from the highlands, especially during the monsoons. Similarly, sea water enters the lake to a certain extent in summer. Locals rely on waterways for transportation. The strongest fortress in this *nadu* and chettuvai stands at the mouth of the river. This place has become an important centre of fishing with facilities for mechanised fishing. Kattakampal in Talappilli taluk, Enamakal in Thrissur taluk are the important fresh water lakes in this *nadu*. The Kattakampal lake extends over to portions of Talappilli and Ponnani taluks. The Canoly canal, helped the people to transport the goods from one place to another.

Jews, Christians and Muslims settled here for trading purpose. These communities contributed towards the prosperity of this *nadu*. They turned their attention to Palayur which was proximate to the port at Chettuvai. There was a jewish synagogue in this settlement, which led to the place to be known as jewish hill. Roman

gold and silver coins have been excavated from here. Indian or local punch-marked silver coins, as well as gold and silver Roman coins have been found at Eyyal. During the ancient and Medieval period the Jews prospered greatly and were actively involved in trade and commerce. The *naduvazhies* were tolerant towards the Jews as they promoted this merchant class to thrive in settlements.

The works analysed to contribute to our understanding of the early Medieval trade and trading network. Increased trade paved way for the emergence of local markets and trading centres. Ward and Conner's Descriptive Memoir of Choughat *Desam* mentioned some important markets like Enamakkal, Chettuvai, Mullasserri, Palayur, Elavathur, Manathala, Guruvayur etc. The barter system existed in the region as a medium of exchange. The later period witnessed the development of coins as currency in the region. *Cantas*, *angadis* and ferries were the nodal centres of local trade. Many *cantas*, *angadis* and ferries are found in the region. Commodities reached the port town for trade from local markets. The presence of *attanis* indicates the presence of long-distance trade in the region.

The region gave importance not only to agriculture but also promoted trade activities such as fishing, coir industry and so on. As a part of internal trade several markets developed in this area. Commodities produced here were not so important from the perspective of regional and international trade, to the exemption of certain articles like coconut and areca nut. Other articles were chiefly consumption-oriented such as oil, pinnakku, copra, coconut fronds, coir and coir ropes, toddy, and *painga* (tender form of areca nut). Among the natives of this locality, the wealthy section was engaged in trading activities while the others worked in the fishing sector. These have a profound influence on the formation of settlement and agricultural production, which in turn have corresponding impact upon the pattern of trade of this region. South of Chaliyam, Chetuvai was a trading post that became a bone of contention between Zamorins and European traders. Commodities like pepper and other items attracted the attention of the Dutch, French and English.

After Tippu Sultan brought his artillery into Malabar, the need for proper roads was felt. As a result, the narrow pathways gave way to coastal roads, thus connecting

the whole Malabar in an intricate network of roadways. These roads were helpful for the promotion of trade and commerce. In present-day, these roads are known as the 'Tipu Sultan Road'. However after the introduction of modern means of transport and communication, the importance of Chavakkad gradually declined. During the last decades of the 20th century, gulf migration to the Gulf nations, has been the dynamic force that shaped the economy of this region. The rapid growth of oil prices in the related industries opened up opportunities which attracted skilled youth of this region and, accelerated the migration to the Countries in the Middle East. The younger generations do not interest in traditional occupations. As a result, the paddy fields were left uncultivated and converted in to residential building and trade centres.

The formation of the political territory was itself a process of hybridization. It saw the emergence of multiple power centers such as the temple, *nadu* and the household. Some of them in the later stages developed as *naduvazhis*. The historic Punnathur *kotta* (fort) is the residence of Punnathur *Raja*. In the 14th century, Punnathur was an independent *nadu* and Kottapadi was its capital. Goda Sankara *Raja* was the title used by all the Punnathur *Rajas*. Besides this *Valiya Tampuratty* and *Ilaya Raja Stanam* were the key positions of this dynasty. The close relation between the Zamorin and Punnathur *Raja* was evident that the Zamorin would proceed to the tank for *pulakuli* or ceremonial bath, with the *Raja* of Punnathur holding the Zamorin's left hand. After the *ariyittuvazhcha* the *Raja* of Punnathur enjoyed the privilege of dining with the Zamorin.

The *swaroopams* and their kings of the Pre-modern period cannot be compared with the modern concept of state. They had traditionally enjoyed both political and judicial powers, after colonization, they became merely puppet rulers in the hands of foreign powers. They were allowed by the colonizers to continue their ceremonial privileges alone and later the *Rajas* became a privypurse of the Colonial administrators. With regard to the Guruvayur temple, the Punnathur *Rajas* had sufficient power to voice their opinions, both as rulers and devotees. This is said to have aided the growth in importance of the renowned shrine. During the colonial period, the Punnathur *Rajas* who were titular kings, conducted and led the rituals in

the Guruvayur temple, as had been the norm in their heyday. Today, the palace grounds house of the elephants that belong to the Guruvayur temple, and the palace has been renamed as *Anakkota*. The elephants are ritual offerings made to Lord Guruvayurappan. Before the reorganization of taluks in 1861, Ponnani consisted of three taluks namely Vettanad, Kuttanad and Chavakkad. When Chavakkad became the administrative headquarters, Guruvayur being closer to chavakkad, began to register its growth.

For centuries villages used to set up an *ezhuthupally* or *pallikoodam*. Students from nearby areas used to go this school and learn reading, writing, language and mathematics. *Sabhamadham* was an education centre for Brahmins. Chowannur *sabhamadham* is a famous one in Punnathurnadu. In olden days scholars assembled here for discussing *Vedas*. *Kalari* schools were generally attached to Bhagawati (goddess) temples and it was presided over by *asans* or a *gurukkal*. *Kalaripayattu*, yet another specialized martial art form was taught in each village. The Basel Evangelical Mission had short span of activity in many areas of Malabar promoting educational institutions. B E M L P school at Chittattukara is a renowned educational institute in this locality. The Basel Evangelical Mission provided equal educational opportunities for both boys and girls. It laid emphasis on compulsory education and on the establishment of schools in every congregation. These activities contributed to the development of education and the modernization of society. In a sense, it was a part of Colonial Modernity.

Folklore encompasses the customs, games, beliefs, festivals and practices of the land. Folk literature draws typical pictures of various castes. These characterisations appear to be fairly established. The popular memories of distant past, enshrined in legends attained definitive meaning. It brings to light the social consciousness of people who lived in this *nadu*. The traditional myths, stories, folklore and literature are integrated with the specific religious rituals.

One of the most fascinating highlights of Punnathurnadu is the richness and variety of performing arts. Each religious community has its own performing arts. For instance, Christians perform the *margamkali*, Hindus perform the *thiruvathirakali* and

Muslims perform the *oppana*. *Margamkali* followed the native, traditional choreographic structure and it clearly shows the indigenous characteristics of the folk dances of the region from where it took roots. Thiruvathira is a celebrated festival among the Nair community. It falls in the Malayalam month *Dhanu* (December or January). In the evening, people visit the temple to offer prayers, following which there is the traditional *thiruvathira* dance performance. *Oppana* dealing with love and marriage and they are sung as part of chorus during marriage festivities. People sit together and sing the songs to the accompaniment of rhythmic clapping of hands. These art forms shed light on the social and cultural life of the various communities of this *nadu*.

Ownership of property has traditionally been bequeathed across generations as inheritance. The knowledge of structures and construction of buildings as well as fences, tools and many other materials used, has also been passed down across generation in society. The village under study was a caste-based one and all the caste groups are arranged in a hierarchical order. The village economy was primarily based on agriculture. The changes in the means and relations of production directly affect the socio-economic positions of village population. People of lower castes are mostly menial workers and landless labourers. The expansion of agriculture resulted in the emergence of occupant groups in the region. Later the labourers became tied down to a single profession and particular way of life, which continued through generations. Blacksmiths, Goldsmiths, Pulayas, Parayas and Tiyyas were the occupational groups mainly found in the region. From these hereditary production groups, caste and sub-castes were formed. These groups had their role in the socio-economic life of the early Medieval period. We can see that economic inequalities were sharp in terms in land-ownership in the village. One of the most important aspects of this *nadu* was the development of the *jenmi* system. Matrilineal system existed in this *nadu*. The ownership of the *taravatu* was jointly bestowed in the name of its female members. It constituted an independent economic unit.

The *kavus* found in the region also indicates the existence of an agrarian society in the early historical period. The cult of mother goddess is so deep-rooted in

this region that every family tended to a *kavu*. In almost all the villages of this *nadu*, we find separate sanctuaries to enshrine the *kavu*. It was an undisturbed site, not impacted by the Brahminical influence. The villagers looked upon *kavu* with much awe and respect. The migration of the Brahmins corresponded to various changes in society, especially in the worshipping pattern as well as in the development of an institutionalised structure. The temple was the heart of the social and cultural life of the people.

Guruvayur satyagraha was an effort to promote social reforms and eliminate social discrimination and untouchability. Although the Satyagraha did not lead to the opening of the Guruvayur temple to all castes, the movement managed to create a strong public opinion in favor of temple entry and abolition of untouchability. Today Mallissery Parameswaran Nampootiripad, the *karanavar* of the present generation is the hereditary owner of the Guruvayur temple.

Christians were pious and peaceful community of peasants and traders who enjoyed religious freedom and patronage from the local Hindu rulers and chieftains, and they followed the existing customs and rituals. Palayur, Pavaratty, Parappur, Chittattukara, Kottapadi and Kunnamkulam were the main Christian centres of this *nadu*. Islam as a religion has had great impact on our culture and civilisation. Its way of life, ideas of brotherhood, social order has enriched the heritage of this *nadu*. Mosques are seen in various places like Chavakkad, Muthuvattur, Blangad, Ovungal, Edakkazhiyur etc. Separate sections of house holdings for separate religions were not in practice in this *nadu*.

People belonging to Hindu, Christian and Islamic faiths lived here in adjacent plots and respected each other. Cultural assimilation happened over the years due to mutual respect and co-operation between the communities. It is noted that the religions of this *nadu* survived through the seamless incorporation of indigenous rituals and customs. Christian churches, Muslim mosques and Hindu temples are built in close proximity of each other villages and this paved way for the communal harmony existed in this locality. This helped in the birth of a common culture of the natives.

In early times, Sanskrit dramas were performed in a traditional and ritualistic style within the precincts of temples. Guruvayur is also well known for its temple arts. *Kathakali*, *ottanthullal*, *chakyarkoothu*, *krishnanattam* and other art forms are the renowned temple art forms. *Krishnanattam* is the story of Krishna, composed by the king Manaveda. This art form was performed in both Guruvayur temple and in the Zamorin's *kovilakam*. It survives in its glory at Guruvayur temple. It is performed in the temple as an offering. Now a days, this art form is performed on all days except Tuesday after the *sree kovil* closes.

Hindu festivals are associated with the changing of the seasons and the harvest, and are strongly associated with folklore, legends and epics. However, the religious and philosophical depth of these celebrations is often revealed. The annual festal celebrations of church called *pallipperunnals* were also an exhibition of the centuries-long evolution of syncretic-plural culture of Christians. In *pallipperunnal* at Palayur church, the *ezhunnallath* of elephants wearing *nettippattom* (caparisons) and ritual performances like *melam* (native bands) were beautiful sights, that continue to exist even today.

The *nercha* at Manathala, is the largest public festival of Mappilas in this locality. It was an expensive rich pageantry which combined nominally Islamic elements with certain features of indigenous folk festivals. In *chandanakudam nercha* conducted at the *jaram* of Hydroskutty Mooper at Manathala, the pilgrims carried pots covered with sandalwood paste on foot or atop elephants, which was then dedicated to the *Jaram*. The local Hindu community had always participated in the festivals both the Christians and Muslims. This analytical study of Punnathurnadu reveals that it promoted an integrated culture in the society by developing overall harmony and tolerance among different religions and communities. The different communities were seamlessly bound together in a collective experience of integration.

The place Porkkalam is the birth place of Payyur Bhattatiri. They accorded valuable contributions in the field of Sanskrit literature. Among the eighteen-and-half poets, nine members were the Payyur Bhattatiris. Some of the famous poets of

Medieval Kerala like Payyur Bhattatiri, Uddanda sastrikal, Kakkasseri Dhamodara Bhattatiri, Punam Nampootiri were conferred the Revathi Pattathanam.

The study of the micro-region helps to understand the general pattern of the *nadus*. To sum up, such micro-level studies are greatly essential in order to acknowledge and understand the far-reaching role played by the regional components in shaping the history of a nation to a large extent. Religious friendship and cultural unity have enriched this land. It is an indisputable fact that the local history of this region played a decisive role in the formation of nationalism.

GLOSSARY

<i>angadi</i>	: Market
<i>anthichanta</i>	: Evening market
<i>ara</i>	: A portion room
<i>ariyittuvazhcha</i>	: A sacred ceremony connected with the coronation of kings in Kerala
<i>asan</i>	: Teacher
<i>athani</i>	: Porter's rest
<i>avarna</i>	: Belonging to the lower class
<i>bazar</i>	: Market
<i>chakkattal</i>	: Pressing out oil
<i>changadam</i>	: Raft
<i>chatta</i>	: A white cotton blouse having a heart shaped neck and long sleeves worn by Christian ladies
<i>chellam</i>	: Betel-box
<i>cherri</i>	: Village
<i>chira</i>	: A reservoir of water or tank on a smaller scale
<i>chumaduthangi</i>	: Porter's rest
<i>copra</i>	: Dried kernel of the coconut
<i>desam</i>	: A village, the same as tara in Malabar province
<i>desavazhi</i>	: Hereditary heads of villages
<i>ezhuthupalli</i>	: Village school
<i>fannam</i>	: Money
<i>gramam</i>	: Village

<i>grandham</i>	:	Book
<i>guru</i>	:	Teacher
<i>gurukulam</i>	:	An ancient system of education
<i>illam</i>	:	The particular name for a Nampootiri household
<i>janmam</i>	:	Hereditary proprietorship
<i>kadu</i>	:	Forest
<i>kalari</i>	:	Martial training school
<i>kandam</i>	:	Field
<i>kani</i>	:	A first object one sees after getting up in the morning
<i>kaniyan</i>	:	A man belonging caste of professional astrologers
<i>kanji</i>	:	Rice gruel
<i>karanavar</i>	:	Head of the family
<i>karyastha</i>	:	Manager or leader
<i>kavadi</i>	:	An ornamented arched pole
<i>kavu</i>	:	Dense grove
<i>kindi</i>	:	Goblet
<i>kinnam</i>	:	A bronze plate
<i>kolambi</i>	:	Spittoon
<i>kooda</i>	:	Basket
<i>koottam</i>	:	Assembly
<i>kotta</i>	:	Fort
<i>kottaram</i>	:	Palace
<i>kovilakam</i>	:	Palace
<i>krishnanattam</i>	:	A kind of dance-drama
<i>kudiyar</i>	:	Inhabitant
<i>kuru</i>	:	Share

<i>kuttuvilakku</i>	:	A lamp with long hand
<i>malikana</i>	:	Allowances to deposed Rajas
<i>mamankam</i>	:	A festival held once in twelve years on the sand-bed at Thirunavaya
<i>manchal</i>	:	A kind of palanquin
<i>manusham</i>	:	Fee to be paid by the tenent to the landlord
<i>marakkuda</i>	:	A Palm-leaf umbrella used by Nampootiri women
<i>margamkali</i>	:	A Canonite catholic Christian entertainment
<i>marumakkathayam</i>	:	Matriarchy
<i>maryada</i>	:	Custom
<i>mela</i>	:	Fair
<i>melkoima</i>	:	Sovereignty
<i>modan</i>	:	Highlands where a particular kind of paddy is capable of being cultivated
<i>montha</i>	:	A metal-mug
<i>mukkuvar</i>	:	A tribe of fisher man in Malabar
<i>mundakan</i>	:	A species of paddy sown within the bed of tanks
<i>mundu</i>	:	Cloth
<i>muniyara</i>	:	Burial chambers
<i>muppu</i>	:	The headship of the family
<i>muthukuda</i>	:	Coloured and decorated umbrella
<i>nadu</i>	:	Country
<i>nadumuttam</i>	:	Inner-courtyard
<i>naduvazhi</i>	:	A king or a chieftain
<i>nagaram</i>	:	City
<i>nalangadi</i>	:	Day market

<i>nalukkettu</i>	:	A quadrangular building with a courtyard in the middle
<i>nampootiri</i>	:	Brahmin of Malabar
<i>nampidi</i>	:	A class of Brahmins
<i>nasrani</i>	:	A Syrian Christian
<i>natakasala</i>	:	Theatre
<i>nazhi</i>	:	A measure
<i>nercha</i>	:	Offering
<i>nilam</i>	:	Rice field
<i>nilavilakku</i>	:	A standing oil lamp
<i>njaru</i>	:	Young paddy ready for transplantation
<i>njattadi</i>	:	Nursery for paddy plants
<i>olakkuda</i>	:	An umbrella made of palm-leaf
<i>padam</i>	:	Rice field in South Malabar
<i>pakkamkuthu</i>	:	Rice separate from paddy
<i>panam</i>	:	Rupee
<i>para</i>	:	A rice measure
<i>parambu</i>	:	garden
<i>pattam</i>	:	The share of the produce of land due to officials and princes
<i>perumal</i>	:	The Chera king
<i>perunal</i>	:	A festive day on Christians or Muslims
<i>pindi</i>	:	Core within the plantain stem
<i>pinnakku</i>	:	Oilcake
<i>pulakuli</i>	:	Bathing after the period of pollution
<i>puncha</i>	:	The name of a paddy which is cut in April or May
<i>purayidam</i>	:	Compound around a plot

<i>raja</i>	:	King
<i>rampan</i>	:	An arch-deacon
<i>rshi</i>	:	An ascetic
<i>sambandham</i>	:	A mode of marriage followed by Nampootiris and Nairs
<i>sambaram</i>	:	Diluted butter milk
<i>shoolam</i>	:	Trident
<i>swaroopam</i>	:	The region under the control of a chieftain
<i>taluk</i>	:	A sub division of a district
<i>tara</i>	:	Unit of organization for civil purpose among the Nairs
<i>taravadu</i>	:	A house or family
<i>tavazhi</i>	:	Matriarchy
<i>thaliyakulam</i>	:	A pond for bathing in Palayur church
<i>thannirpanthal</i>	:	A shed where drinking water supplied
<i>tharppanam</i>	:	Libation to the spirits of the dead
<i>thattom</i>	:	Veil worn by Muslim women
<i>thirunnaal</i>	:	A holy-day
<i>thodu</i>	:	Canal
<i>thookkuvilakku</i>	:	Lamp suspended by a chain
<i>thulabharam</i> <i>thookkal</i>	:	A kind of offering to a temple or church that which is weighed in a balance
<i>thulam</i>	:	A unit of weight
<i>ur</i>	:	Village
<i>urumal</i>	:	Head-kerchief
<i>uthsavam</i>	:	Festival
<i>vanibham</i>	:	Trade
<i>varambu</i>	:	Boundary between paddy-fields

<i>vattaka</i>	:	A flat circular vessel
<i>vattzhuthu</i>	:	An ancient script for Tamil and Malayalam
<i>vatti</i>	:	Basket
<i>vayal</i>	:	A large tract of paddy land
<i>vazhipadu</i>	:	Offering
<i>vel</i>	:	Javelin
<i>villakku</i>	:	Lamp
<i>virippu</i>	:	Crop cut in August or September

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Babu Aloor, age 65, Councillar in Guruvayur Municipality, at his office at Thaikkad in Thrissur District. dated on 30-05-2022;

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Treaties

LX.

Engagement of SAMOORY RAJA and of the POONATOOR RAJA, dated 1st September 1793.

The Samoory and Poonatoor Raja do agree in the presence of Mr. Jonathan Duncan and Mr. Farmer that as there is a contest between them in this way, that is, as to which of them had the rule and right in the said country before the coming of the Nawab Hyder Ali Khan; Mr. Farmer shall fairly enquire into this and till that time Mr. Farmer shall give for the expenses of the Poonatoor Raja in the way that has been given in both the preceding years. To this we do both agree and we have both given this in writing; and till this cause be enquired into, the same mode as hitherto shall continue to be observed.

(Signed by the parties.)

Note.—From the Diary of the Malabar Joint Commissioners, dated 2nd September 1793. The Punattur or Tallapadi Raja is the descendent of one Kakat to whom Cheraman, one of the Perumals, granted the district formerly known as Chavakkad for services rendered him in assassinating Choy, General of the army of the Chola King, sent to subdue the revolt of the Perumal. He thus became the ruler of Chavakkad district on the division of Malabar by Cheruman Perumal. His descendant was reduced by the Zamorin in 1791 to the humiliating position of collector of his revenues till by the interposition of the Company, the Raja was granted an allowance.—*Vide* Report of the Commissioners, paras. 343 to 351.

LXI.

Submission and Agreement entered into by the SAMOORY RAJA and the RAJA OF POONATOOR.

It is hereby agreed and settled that Mr. Farmer obtain information of, and determine to whom the country claimed by each of us

belonged of right, previous to the time Hyder Ali Nawab took possession of the country and we agree to abide and conform to the rules and customs then observed, until this is decided it is hereby further settled that Mr. Farmer shall provide the means of support for the Raja of Poonatoor in the same manner as has been observed for the last two years, that in the mean time and until the final issue of the matter now submitted the business to be managed as usual.

Done in presence of William Gamul Farmer, Esq., and Jonathan Duncan, Esq., this 21st Chingo 968 (1st September 1793).

Mark of the ZAMORIN.

Mark of the POONATOOR RAJA

Note.—From the Malabar Supravisor's Diary, dated 25th October 1793.

Appendix 2

Letter from W.G. Farmer to Poonathoor Raja

LXIX.

To

THE POONATHOOR RAJA.

The Zamory having a long time evaded to settle the business of the countries claimed by you according to the paper written in the presence of Mr. Duncan and myself by the Samory and you, you have represented your grievance and desired leave to go home, and that means should be taken for your expense according to agreement.

It is therefore settled that at the Cutcherry of the Tahsildar you may place a Carregar on your part to inspect the amount actually collected from the 51 Tarras claimed by you, one-fifth of these collections will be allowed for your expenses as is allowed to other Rajas for the year 969. In order diligently to serve the Company and yourself, you are to be watchful after the collections made by the people of the Samory. For the present 2,000 fanams are given you for your expenses, all particulars are explained to Mr. Stevens¹ at Cherpulcherry to whom you will present the letter I now write and he will give the orders necessary about your business.

CALICUT,

6th November 1793.

(Signed) W. G. FARMER.

Appendix 3

Palayur Cheppedukal

16 പാലയൂർചെപ്പേട്-I കൊല്ലവർഷം 781 (ഏ.ഡി. 1606)

വട്ടെഴുത്ത്.

1. കൊല്ലം 781മത കുർപ്പത്തായറ്റിൻ എഴുതിയ (വെമ്)
2. പാട്ടം നെർപലിച ഓലകരണമാവത. പാലൂർപള്ളിലെ വികാരിയും പുരോ
3. ത്തിക്കാരുമുട കൈയ്യാൽ ആയിരത്ത അൻമപത്ത അഞ്
4. ചു പുതുപണം കൊണ്ടാൻ കുത്തംചേരി ഇരൈവിനാരാണെൻ
5. കൊണ്ടാൻ. കൊണ്ടന പരിചാവത. ഇക്കൊണ്ട പുതു (പണമ്) 105
6. 5 നും കാരിയ്മതൻറേ ഇരിങ്ങപ്പുരമ് തെചത്ത ഇളങ്
7. കുളത്തവടക്കെ മുറി പറമ്പു മ് അതിന അടുത്ത കണ്ടങ്
8. ഒൾ നാല്പതിനാഴി വിത്തി (നുക)ണ്ടവും കൂടനില (പാ
9. ടുമുൾ) പ്പട ആയിരത്ത അൻമപത്തഞ്ചു പണത്തിന

രണ്ടാംവശം

10. നെർപലിച കിഴിടുമാറ് എഴുതിക്കൊടുത്താൻ ഇരവിനാരാണെൻ
11. ഇമ്മാർക്കമേ ഇച്ചൊന്ന ഇളങ്കുളത്തവടക്കെ മുറിപ്പറ (മ്)
12. പൂമ് അതിടുത്ത കണ്ടമ് നാനാഴി വിത്തിന്നു കണ്ടവുമുടകൂടി ആയ
13. യരത്ത 1055 പണത്തിന* നെർപലിച കിഴിയുമാറ എഴു
14. തിച്ചു കൊണ്ടാർ പാലൂർപള്ളിയിൽ വികാരി പരക്കുളങ്ങരെ
15. ഇട്ടി അച്ചനാരുമു പുരോത്തികാരുമുടകൂടി ഇപ്പടിക്ക
16. ഇതട്ടിയുമ്**. താഴ്ക്കി കൊതനല്ലൂർ നമ്പൂതിരി. മാ
17. ടക്കാവില് ചാത്തപ്പമനോൻ കൈയഴുത്ത.

*ഇവിടെ ഒരു അടയാളമുണ്ട്. സന്ദർഭംകൊണ്ട് “പണം” എന്നുവായിക്കാം.

** “ഇതറിയും” എന്നുവായിക്കുക.

T.A.S. vol. III-Part I.,pp. 81-82.

17 പാലയൂർചെപ്പേട് -II കൊല്ലവർഷം 852 (ഏ.ഡി. 1677)

വട്ടെഴുത്ത്

1. കൊല്ലം 852 ആമത പൊകുന്ന ചിങ്ങത്തായത്തിൽ എഴുതിയ അട്ടിപ്പെറ്റൊല കരണമാവത്[.] പലെയൂർ തെചത്ത് അച്ചാഴത്ത
2. പാലിപ്പറമ്പ കിഴക്കതിർ തെക്കുവടക്ക് പലെയൂർ പള്ളി [പറു] മാളികെക്ക് പടിഞ്ഞാറും തെക്ക അതിർ കിഴക്കുപടിഞ്
3. തൊറ് വിളക്കത്തറെ പറമ്പിനു വടക്കും പടിഞ്ഞാറെ അതിർ തെക്കു വടക്ക് പെരുവഴി തോട്ടിന്കിഴക്കും വടക്ക് അതിർ കി
4. ഴക്കുപടിഞ്ഞാറ അച്ചാഴത്ത വലൈക്കറെറു കുടിയിരിപ്പിൻറെ തെക്കെ അതിർക്കു തെക്കും ഇന്നാലതിർക്ക അകത്ത അകപ്പെട്ട തെച
5. പൊകകുളു തെങ്ങിന തെങ്ങായും മറ്റുമെപ്പെർപ്പെട്ടതിനും കൂടി അനു പെറും അർത്തവും വാങ്ങികൊണ്ട അരവെളും അരികുപതിയു
6. കൊയിലും പാലെയൂർ പാട്ടമാളിയും അന്നാടുകൊയിലും മുൻപായാകെ അട്ടിപ്പൊറായി എഴുതി നീര അട്ടിക്കൊടുത്താൻ അച്ചാഴത്ത
7. കാമൻകാമരും തംപിമാരും [.] അമ്മാർകകമ ഇച്ചൊന്ന പാലെയൂർ തെചത്ത് അച്ചാഴത്ത പാലിപ്പറമ്പ് കിഴക്കതിർ തെക്ക വടക്ക
8. പാലെയൂർപ്പള്ളി പറുമാളികക്ക പടിഞ്ഞാറും തെക്കതിർ കിഴക്കു പടിഞ്ഞാറ വിളക്കർത്തറെപ്പറമ്പിനു വടക്കും പടിഞ്ഞാറെ അ

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9. തീർ തെക്കുവടക്ക പെരുവഴിതോട്ടിനു കിഴക്കും വടക്കുതീർ കിഴക്കുപടിഞ്ഞാറ അച്ചാഴത്ത് വലൈക്കരൈ കുടിയിരുപ്പിന്റെ തെക്കെ അതിർക്ക തെ
10. കും ഇന്നാലതിർക്കകത്ത അകപ്പെട്ട തെച്ചൊഗങ്ങളും തെങ്ങിനു തെങ്ങായും മറ്റുമെപ്പർ പെട്ടതിനും കൂടി അന്നുപെറും അർത്തവും
11. കൊടുത്ത അരവെളും അരികും പതിയും കൊയിലും പാലെയൂർ പാട്ടമളിയും അറികെ അന്നാടു കൊയിൽ മുംപാകെ അട്ടിപ്പൊറായി എഴുതി നീരട്ടികൊണ്ടാർ പാലെയൂർ പള്ളിക്കൽ മാർ കുറിയാക്ക
12. സഹത പെരാൽ പാലെയൂർ ചാക്കുക [ത്ത] നാർ ഇടവികാരിയും തെച്ചത്തെ പട്ടക്കാറെന്നും പള്ളിപൊറത്തിക്കാറെരും ഇമ്മാർക്കമെ പരമ്പു നാലതിർക്ക് അകത്ത് അകപ്പെട്ട
13. തിനു എപ്പേരും മാവറെക്കൊണ്ട മണ്ണടക മുതലറ നിരുത്തമയ് നീരട്ടിക്കൊടുത്താർ കാമൻകാമരും തംപിമാരും അമ്മാർക്കമെ ഇച്ചൊന്ന പരമ്പ നാലതിർ
14. ക്ക അകത്ത അകപ്പെട്ടതിൻ എപ്പേരും മാവറ കൊടുത്ത മണ്ണടക മുതലറ നിരുതമായി നീരട്ടിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാർ പലെയൂർ ചാക്കുകത്തനാറും വികാരിയും പൊഴത്
15. തിക്കാറെരും ഇമ്മാർക്കമെ ഇത അറിവോർ കൊണ്ടാട്ട കണ്ടു മെണൊന്നും വാലാട്ട തെവെൻ മെണൊന്നും ആച്ചവീട്ടിൽ ഇട്ടിനായെരും പാലവായകരത്തിൽ
16. പടിപ്പുരെക്കൽ ഇട്ടിന്റേന്നും കാവക്കരെ പുത്തകുറിപ്പും തലപ്പെള്ളി പുത നായരും അറികെ കെട്ടുകെൾപ്പിച്ച് കയ്യെഴുതിനാർ കുത്തിനം പെള്ളി ചങ്ങരി പങ്ങ കൈ എഴുത്ത T.A.S. Vol.VI-Part.I., pp.87-88.

18 പാലയൂർചെപ്പേട്-III കൊല്ലവർഷം 856 (ഏ.ഡി. 1681)

വട്ടെഴുത്ത്

1. കൊല്ലം 856 ആമത് വിചിനത്തായറ്റിൽ എഴുതിയ പനെപ്പാട്ടൊല കരണമാവത[.]
2. ചാലെയൂർ പള്ളിക്കൽ മാർ കുറിച്ചാക്കൊ സഹത പലെയൂർ ചാക്കുകത്തനാ[റും] വികാ
3. റിയും തെച്ചത്തെ പാട്ടക്കാറെന്നും പള്ളിപൊഴത്തിക്കാറെരും കയ്യാൽ നൂറ്
4. റൊരുപത്തൊന്നു പുതുപ്പണം കടങ്ങുകൊണ്ടാർ ആച്ചവീട്ടിൽ ചുരികെട്ടി കൊണ്ടാർ കൊ
5. ണ്ട പരിചാവത[.] ഇക്കൊണ്ട പുതുപ്പണം 111 നു കാരിയം പാലെയൂർ തെച്ചത്ത തര
6. കൻ വീട്ടിൽപ്പറമ്പിന്റെ തെക്കെ പള്ളിയതിർക്ക കിഴക്ക കൽകിണറ്റിന

രണ്ടാംവശം

7. വടക്ക തനിചകതനിക്ക പള്ളകാളിയൻ വീട്ടിൽപ്പറമ്പ വിലനലമുൾപ്പെറു പാലൈ
 8. യൂർ തെച്ചത്ത കാളിയൻ വീട്ടിൽപ്പറമ്പ 111 പണവും കൊടുത്ത പനെപ്പാട്ടം നെർപലിച
 9. കിഴിയുമാറ എഴുതി കൊടുത്താർ ചുരി ഇട്ടി വാങ്ങി അമ്മാർക്കമെ ഈ ചൊന്ന തെച്ചത്ത് 101
 10. പണവും കൊടുത്ത പനെപ്പാട്ടം നെർപലിച കിഴിയുമാറ് എഴുതിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാർ പള്ളിക്കൽ മാക്കുറി
 11. ചാക്കു സഹത പെരാൽ പാലെയൂർ ചാക്കുകത്തനാ[റും] വികാരി[യും] ഇപ്പറമ്പിൽ വച്ചാക്കുന്ന പല
 12. ണ്ടക്ക തെച്ചവക്കം കുഴിക്കാണം കൊടുക്കവും കൊള്ളവും കടവർ ഇപ്പടിക്ക കൊണ്ടാ[ർ][.] തംപി തംപി കഏ
 13. ഴുത്ത[.]
- T.A.S. Vol.VI-Part.I., p.90.

19. പാലയൂർ ചെപ്പേട്-IV കൊല്ലവർഷം 918-ലെ ലിഖിതം

വട്ടെഴുത്തു

കൊല്ലം 918-മത മീന ഞായറ്റിൽ എഴുതിയ അട്ടിപ്പെറ്റൊലക്കരണ മാവത- പാലയൂർ തെചത്ത കുമ്മനിപ്പറമ്പിന്ന തെക്കെപ്പുറം ഇമ്പൊണൻ കല്ലട്ട അതിർക്ക തെക്കൊട്ടും പള്ളിപ്പറമ്പിന്ന വടക്കെ അതിർക്ക വടക്കൊട്ടും- പടിഞ്ഞാറ എടവഴിക്ക കിഴക്കൊട്ടും- കിഴക്കെ അതിർക്ക പടിഞ്ഞാട്ടും. ഈ നാലതിർക്ക അകത്തകപ്പെട്ടത എപ്പിയെർപ്പെട്ടതും 'അന്നു നാലറകണ്ടു'യെടം അർത്തവും വാങ്ങി അട്ടിപ്പെറ്റ പിറ മുതലൊതകമായി എഴുതി കൊടുത്താൻ അച്ചഴിത്ത രാമൻ പങ്ങനും തമ്പിമാരും. അമ്മാർക്കെ ഇച്ചൊന്ന പാലെയൂർ തെചത്ത അച്ചാഴിയത്ത കുമ്മനിപ്പറമ്പിന്ന തെക്കെപ്പുറം കല്ലിട്ടതിർക്ക തെക്കൊട്ടും. പള്ളിപ്പറമ്പിന്ന വടക്കെ അതിർക്ക വടക്കൊട്ടും- പറിഞ്ഞാറ ഏടവഴിക്ക കിഴക്കൊട്ടും- കിഴക്കെ അതിർക്ക പടിഞ്ഞാട്ടും- ഇന്നാലതിർക്കകത്തകപ്പെട്ടത എപ്പിർപെട്ടതും 'അന്നു നാലറകണ്ടു'യെടം അർത്തവും' കൊടുത്ത അട്ടിപ്പെറ്റ 'പിറമുതലൊതക മായി' എഴുതിച്ച കൊണ്ടൻ പാലെയൂർ പള്ളി വെകാരിയും പൊറത്തിക്കാരും- ഇമ്മാർക്കെമെ ഇച്ചൊന്ന പറമ്പ 'അന്നു നാലറകണ്ടു'യെടം അർത്തവും' വാങ്ങി 'പിറമുത'ലൊതകമായി എഴുതി കൊടുത്താൻ രാമൻ പങ്ങനും തമ്പിമാരും അമ്മാർക്കെമെ ഇച്ചൊന്ന പറമ്പ അന്നു 'യെടം അർത്തവും കൊടുത്ത പിറ മുതലൊതകമായി' എഴുതിച്ചുകൊണ്ടൻ പാലയൂർ പള്ളി വെകാരിയും പൊറവർത്തിക്കാരും ഇമ്മാർക്കെമെ അറിയും പലതക്കി തലപ്പെള്ളിയെരുവെർ കാവെക്കരുക്കുടവ്വും ചവുലക്കട്ടിൽ നാട്ടാരും മമ്മമ്പിൽ മുത്തവെരും കുത്താമ്പെള്ളി കമ്മളും അറികെ കൊങ്ങാട്ടിൽ കേരളൻ കണ്ടർ കയ്യെഴുത്ത.

സി . എൽ. ആൻറണി, ഭാഷാപഠനങ്ങൾ, കേരളസാഹിത്യ അക്കാദമി, 1989,പു. 34-35.

Appendix 4

Illustrations of Megalithic Sites in Punnathurnadu



4.1 Kandanassery Cave



4.2 Chowannur Cave



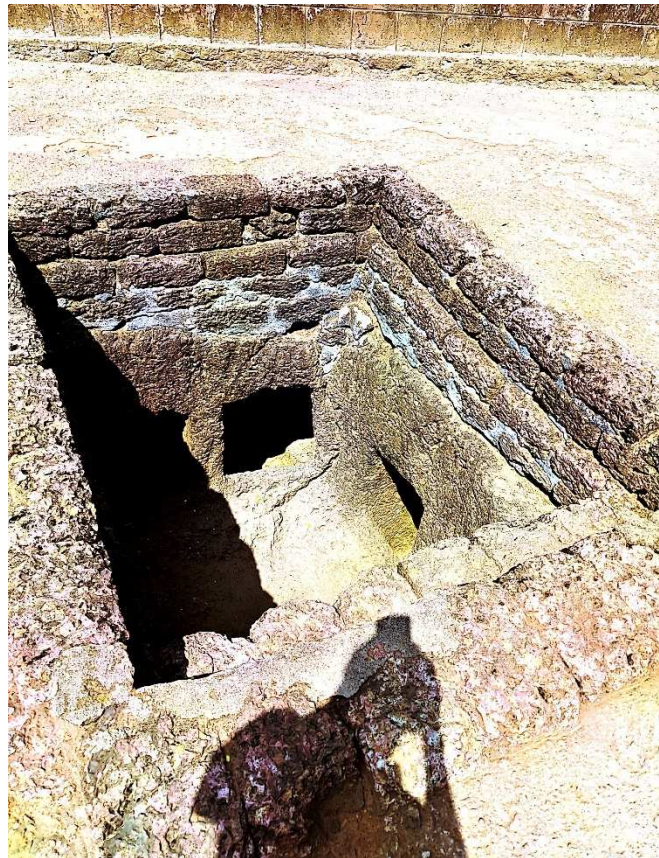
4.3 Kakkad Cave



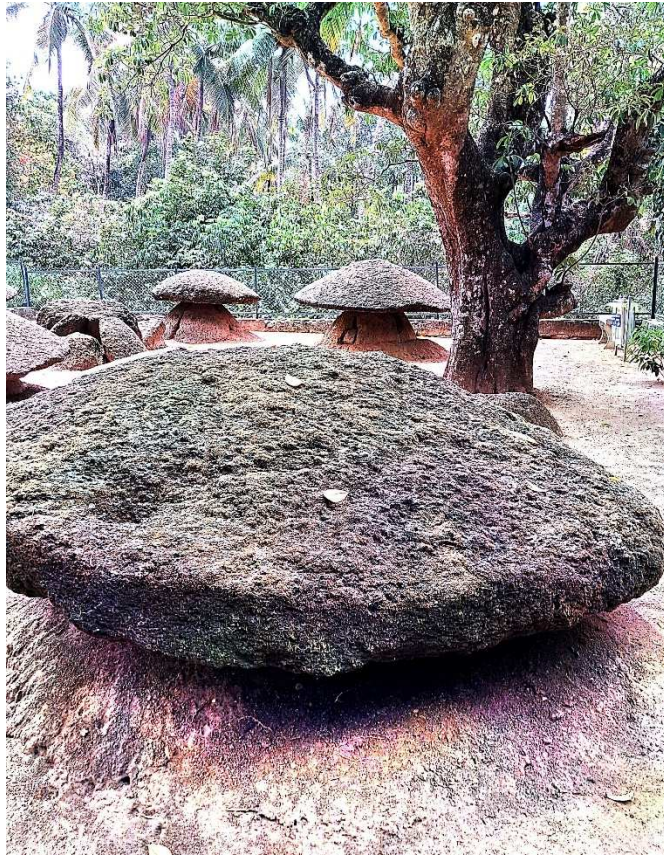
4.4 Porkkalam Cave



4.5 Eyyal Cave



4.6 Kattakambal Cave



4.7 Ariyannur Kudakkallu



4.8 Chiramanangad Kudakkallu



4.9 Punnathur Kotta



4.10 Ilayaraja's Palace, Thampuranpadi



4.11 Jews Hill, Palayur



4.12 Stone Inscription found at Jews Hill

Appendix 5

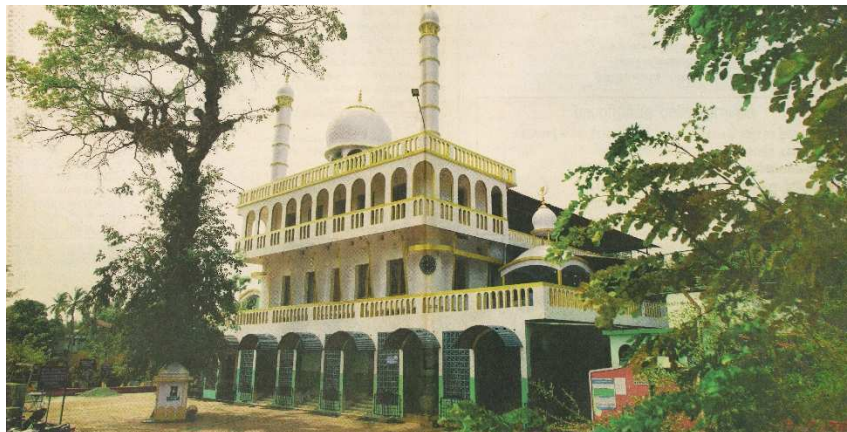
Illustrations of Religious Centres at Punnathurnadu



Guruvayur Sreekrishna Temple



Palayur Church



Manathala Mosque