

**WOMEN IN LABOUR PROCESS, PRODUCTION
RELATIONS AND SOCIAL CHANGE:
A STUDY OF NORTH MALABAR**

*A Dissertation submitted in the Department of History,
University of Calicut for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*

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JULY 2006**

DECLARATION

I, Sreevidhya. V, hereby declare that the dissertation **WOMEN IN LABOUR PROCESS, PRODUCTION RELATIONS AND SOCIAL CHANGE; A STUDY OF NORTH MALABAR** is a bonafide record of research work done by me and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any other degrees.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation '**WOMEN IN LABOUR PROCESS, PRODUCTION RELATIONS AND SOCIAL CHANGE: A STUDY OF NORTH MALABAR**' submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Calicut is a record of bonafide research carried out by **Sreevidhya. V**, under my supervision. No part of the dissertation has been submitted for the award of any Degree before.

University of Calicut

Dated : 20.7.06.....


Dr. K.N. Ganesh
Supervising Teacher

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Gender studies have attracted the attention of the historians very recently. The concept of gender was adopted in order to analyse or delineate the social construction of men and women. Gender studies have mainly addressed the question of invisibility of women. More precisely, they focused on the invisibility of women's labour and their relation to family and society. When scholars refer to the working population, they include only the men and women who participate in the labour process either as full time or part-time. Labour is a human effort directed towards producing commodity and is one of the factors of production. The meaning, location and nature of labour of course have changed over time. The perception of what constitutes labour also vary between people. Like many other words, labour has several meanings. The terms like work, labour, employment, job etc are frequently used in order to denote this. Work is a more standard term or unit often used by the neo-classical economists and is used to denote a specific point that it has no direct connection with productive activity. It can be used to determine the quantum of specific kind. It is often used in the sense of 'doing'. But unlike work, employment means occupation, work in offices and activities that are modern in nature.

Usually women's labour is always referred to as 'work'. Work is often a general term that includes both socially productive and unproductive

labour. The economic theory from the point of the neo-classical economists has always been centred on labour market. In labour market, the volume of labour accomplished and the time devoted to it is usually compensated in terms of money. This market centred nature of labour theory creates some separation between women's labour and men's labour. Otherwise it creates a separation of workplace from domestic labour and naturally creates private and public spheres of work. It was Max Weber who had anticipated the feminist discussion of the relationship between public and private spheres¹. This isolation of the units of domestic labour appears to be a natural separation of women from men as well. The justification of removing women from social labour process is normally done by advocating the myth that domestic labour is the time honoured natural setting for women. A series of correlated opposites embodies the seemingly universal division of life into two spheres of experience. Private and public, domestic and social, family and work, women and men. Rooted in the economic working of the capitalist mode of production, and reinforced by system of male supremacy or patriarchy, this ideology of separate spheres has a force that is extremely difficult to transcend².

In order to describe the patriarchal control, several approaches have been explained by the feminists. Important among them were liberal

¹ Stevi Jackson, et. al, (eds), *Gender, A sociological Reader*, Routledge, London, 2002, P.4.

² Lise Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women; Toward a Unitary Theory*, Pluto Press, London, 1983, p.154.

feminist approach, radical feminist approach, and social feminist approach. The liberal feminism argued that gender roles constraining women to household superintendence was based on legal subordination of women. It was advocated that women should be empowered with civil and political rights and educational facilities. However, the concept of women's place at home was not challenged. According to radical feminists, nothing short of a complete sexual revolution can help to restructure the society. They concentrated on the traditional female concerns of love, sex, children and interpersonal relationships. The biological differentiation of women, the institution of marriage and family were seen to perpetuate masculine control over female fertility and thereby helping the preservation of a patriarchal system. The socialist feminist approach is derived from the Marxian perspective and finds the roots of female subordination embedded in the private ownership of means of production. This viewpoint held that domestic work produces only use value and not exchange value. A group of socialist feminists argue that women's oppression is based on unpaid house work; child bearing, child care and house work are mentioned as being productive activities. Women in their role of house wives contribute to the reproduction of social relations and provide domestic labour³.

Historical transformation of women's labour had show the changing role of women's labour. It shows that in the early stages of society, productive resources were made communally and the absence of private

³ Deepa Mathur, *Women, Family and Work*, Rawat Publications, New Delhi, 1992.

property, had made the household labour of women and productive labour of men equal. But with the emergence of private property, the relation between men and women changed. And thus men began to control the process of production and exchange within and outside the household in general and women were reduced to the so called domestic cores.

In this context, an effort is made here to explore women's labour and interlinkage between household, family, kin relations and production in an agrarian economy in North Malabar in Kerala during early 20th century. Although there have been a number of studies on the land relations and social change in Kerala, very few of them directly addressed the question of women's labour in the land relations and in the process of social change. The present study is aware of the difficulties in evaluating these sources. Even though a large number of works have discussed the agrarian problems on North Malabar, all these works have attempted to analyse the differentiation among the North Malabar peasantry, and its impact on the process of production⁴. And in the remaining sources, especially from the biographies

⁴ The works of Thomas, Shea Jr. 'Barriers to Economic Development in traditional Societies: Malabar A Case Study, *Journal of Economic History*, Vol.19, 1959, p.p.505-527; Prakash Karat, Agrarian Relations in Malabar-1925-1948 Part I, *Social Scientist*, 2(2), September 1973, p.p. 24-37, Part II, *Social Scientist*, 3(2), October 1973, p.p.30-43; Prakash Karat, The Peasant Movement in Malabar, 1934-40, *Social Scientist*, 2(5), September 1976, p.p. 30-43; B.A. Prakash, Agricultural Backwardness of Malabar during the colonial period: An Analysis of Economic Causes, *Social Scientist*, p.p. 51-76; K.K.N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot*, Sandhya Publications, Calicut, 1978 and *Modern Kerala: Studies in Social and Agrarian Relations*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1988; William Logan: *A study in the Agrarian Relations in Malabar*, Sandhya Publications, Calicut, 1981 etc belong to this category.

of early leaders, we find only scattered references⁵. The only exception to this case was the work of Andalat and K. Devayani⁶. It is recognized that in the traditional agrarian system, women's labour composed a substantial part of the agricultural labour. When the movement of the ordinary tenants against the landlord intensified in the 30's and 40's, women labourers took active part. The visibility of the women labourers in the political process became manifested with the growth of tenant agitations. The presence of women labourers in all these agitations shows that the repressive policies followed by the landlords, the newly emerging industrial classes and the state directly affected the women labourers. The extensive participation of women in this agrarian struggle throws up a number of questions. This constitutes a major problem in historical analysis. The present study on the women's labour process takes up North Malabar as the study region primarily because of the

⁵ V.M. Vishnu Bharateeyan, *Adimakallengane Udamakalaye* (Mal), Prabhat Book House, Trivandrum, 1981; P. Krishna Pillai, *Adimathathinethire* (edited by Andalat) Chintha Publications, Trivandrum, 1979; K. Madhavan, *Payaswiniyude Theerathu* (Mal), Prabhat Book Depot, Trivandrum, 1987 and *Oru Gandhayan Communistinte Ormakal* (Mal), Creative Arts and Cultural Co-operative Society Limited, Trivandrum, 2002; P. Narayanan Nair, *Aranoottantilute*, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Trichur, 1999; N.C. Sekhar, *Agniveethikal* (Mal), North Kerala Printers and Publications, Cannanore, 1987; A.K. Gopalan, *Entejeevithakatha*, Chintha Publications, Trivandrum., 1999; P. Krishna Pillai, *Sakhaakkale Munnottu* (edited by Andalat), Chintha Publications, Trivandrum, 1998; K.K.N. Kurup (ed.), *A.C. Kannan Nair, Oru Padanam* (Mal), Language Institute, Trivandrum, 1985.

⁶ Andalat, *Rekhyallatha Charithram* (Mal), Chintha Publications, Trivandrum, 1987; K. Devayani, *Chorayum Kaneerum Nananja Vazhikal* (Mal) Chintha Publications, Trivandrum.

following reasons:

- (a) North Malabar was the centre of sustained struggles of the *Verumpattakar* of which, the labour women formed a sizeable component.
- (b) This women's activism sustained itself even after the 40s and it is the only region where women's organizations have mass following, from the 40s to the present day.
- (c) This is also the region where radical and national politics took deep roots and wielded considerable influence to this day. Because of this, it is possible to explore the relationship between labour process, changes in social relations and women's social and political activism as a sample case.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since the 19th century itself, a range of opinions have been brought about the position of women in labour process.

The pioneering historical research belonged to the gendered aspects of labour in French history are Olive Schreiner, Aben Soure and the Fabian socialist Alice Clark, research student at the London School of Economics, writing under the inspiration of Olive Schreiner's work. Clark in her work, *The Working Life of Women in the 17th Century*, spelled out the differences among the working women, from midwives and merchants through

agricultural labourers. Aben Soure in *La femme et le fem*⁷ gave separate consideration to the women of the courtly and provincial nobility. Besides these works, a number of case studies of women's work in particular industries, occupations and work places have been carried out.

Ester Boserup's *Women's Role In Economic Development*⁸ emphasised the fundamental ways in which women's work varied cross culturally. Drawing largely on materials derived from African agriculture, she was the first to note the prevalence in Africa of female farming systems in which food production was taken care of by women with little help from men. The centrality of women in African agrarian production and food production systems in a culture distinguished by rigid sexual division of labour was, for Boserup, linked directly to population, density, landholding systems and technology. She was also concerned with identifying the relations between female farming and agricultural intensification. Driven by population growth and the attendant shortening fallow periods, the trajectories of agrarian change in African agriculture were typically associated with the withdrawal of women from production.

⁷ Olive Schreiner, *Women and Labour* (1911), Aben Soure, *La femme et le fem*, Alice Clark, *The Working Life of Women in the 17th Century*, Frankcass, London, 1968.

⁸ Ester Boserup, *Women's Role in Economic Development*, George Allen and Unwin Limited, London, 1970.

Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott in *Women, Work and Family*⁹ examine the historical record of women's work in England and France from about 1700 to 1950. The work focuses on those social groups which involved large numbers of women in productive activities at home and in the labour market. Although the experience of women and families in countries undergoing industrial growth and demographic change varies, the definitions and the important variables are relevant to the history of women's work elsewhere. According to the authors, the supply of women available for these activities is shaped in part by demographical factors such as sex ratios, morality, the age and rate of marriage and levels of fertility. The work also analyses women's labour approaches from two aspects. On the one hand it looks at the labour women. And on the other hand, they look at the economic and demographic factors that influenced women's labour.

Marshall Sahlins' *Stone Age Economics*¹⁰ examines the economies of early societies. In the beginning this book focuses on hunters and gatherers society and their economic behaviour i.e., their inclination to consume at once all stocks at hand. And about the affluent character of this society in which all the material wants of peoples are easily stratified. He states that agriculture had allowed the Neolithic communities to maintain high degree of social order. In this work he had clearly defined about the domestic mode

⁹ Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, Holt Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1978.

¹⁰ Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1979.

of production. For him domestic mode of production refers to economics organized by domestic groups and kinship relations. And it was mainly based on household production in which the household tasks are allotted to women but they often did men's labour too.

The collection titled *Feminism and Materialism; Women and Modes of Production* edited by Annette Kuhn and Ann Marie Wolpe contains eleven articles¹¹. The articles of Annette Kuhn and Ann Marie Wolpe at the beginning of this collection are arguing for a materialist conception of theoretical contribution. In order to assess the position of women for the materialist conception they are taking the Marxist conception that put forward in the *Capital* i.e., on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. It is at this point that the whole articles in this collections are concentrating on. This is followed by two articles that centered on patriarchy and its relations of production, by Roisin McDonough et.al and Annette Kuhn. There after Lesley Cardwell's paper on church, state and family, Eva Gamarnikow's paper on sexual division of labour, the case of nursing, and Kate Young's mode of appropriation and the sexual division of labour'; a case study from Oaxaca, Mexico are arranged. Following that Veronica Beechey's paper on women and production a

¹¹ Annette Kuhn and Ann Marie wolpe, *Feminism and Materialism; Women and Modes of Production*, Routledge and kegan paul, London, 1978.

critical analysis of some sociological theories of women's work discuss some of the problems involved in analysing female wage labour and had discussed sociological theories regarding women's labour and dual labour market theory. This was followed by four more articles regarding sexual division of labour and women's oppression. The authors of this collection argue that it is of fundamental importance to analyse the relationship between the family and the organization of production in the process of capital accumulation.

In *Women and Work*¹², Sheila Lewenhak is trying to trace the developments in women's work from stone age to the present age. She argues that since the beginning of human history, women have worked constantly, continuously, always and everywhere, in every type of society and in every part of the world. She traces that in human history, there has not been an unchanging delimitation of work functions on sex lines. The travellers, conquerors, settlers, archaeologists and anthropologists have all recorded that in earliest societies the principle of existence was do-it-yourself.

In *Work and Inequality*¹³, Susan Lonsdale looks at the unequal distribution of work in British society and some of the explanations for this. She documents some significant changes in employment, most notably the

¹² Sheila Lewenhak, *Women and Work*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1980.

¹³ Susan Lonsdale, *Work and Inequality*, Longman, London, 1985.

growth in female participation in the labour market, part-time employment and in unemployment, and the response to these trends by policy makers. A considerable part of the book provides us with evidence about the circumstances of group in society who face discrimination and disadvantage in the labour market. The book concludes that a great deal of poverty and inequality still persists in Britain today as a consequence of the social division of labour and the concern of policy with efficiency rather than equity.

Wally Seccombe's *A Millennium of Family Change; Feudalism to Capitalism in North Western Europe*¹⁴, presents a broad sketch of a millennium of economic and family change in North Western Europe, from the early middle ages to the brink of the industrial revolution. The book also has sought to locate the family forms of labouring classes within prevailing modes of production. Further, this book has expanded the mode-of-production concept by including the reproduction of the species as a form of production.

The contributors of *Agrarian Change, Gender and Land Rights*¹⁵ edited by Shahra Razavi, explore how the deflationary macro-economic policies and processes associated with economic liberalization are impacting on rural livelihood and agrarian change in diverse political economics, focusing in

¹⁴ Wally Seccombe, *A Millennium of Family Change; Feudalism to Capitalism in North Western Europe*, Verso, London, 1992.

¹⁵ Shahra Razavi, *Agrarian Change, Gender and Land Rights*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2003.

particular on the gender specificities of these impacts. This collection includes eight articles. The volume opens with an introduction by Shahra Razavi in Agrarian change, gender and land rights and it was followed by two articles one by Utsa Patnaik and by Ann Whitehead and Dzodzi Tsikata on neoliberal macroeconomic policies, agricultural liberalization and the reform of land tenure institutions. After these two articles, it contains case studies on agrarian change, land tenure reform and gender structures of five countries. It reflects on the particular agrarian histories, current processes of land tenure reform and the on-going preoccupations of women's movements and advocates in the different countries.

Sue Hatt's *Gender, Work and Labour Market*¹⁶, tries to trace the dual responsibilities of women, the division of labour and gender wage gap. Sue Hatt is trying to trace that the decision about women's hours of work, place of work, full-time or part-time employment and the response to income tax etc within the parameters imposed by family, society and economic opportunities. The author argues that the living standards of men and women in society is depend upon the level of output which the economy actually produces within the market and the domestic sector of the economy.

*The Politics of House Work*¹⁷ edited by Ellen Malos is a collection of 18 essays regarding domestic labour. The volume begins with Catherine Hall's

¹⁶ Sue Hatt, *Gender, Work and Labour Markets*, Macmillan Press, London, 1997.

¹⁷ Ellen Malos (ed.), *The Politics of House Work*, Allison and Busby Limited, London, 1980.

article about the history of the house wife. This is followed by different articles about the politics of house work, women and family, wage for house work and wage against house work.

When we look into the various works regarding labour history in India, serious Indian works regarding the role of women in labour process and other development are relatively few. Some of the major works are given below:

*Structures of Patriarchy; State, Community and Household in Modern Asia*¹⁸, is a collection of essays edited Bina Agarwal. These essays examine the gender impact of agricultural growth strategies in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, India and China, export oriented industrialization in South east Asia, the new population policies in Malaysia and Singapore, and the rise of religious fundamentalism in Iran and else where.

The collected work *Land Caste and Politics in Indian states*¹⁹ by Gail Omvedt beginning with an introductory essay by Gail Omvedt on class caste and land in India and followed by seven other studies. Though the method of class analysis is one of the most valuable tools for understanding social stratification and social relations, to say that caste category is only a manifestation of class in simplistic mechanical understanding is devoid of

¹⁸ Bina Agarwal (ed.), *Structures of Patriarchy; State, Community and Household in Modern Asia*, Kali for Women, 1988.

¹⁹ Gail Omvedt (ed.), *Land Caste and Politics in Indian States*, Authors Guild Publications, University of Delhi, 1982.

empirical reality and historical context. According to the authors there is a need to diagnose both the basis of caste in the structure of land relations and its super structural dimensions in politics emphasizing various levels of interaction between economy, culture and politics.

Ursula Sharma's *Women's Work, Class and Urban Household; A Study of Shimla, North India*²⁰, is based on research in Shimla among the urban households. In this work she compares the household works performed by employed women with that of unemployed. She also reveals that women's migration is primarily related to their husband's employment. She traces the Indian women's concept of housework and examines the notion that, house work must be privately done. Then she examines the role of education and the role of women's paid work in the household economy, examines the patterns of employment and also states that marriage does not precipitate a crisis in a woman's working career. And the labour outside the home extends the range of source of help and information which are available to the household. Lastly, the author examines the structure and stage of the social life of the women. She argues that participation in public labour enhances the decision making power of women even inside their household, and the decision making power of the unemployed women in the household is relatively less.

²⁰ Ursula Sharma, *Women's Work, Class and Urban Household: A Study of Shimla, North India*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1986.

In *Cold Hearths and Barren Slopes: The Wood Fuel Crisis in the Third World*²¹, Bina Agarwal analyses the wood fuel crisis faced by the third world. In this book she traces the nature of the wood fuel problem, causes of the wood fuel crisis and also makes a search for the solution to these problem, causes of the wood fuel crisis and also make a search for the solution to this problems. The nature of this problem is that, in the third world countries the collection of firewood was done by women and they spent a lot of their time for this purpose. Then she traces the reasons for the shortage of fire wood and states that the worst sufferers of this shortage were the women themselves. During times of wood fuel shortage, they are forced to depend on things that do not provide continuous heat and thus increase the cooking time. Moreover, they had to reduce the course of food preparation and had to shift to less nutritious food. This shortage also reduced the input in agriculture. Lastly, the author also discusses the effects of innovations. This study thus focuses on the impact of environmental destruction on the household labour of women, which in turn has its impact on the actual labour time spent by women on agriculture or other areas of public labour.

*Finding the Household; Conceptual and Methodological Issues*²², edited by K. Saradmoni is a collection of eleven essays which explore various

²¹ Bina Agarwal, *Cold Hearths and Barren Slopes, The Wood Fuel Crisis in the Third World*, Allied Publications Limited, New Delhi, 1986.

²²K.Saradmoni (ed.), *Finding the Household; Conceptual and Methodological Issues*, Sage Publications, 1992.

important issues, including the formation and inner dynamics of households, the linkage between individual households and the wider processes and structures of society, and differing kinship. The first three essays examine the currently available Indian data sources. The next seven discuss major concepts like family, household and has based on field data drawn from India, the Philippines, Korea and Vietnam. The last essays sum up the debate and highlight the global nature of the problem.

Bina Agarwal, in her book entitled *A Field of One's Own; Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*²³, raises the question whether independent ownership of land can be of crucial importance in promoting the well being and empowerment of women. She also points out that the issue of women's land rights has, until recently, received little attention in policy formation. In pursuing the issue of women's independent rights in land, a number of related questions arise, such as; how should we characterize gender relations and what role do the land rights play in constituting and changing those relations, what are the rights in the land that women have historically enjoyed, and how and why did these change during different historical epochs. She also indicates the need for a very different conceptualization of the household and says that the bargaining approach, which indicates the ability of a member of the household to bargain her claims within the household, has particular usefulness in examining gender relations. Further,

²³ Bina Agarwal, *A Field of One's Own*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

Bina examines the communities that customarily recognize women's rights in land. She traces the formulation of contemporary inheritance laws on landed property and the significant legal differences between different countries. She also points out the gap between law and practice in traditionally patrilineal communities and states that the claims to land would depend upon the strength of Purdha norms and practice, post marital residence and marriage distance, the extent of male support, women's level of education and extent of women's economic vulnerability. After that, she discusses the issue of land control and states that women's ability to claim as well as control and self manage land likely to be a function of a number of factors, such as the taboo on female ploughing, purdha practices, female illiteracy rates etc. She provides an analytical framework on the role of women in land relations, that could be applied in specific studies. Thus this work is a major contribution to gender studies.

*Siva and Her Sisters: Gender, Caste and Class in Rural South India*²⁴ by Karin Kapadia focuses on the experience of Pallar women of Tiruchi district in Tamil Nadu. In this study Karin shows that it is impossible to deal with class and caste as categories without incorporating the dynamics of gender and also shows that Pallar women possess a certain cultural autonomy. This book begins by laying out the categories of kinship prevalent amongst different castes in Arulloor, with a special emphasis on matrilineal kin and

²⁴ Karin Kapadia, *Siva and Her Sisters: Gender, Caste and Class in Rural South India*, Delhi, OUP, 1996.

the unique functions of the mother's brother. After that the author looks at how gender and sexuality are affected by caste. And states that the control of women's fertility as being more central amongst lower castes, while female sexuality and chastity are primary pre occupations for upper castes, a norm that is emulated by upwardly mobile lower caste groups. In the last part, the author discusses the spheres of work and production relations. She also traces the effects of the technological changes in capitalist agriculture on the gendered divisions of labour and disparities in wage rates.

*Labour and Gender; Survival in Urban India*²⁵, by U. Kalpagam focuses on labour and gender. The work is based on the thesis that gender issues cannot be studied in isolation but need to be located within the overall structural context of an economy. The approaches that have been applied for this are neo-classical and Marxist. The author is underlying the fact that work and reproduction are two very crucial and mutually influencing spheres in women's lives, and that an understanding of the multiple fields of force and power relations that enmesh women's lives have to ground its analysis in these two spheres.

In *Women and Labour in late Colonial India; The Bengal Jute Industry*²⁶, Samita Sen traces the history of labouring women in Calcutta in the 19th and

²⁵ U. Kalpagam, *Labour and Gender; Survival in Urban India*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1994.

²⁶ Samita, Sen, *Women and Labour in Late Colonial India: The Bengal Jute Industry*, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

early 20th centuries. She raises the question why and how the industrial working class became overwhelmingly male-centred. She tries to question the assumptions and judgements of the earlier writers regarding the working class, especially working class women. The author examines the migration of the labour to the jute mill area and raises the question why, the Calcutta jute mill owners found the women unsuitable and also traces that how the earnings of wives and children in the villages enabled the male workers 'Come and go as they please'. Then the author examines the impact of men's migration on women's work. The chapter entitled 'Away from homes; women's work in the mills', examines the role of gender division of labour and explores the fact that employers paid women less than men because they considered women's task as unskilled. With the outset of mechanization in jute mills, women began to be thrown out of labour even on flimsy excuses. Thus, industrialization and mechanization resulted in rendering women unemployed and the industrial working class became mainly male. The author also examines the sexual and marital history of Calcutta's jute workers and shows that women workers were victims of sexual exploitation both in public and private life. Further, she also tries to reconstruct women workers political roles and recovering their diverse concerns.

In *The Veiled Women*²⁷ Prem Chaudhary describes the importance of women in Agrarian economy in Hariyana. The author explains how this

²⁷ Prem Choudhry, *The Veiled Women: Shifting Gender Equations in Rural Haryana, 1880-1990*, Oxford Publications 1994.

important role of women in the agrarian economy led to wide acceptance of the prevalent custom of sale and purchase of brides among the economically distressed peasantry, how the reinforced importance of animal husbandry increased female work etc. The author states the division of labour was constituted on the basis of certain patriarchal norms. But the fact is that, it is only the care given by a women to the land and household that made it possible for a man to avail the job opportunity outside. The author argues that it is through education, this type of cultural work ethics can be eliminated and this can imbued with a new set of values. There existed a number of jokes and stories which clearly ridiculed men's cornering of the largest share of food. The author states that apart from the direct physical control of a woman through violence, there are certain cultural constraints which not only control her ideologically, but, also assure her non participation in decision making. The custom of observing purdha is foremost among them. Thus her being veiled allows men and other people to perpetuate discrimination in private and public sphere. The author also explicates the exclusion of women from property rights and inheritance. There existed justification for continuing to deprive a women of her inheritance rights. The main justification of the male is that girls receive their share at the time of marriage. The author states the rural women have accepted dowry as a substitute for property. Thus in this work, the author has described the cultural restraints of women that prevent her from entering the public sphere and keep her confined to the household as

subordinates of men.

Exploring Gender Equations: Colonial and Post-Colonial India edited by Shakti Kak and Biswamoy Pati, is a collection of 18 articles. Shashank Shekhar Sinha's article on Adivasi women and Archana Prasad's article on tribal women vehemently deny the notion propounded by many anthropologists that prior to colonial rule tribal women enjoyed more freedom and egalitarianism. The articles by Samita Sen and Shobhana Warriar on labouring women in Bengal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and women and workplace respectively have some common concerns. Shobhana Warriar explains that while, on the one hand, the factory 'constituted a cultural space entirely different from that of agrarian society', there was nevertheless a tendency to bring old cultural practices in to the workplace. Thus the custom of segregating a women during the days of her menstrual period was sought to be perpetuated by a union demand that women should be given three days leave in a month for that period. In Madurai, she tells us, the workers never dared to eat food at their new work place, because if they were found eating inside the mill, sand was thrown on their faces by way of punishment²⁸.

We can analyse the history of labour and labour movements in Kerala from the works of K.P. Kannan, Andalath, R. Prakasam, Thomas Isaac, T.C.

²⁸ Shakti Kak and Biswamoy Pati, (ed.) *Exploring Gender Equations: Colonial and Post Colonial India*, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Delhi, 2005.

Varghese, P. Radhakrishnan etc²⁹. But in these works we find only scattered and incomplete references on women and labour process. Some articles of Mridual Eapen, Praveenakodoth and Saradamoni's are some exceptional cases³⁰. In her work entitled *Changing Land Relations and Women; A Case Study of Palghat District Kerala*, Saradamoni had undertaken the case study of Palghat district, one of the major centres of land reform process in Kerala. This work attempts to study the important changes that Kerala society had witnessed in the 20th century, viz., the progressive break down of landlordism and the accompanying socio-cultural changes and to examine the ways these changes affected women belonging to the different strata of the agricultural community. But this study does not confine itself to issues like land and women and in terms of their labour.

²⁹ K.P., Kannan, *Of Rural Proletarian Struggles, Mobilization and Organization of Rural Workers in South West India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1998; R. Prakasam (ed.) *Keralathile Thozhilali Varga Prasthanathinte Charithram (Mal.)* Prabath, Trivandrum, 1979; Thomas, Issac, *Alappuzhayude Samarapatha (Mal.)* Chinthra, Trivandrum, 1996; T.C. Varghese, *Agrarian Change and Economics Consequences: Land Tenures in Kerala, 1850-1960*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1970; P. Radhakrishnan, *Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Change*, New Delhi, 1989.

³⁰ Mridual Eapen, 'Women in Informal Sector in Kerala: Need for Re-examination', *EPW*, June 30, 2001; Praveena Kodoth, 'Gender, Property Rights and Responsibility for Farming in Kerala', *EPW*, May 8, 2004 etc are some of the important works in this area; K. Saradamoni, 'Changing Land Relations and Women; A case study of Palghat District, Kerala', in R.C., Mazumdar (ed.), *Women and Rural Transformation*, Council of Social Science Research, concept Publications, New Delhi, 1983; *Filling The Rice Bowl* Sangham Books, Hyderabad, 1991.

Although the information, provided by the texts cited above is very rich, we find only scattered and incomplete references on women's labour participation. So the present study attempts to contribute to the development of a gender perspective on some of the problems of Kerala history with reference to the process of land reform and social change during 19th and 20th centuries.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This study is an attempt to analyse the character of women's labour and the role that it played in the social relations of North Malabar in their transition from premodern to modern times. It will analyse the role of women in the tenorial pattern of the pre-modern traditional society and examine the production process in traditional societies in order to find out the share of women in agricultural and non-agricultural labour. This study also aims at analyzing the changes occurred in the labour status of women from pre-colonial to colonial periods, and will examine the role of caste and gender in the process of division of labour and how it affected the women labourers.

When we examine the existing literature regarding labour process in Kerala, we perceive that very few of them depict the conditions of women labourers. It is well known that women have always played a substantial role in agriculture and craft production. But it is surprising that no study seriously goes into the question of the vicissitudes of female labour in traditional and modern Kerala society. It is also known that caste, gender and social norms play an important role in limiting the participation of

women in the labour process, which has also not been adequately studied. Gender based labour pattern is seen in agricultural and non-agricultural labour. In the agricultural field, the most of the women belong to the lower castes and agricultural operations like sowing, transplanting, grain-processing etc. were done by women. In the coir industry, cleaning job was done by low caste women. Hence this study will analyse a detailed picture of their conditions in terms of socio-economic and gender categories.

Another factor is that, though Kerala has witnessed sustained participation of women in majority of the popular movements, there have been hardly any studies on the role of women in agrarian struggles. In this context a study like this which will examine the issues to which women responded and the method of their struggle, and whether they came forward because of their own motivation or because of inspiration by others is so relevant. There is ample evidence of the participation of women in struggles in various forms. However, the forms in which they participate need not be in the standard forms like jathas, dharnas, satyagrahas, strikes and so on.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The study will make use of the existing archival records, combined with surveys, interviews and oral testimonies from women. Literary sources and folk memories can also be made use of. Here priority is given to oral history, since details regarding women are meagre in literary works. It is only through oral testimony, that it can be recalculated.

Normally, the labour history and history of agrarian struggles are

treated separately, but in the study the effort is not to give a detailed account of the dynamics of women's labour, but the change that women's participation in the labour process has undergone during the early phases of the 20th century. The role of women in the labour process contributed to their participation in agrarian struggles, which in turn resulted in the changes in their position as labourers. This dialectical relationship is important to understand the crucial question, why women participated in these struggles and again why they did not become a manifest political force, in spite of their participation.

The study will have to be interdisciplinary by drawing up on models from Sociology, Anthropology and many other disciplines. The scope of the present study is limited to the area of North Malabar in Kerala. North Malabar is conventionally regarded as the region to the north of the city of Calicut in Kerala and includes Cannanore districts and parts of Calicut, Kasargod and Wynad districts. But Wynad had been excluded from this study due to the fact that, it was not an active area of agrarian struggle.

Even though the experience of old people/living people offers an entire world of opportunity, most professional historians are generally sceptical about the value of oral sources in reconstructing the past. One of the persistent challenges presented by scholars to oral history is on the reliability and the validity of the interviews³¹. Reliability can be defined as the consistency with which an individual will tell the same story about the

³¹ David K. Dunaway, et. al, (ed.), *Oral History an Interdisciplinary Anthology*, Altamira, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1996.

same events on a number of different occasions. Validity refers to the degree of conformity between the reports of the event and the event itself as recorded by other primary resource material such as documents, photographs, diaries and letters³².

According to Gwyn Prins, we can distinguish three modes of communication:

- 1) Oral Cultures where language takes a purely oral form. These are typified by local languages they are now, and have been for a long time, relatively rare.
- 2) Written cultures where languages takes a written form only, because the oral form has died out. These are typified by classical languages.
- 3) Composite cultures where languages assume both oral and written forms for all or a proportion of the people. We are obliged to categorize further and to distinguish between universally literate cultures, such as we too easily take for granted but which are historically unusual, and restrictedly literate cultures where most people live on the fringes of, but under the sway of, the literate register³³.

Here Gwyn Prins points out that the conventional range of judgement

³² *Ibid.*, p. 89.

³³ Gwyn Prins, 'Oral history' in Peter Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writings*, p. 119.

regarding oral sources is bleak because from pre-historic periods onwards communications are orally transmitted. Moreover, in societies without historical writings, oral tradition bear the brunt of historical reconstruction. We can make oral description as a true description by testing its validity against other evidence. Particularly when the object of study is a composite culture, where both written and oral forms of communication are present. So in this study wherever possible, the oral sources are corroborated with other sources like archival records, surveys, reports, literary sources etc.

There are three classes of oral documentation. The first is the recording of performances in which the participants are following a prepared script. Second is the recording, sometimes surreptitiously, of unrehearsed events in which the speaking of the participants is spontaneous and dynamic and entirely concerned with immediate purposes or plans. Finally there is the oral documentation that has come to be called oral history; the recording of a special kind of event, the interview in which historical information, insight and opinion are sought deliberately and are deliberately preserved as a historical source³⁴. In the present study the third category is used.

In order to develop an outline regarding the areas of the study, a rough draft regarding the areas was prepared with the help of *Vikasana*

³⁴ David K. Dunaway, et. al, (eds), *Oral History...Op. Cit.*, p. 120.

*Rekha*³⁵ prepared by the Panchayaths during the people's planning campaign in 1997-98, which gave evidence about the geographical peculiarity and other socio-economic events. Even though the participation regarding women are very meagre in these volumes, they are sufficient to make an outline of unknown areas. With these outlines we have spotted particular areas and in each area we visited co-operative service banks (almost all the co-operative service banks are situated on the main road so it is easy to reach there by bus). From these offices we gathered information regarding the participants in various struggle of that particular area. With the help of auto drivers or local people we met the participants. But one of the main difficulty was to convince them about the purpose of our study. But in areas like Karivelloor, Kodakkat, Eleri, Kayoor, Kandakkai etc this difficulty did not arise. Even though we spent a lot of time to convince them, we were fortunate to receive good hospitality and response from those people. About 300 respondents were interviewed in which majority of them were women. Majority of the interviews were conducted at homes and besides these some group interviews were also conducted in schools, local libraries, clubs and paddy fields. Sometimes some of them were visited more than once. Most interviews lasted three to four hours. Their response shows that a lot of historical experience is hidden among them and they presented several facets and sides that normally are not brought to light in conventional

³⁵ *Vikasana Rekha*, Project of Peoples Development Programmes gives minute details regarding Panchayats. Almost 166 volumes are available.

historical writing. It also reveals that so many factors like land, gender, caste etc. restricting women's labour relations. Besides these, it shows that women's labour form a major portion of agricultural labour in North Malabar and their working period is longer than men. Another interesting fact is that, the existing norms regarding women's labour participation, i.e., the participation of women in agriculture is inversely related to the status of family is not applicable in the case of North Malabar. Here, by disregarding their family status, all of them actively participated in the labour process. Besides oral sources archival sources like settlement records, reports, memorandums, confidential files, general files, census reports, statistical data, agricultural reports etc. are used. Newspapers like *Prabhatham*, *Mathrubhumi*, *Deshabhimani* and literary sources and journal are combined. From these sources we can analyse that the actual labour expended by women in an agrarian society would be substantial but the net return to the women is minimum.

The period of the study roughly covers the early half of the 20th century, when the traditional agrarian society and landlord tenant relations in North Malabar was being transformed as a result of agrarian struggles and agrarian legislations by the colonial government. The period is only to provide a rough chronological framework rather than indicating a very strict adherence to a political era.

Chapter II

WOMEN'S LABOUR IN HISTORY

Feminist historians have advanced several theories regarding the invisibility of women. They have argued that women have been invisible in history both as a matter of fact and as a result of the narrative strategies used by a predominantly androcentric historiography. These theories are ranged from radical feminist to Marxist perspectives. Despite the variance in details and the differing perception regarding the origin of invisibility, all the theories are focused on one major contradiction that is, whereas men have nearly completely occupied the public domain in terms of politics, economy and culture, women have been almost exclusively confined to domesticity, that is they have been totally burdened with reproduction, child bearing and house-hold work. It is true that labouring classes from very early times included women, who participated in the labour process. But there is little evidence of the fact that they were disassociated from domestic work. This has prevented them from gaining the necessary space or leisure to engage themselves in public activities.

The social location of women's labour can be better understood if viewed in the context of the family. In family, a clear sexual division of labour can be seen. This was one of the important issues pointed out by Marxists. The division of labour between men and women is justified on the basis of women's child bearing function. For Marx, the reproductive labour

is necessary for the survival of individuals and species and this labour includes the energy expended to sustain the lives and labour power of workers. The effort involved in producing meals for workers is one example of reproductive labour. The reproduction of children and the rearing of children to become the next generation of workers are also included in reproductive labour.

Social life appears to be organized around two apparently equal poles, male authority at one end and women's labour power on the other. It also shows that the division of tasks on the basis of sex is not fixed; it varies regionally and also on the basis of the modes of production. The intervention of women in the labour process can be found more in agricultural economy. The labour pattern in this society clearly shows that women have the technique of combining household labour and productive labour. They were involved in procuring manure, collecting leaves and fire wood from the forest, bring water for household as well as for agricultural purposes. But even though they had to perform this as social labour to low wages, they were also subjected to sexual exploitation and differentiation in terms of social privileges. It should also be remembered that majority of women who entered the labour process come from the primary producing classes, who were socially and economically the most deprived section. They have to bear the double burden of household tasks and productive labour. Household task of women has to be considered as reproductive labour, and in an agrarian economy they acquire the characteristics of labour complimentary

to agricultural labour. In this sense, women's labour in agrarian economy is not invisible in the labour process as such. Hence there is a need to analyse women's labour within the agricultural field and outside. In this context the present chapter on women's labour process tries to analyse the historical transformation on women's labour on the basis of the important labour theories.

Labour is a necessary condition of human existence and which has existed in all forms of society. Besides this, labour mediates the relation between human beings and nature, and therefore makes human life itself. Secondly, any act of labour can be considered itself apart from its specific characteristics, as purely the expenditure of human labour power¹. Labour is not a passive object. Instead, it is an active one which continuously acts and reacts in order to satisfy its natural desire for new comforts, new pleasures and improved standard of living. Since, labour is constituted in all society, one should look at the specific social relations for analyzing concrete labour. Materialistic interpretation can clearly throw light on this problem in this context.

According to the materialist interpretation, the production and reproduction are the two important determining factors in history. The production is two fold: The production of means of consumption and the production of means of production. Production takes place through the

¹ Tom Bottomore, (ed.), *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1983, p.1.

expenditure of labour power, that is the concrete labour is embodied in the product. Karl Marx was the first who thoroughly investigated the quality of value creation of labour. According to Marx, Labour is the worker's own life activity; the manifestation of his own life. And this life activity he sells to another person in order to secure the necessary means of subsistence². For Marx, labour was not always wage labour, that is, free labour, for example the slave did not sell his labour power to the slave owner, any more than the ox sells its services to the peasant³. In pre-capitalist societies, labourer does not sell his labour power but exchanges the product of his labour to the landlord for the so-called protection or right to cultivate the soil which essentially means appropriation of the surplus product by the landlord. In the case of capitalist societies, it is labour power that labourers sell to capitalists for a money wage. The category of labour power arises in the labour theory of value in the explanation of the source of surplus value. The value of commodities is determined by its cost of production. And the cost of production consists of raw materials and depreciation of instruments, that is of industrial products the production of which has cost a certain amount of labour days and which, therefore, represent a certain amount of labour time. Besides this the cost of production also consists of direct labour, the measure of which is precisely, time. Thus the price of labour will be determined by

² K. Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, P.34.

³ *Ibid.*, p.35.

the cost of production, by the labour time necessary to produce this commodity and also be determined by the price of the necessary means of subsistence⁴.

In the case of women's labour, it is difficult to analyse their labour on the basis of necessary labour. They at the same time acted as direct producers and also acted an important role in the generational replacement of labour. Marx defines labour power as something latent in all persons and its potential is realized when labour power is put to use in a labour process. Thus labour power is inserted in determinate modes of production and it does not exist in isolation. Here, any production is, at one and the same time reproduction. When it produced the means of production, and replenishes human labour power. Therefore when viewed as a connected whole, and as flowing on with incessant renewal, every social process of production is, at the same time, a process of reproduction. Despite the linguistic similarity of the terms production and reproduction, the process that make up the reproduction of labour power and those that form part of a societies production are not comparable from a theoretical point of view. Reproduction of labour power is a condition of production for it repositis or replaces the labour power necessary for production. Necessary labour is that portion of the days work through which capital is reproduced. The remaining portion of the days work is surplus labour, appropriated by the

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.45.

exploiting class as profit⁵. For the reproduction of capital, the capitalist requires money wages to the labourers, which meets the subsistence, and hence the reproduction of the labourers. According to Lise Vogel, the three aspects of necessary labour is the maintenance of direct producers, maintenance of non labouring members of the subordinate class and generational replacement processes⁶.

Evidence shows that the concept of separate spheres is sharp in capitalist society and was blurred in pre-capitalist society. In pre-capitalist society, since most productive activity was based on household, the labour activity often consist of the collective labour of both men, women and children. Besides this, the solidarity existed among the kin groups had also decrease the burden of labour. Thus we cannot see a sharp distinction of labour in pre-capitalist society. Here without much difficulty women labourers simultaneously acted as labourers and mothers. But when the centre of production was shifted from household to factory, the concept of separate sphere became strictly demarcated the capitalist society. This separation became more wide in the case of propertied class. For them the glorification of mothers became their main perception. And in the case of propertied class they had to work along with men for their subsistence. Thus it shows that the root of sexual division of labour lies in family labour. Under

⁵ Lise Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women; Toward a Unitary Theory*, Pluto Press, 1983, p.143.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.143.

this situation, the roots of women's oppression had to be discussed seriously from family/household labour. And women's household labour has to be included in the discussion of labour.

The focus on women's labour in factory, agricultural field and domestic area that brought many thinkers to seek a deeper understanding of Marxism. It is Engels who comes to the fore in an early engagement with gender. Marx's treatment of the issue of gender is now widely regarded as scattered, scanty and unsatisfactory. Taking a broader look at Engels and Marx's treatment of gender issues, we can see that in their early writings Marx and Engels begin to distinguish their position on the question of women from the imprecision and utopianism of earlier socialist opinions. In the next decades both Marx and Engels sought to elaborate the theoretical as well as the programmatic aspect of their perspective. In so far as they continued their emphasis on the division of labour according to sex, on the oppression of proletarian women at work, and on the supposed dissolution of the working class family, they set the terms within which the so called woman question was to be discussed and acted upon by sociologists for the next hundred years. At the same time, they deepened their understanding of women's oppression as a structural element of the overall reproduction of the working class and of general reproduction⁷.

⁷ The above statement was put forward by Lisevogel and for this Lisevogel had thoroughly examined the available works of Marx and Engels including some unpublished manuscripts.

Engel's first examination of women's position in society appears in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* published in 1845. In this work he insists that it is not the invention of machines but capitalism itself, with its drive for accumulation and profit, that makes the cheap labour of women and children attractive to employers⁸. In this work Engels makes three genuine theoretical contributions to an understanding of the situation of women. First he implicitly recognizes that neither individual nor the family exists as a historical abstraction. He suggests that women's oppression and the family must be conceptualized in terms of specific mode of production and classes. Second, he considered the determination and structure of the wage. He argues that two types of competition affect the level of the wage. Exceptionally in periods of full employment or even job surplus, employers must compete among themselves for labour and wages rise. Engels third theoretical insight concerns the overall relationship between population and capitalism⁹.

Marx's earliest comments on the question of women have a decidedly philosophical and symbolic tone. In *On the Jewish Question* published in 1843 when Marx was twenty five and in the unpublished *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* written in 1844, Marx discusses the relationship between man and woman as representatives of the level of social development. In *The Holy Family* published in 1845, Marx in a few relevant passages, significantly

⁸ Lisevogel, *Marxism and ...*, Op. Cit., p.43.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.46.

transforms his previous emphasis on the relation of man to women¹⁰.

Thus it shows that even though there existed many interpretations and modifications of Marxian theory, Marxist literature contain several broad themes on the role of women in the economy.

Historical transformation of women's labour has shown that there is an active interdependence between the development of modes of production and the evolution of family forms. According to Wally Seccombe, all human societies are necessarily involved in three interrelated forms of production. They are: the production of the means of production; the production of the means of consumption and the production of labour power¹¹. This, according to him, we take labour power as a productive force, obviously, the question of generational replacement of labour power emerges and this leads us to the family. Seccombe suggests a tripartite distinction between household, family and kinship, where the intermediate term the family- is assigned the restricted meaning of the core kin group which is normally co-resident through various phases of the domestic cycle. It is recognized that household, family, kinship relations may organize more than the third production of labour power outlined above. In many modes, they are

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.41.

¹¹ For this argument, see Wally Seccombe's *A Millennium of Family Change*, Verso, London, 1992. also see Wally Seccombe's 'Marxism and Demography' *New Left Review*, No. 142, pp.22-47, 1983.

integral to the production of the means of subsistence as well¹². Here, Seccombe has argued that household, family, kinship relations do organize the primary production of labour power in all societies.

In order to rectify the problem of not including family in the studies of mode of production, Seccombe has tried to expand the mode of production concept by including Marx's 'reproduction of species' as a form of production with the same ontological status as goods production. Marx's theory of Alienation has four main aspects regarding labour: (a) man is alienated from nature (b) he is alienated from himself (c) he is alienated from his species- (d) man is alienated from man. The first of these four characteristics of alienated labour expresses the relation of the labourer to the product of his labour, which is at the same time, according to Marx, his relation to the sensuous external world, to the objects of nature. The second on the other hand, is the expression of labourers relation to the act of production within the labour process, that is to say the labourers relation to his own activity as alien activity which does not offer satisfaction to him in and by itself, but only by the act of selling it to someone else. The third aspect is related to the conception according to which the object of labour is the objectification of man's species life, for man 'duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he contemplates himself in a world that he has created'. In the fourth he is

¹² *Ibid.*, 'Marxism and ...*Op. Cit.*, p.29.

considering them as regard's man's relationship to other men. Infact, the proposition that man's species nature is estranged from him means that one man is estranged from the other, as each of them is from man's essential nature¹³. But it shows that this process of alienation can never take place in pre-capitalist society in which women labourers acted as the active participants in the production relation. In that society they were at the same time acted as active labourers and mothers. But this situation transform in the capitalist society. In the capitalist society, she is being treated as domestic labourer, consumer, victims or as a sexual thing. The glorification of mothering is an embodied form in this society thus her perception infact alienates her from the social process.

The studies of modes of productions have shown that the labour status of women varies according to the production relations. In pre-capitalist economies, both the labour of men and women was not always wage labour, some times it may be free labour. In most cases the surplus labour goes to the landlord. Women labourers play an important role in pre-capitalist society and in this economy she has to perform both the productive and unproductive activities. But along with her, the male members also performed labour and thus in this society there existed certain type of collective labour. But in the case of capitalist economy the surplus goes to the capitalist and here the labourers work for wages. The wages of the male labourers can be distributed for consumption of family and leisure. In the

¹³ Istvan Meszaros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation*, Merlin Press, London, 1970, p.15.

case of women labourers her labour was distributed in public production and household production. Thus in the capitalist economy though her burden of labour is increased, only her public labour is calculated as wage labour.

Frederick Engels in his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* held a naturalistic view of gender relations and assumed women's responsibility regarding home and family. In this work he had argued that 'the overthrow of mother's right was the world historic defeat of the female sex'¹⁴. In this work what Engels was seeking to theorize was the relationship between the division of society into classes and the subordination of women to men. His main empirical anthropological source was Lewis Morgan's *Ancient Society*¹⁵. Engels views the shift to the patrilineal clan system as a turning point in gender relations. It was to create the conditions for the emergence of private property and the development of class society. Thus through this work he develops an explanation concerning the way in which the family is connected to the process of production under capitalism. But modern studies do not sustain his belief that the origin of women's subordination lay in the rise of class-state formations.

Besides Engels, anthropologists have made some speculations about the origin of family. According to Kathleen Gough, the evidence about the

¹⁴ Frederick Engels, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1980.

¹⁵ L. Morgan, *Ancient Society*, New York: Holt, 1877.

origin of the family comes from three sources. One is the social and physical lives of non-human primates- especially the new and old world monkeys and still more, the great apes, humanity's closest relative. The second source is tools and home sites of pre-historic humans and protohumans. The third is the family lives of hunters and gatherers who have been studied in modern times¹⁶. It shows that, inequality between men and women is linked to complex historical process and it varies according to the given social and cultural conditions of society. According to the Anthropologists, a division of labour based on gender is already found in primate society between a female role of prolonged child care and male role of defense. Collective hunting and tool use involved group co-operation and helped to foster the growth of language. It greatly increased foresight, memory, planning and division of tasks. With the growth of hunting, group territories became much larger. But because their infants were helpless, nursing women could hunt only small game close to home. This produced the sexual division of labour in which the human family was since been founded. Out of the sexual division of labour came for the first time home life as well as group co-operation¹⁷. Later fire came into use for protection against wild animals, for lighting and eventually for cooking.

The sociologist view of division of labour is composed of the relations

¹⁶ Kathleen Gough 'The Origin of the Family' in Rayna R. Reiter (ed) *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, Monthly Review Press, London, 1975, p.51.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, P.60.

among individuals as psycho-biological entities, is grounded in dependence on others for the satisfaction of organic needs, and its operation is mainly a matter of some kind of overt exchanges which occur among the specialized producers and which contribute to the satisfaction of each. But the basic difficulty of this approach has to do with marking off the boundaries of the economy as a distinct part of society and integrating the different parts of the economy. Division of labour provides no help in resolving the problem of distinguishing economic matters from non-economic matters. The second difficulty regarding this view of the economy is connected with the problem of re-uniting divided labour. The division of labour theory typically surmounts this problem of integration by invoking the concept of exchange so that specialized individuals form a unity through the multiplicity of imputed exchange relations among them¹⁸.

According to Wally Seccombe, the separation of food production from consumption gives rise to a specific labour of food preparation in the domestic setting. This consistency is based on a socially determined division of labour and is not the inevitable by-product of women's natural responsibility for child bearing and breast feeding. Since food preparation, house work and child care are by their very nature integral to the renewal of our capacity for labour, their joint assignment to women places them, much

¹⁸ Karl Polanyi, *et.al.* (eds), *Trade and Market in the Early Empires; Economies in History and Theory*, The Free Press, London, 1957, p. 278.

more than men, at the center of labour power's on going production¹⁹. Thus, the historical transformation of women's labour had shown that division of labour is not the inevitable by product of women's natural responsibility of child bearing and rearing. On the other hand, it is based on a socially determined division of labour. Gradually, the responsibility for providing a livelihood for family rested on women. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels focus on social division of labour. According to them, the conception of the family is rooted in the social division of labour. In this work they go on to make the general theoretical claim that 'the production of life' both the one's own in labour and of fresh life in procreation, now appears as a two fold relation. On the one hand as a natural and on the other as a social relation²⁰.

Margaret Mead's work questions the naturalistic assumptions about sexual division of labour²¹. Mead's anthropological study of three New Guinea Societies, which she saw as representing very different ideas about the sexual division. The first of these societies, the Arapesh, she characterized as relatively androgynous in temperament, with both men and women exhibiting the nurturant, caring qualities which, in Western cultures

¹⁹ Wally Seccombe, *A Millennium...Op. Cit.*, p.15.

²⁰ Ronaldo Munck, *Marxism@2000; Late Marxist Perspectives*, Macmillian Press, London, 2000, p.80.

²¹ Margaret Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, William Morrow, New York, 1935.

are regarded as feminine. The second society, the Mundugamor, were equally androgynous, but here, by western standards, both men and women were masculine, in that both were very aggressive. Mead claimed that the third society which she studied, the Tchambuli, reversed our ideas about masculinity and femininity, with the women being the practical doers and the men being largely pre-occupied with idle gossip and self adornment. Mead sought to establish that feminine and masculine attributes and roles were largely cultural rather than natural²².

The role of women in an economy differs according to the mode of production. Some writers argue that the earliest development of agriculture and the settlement around which it was pursued were women's special work²³. They further argue that, women were the first who tried to tame animals and started cultivation, and in order to improve cultivation, women discovered new varieties of seeds and they also invented agricultural implements²⁴. Besides this other studies also show that it was the labour needs of the household which defined the work roles of men, women and children. Since the household was the center of production in this economy, the need for women's labour was comparatively high and women played

²² Stevi Jackson et.al, (eds), *Gender A Sociological Reader*, Routledge, London, 2002, p.6.

²³ Elise Boulding, *The Underside of History* (vol.1), Sage Publications, 1992; Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive*, Kali for women, Delhi, 1988.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.98.

quite as important role as men²⁵. Thus in a household based economy, the demand for women as labourers can be defined as part of larger household in which everybody is a part of this.

With the growth of capitalist mode of production, the labour was shifted to factories and urban areas. The migration of labour led to the breakdown of the kin based feudal households. This resulted in the nuclearisation of the family and household became private. This has occurred in industrial capitalism, where a deep antagonism has developed between child bearing on the one hand and wage work on the other which undermines women's bargaining power in the labour market. Marx had discussed two aspects regarding this in his *Das Capital*. For Marx, manufacture and modern industry are two forms of organization of the labour process, which is defined in *Das Capital* as a relationship between the labourer, the object of labour and the instruments of labour²⁶. It shows that the labour process in any period is a product of the development of the forces of production, and embraces both the forces and relations of production. In the actual organization of labour process, there developed division of labour based upon co-operation among the manufactures. Later these functions are arranged according to a hierarchy of concrete labourers

²⁵ Louise A. Tilly and J.W. Scott, *Women Work and Family*, Holt, New York, 1978, p.12.

²⁶ Quoted from Veronica Beechey, 'Critical analysis of some sociological theories of women's work', in Annette Kuhn et.al, (eds), *Feminism and Materialism; Women and Modes of Production*, Routledge, London, 1978, p.181.

with a corresponding scale of wages. Marx argues that since manufacture adapts detail operation to varying degrees of maturity, strength and development of labour power, it is conducive to the employment of women and children, at least theoretically²⁷.

Marx further argues that there exists a tendency in modern industry towards the substitution of unskilled labour for skilled, female labour for male, and young labour for mature. Besides this, the excessive employment of women and children serves to breakdown the resistance which male operatives had to the development machinery in the manufacturing period; and the modern industry gives rise to intensified production outside factories, in the form of outsourcing, sweat shops and so on, a new form of domestic industry in which women and children are extensively employed. Finally the more extensive employment of women and children gave rise to a new form of family and relations between the sexes²⁸.

According to Tilly and Scott the history of women's labour does not conform to a simple evolutionary model. The pattern evident by 1900 continued with some variation during 1920's and 1930's. But after the second world war, demand for female workers increased. Tilly and Scott argue that the historical records show a U-shaped pattern of female productive activity, i.e., from relatively high in the pre-industrial household economy, to a lower

²⁷ *Ibid* p.182.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.182.

level in industrial economies, to a higher level with the development of the modern tertiary sector²⁹.

The fact that married as well as single women work in the household economy and work today in the consumer economy helps to raise the level of female productive activity in these two periods³⁰. In order to analyse their argument, Tilly and Scott were primarily concerned with the classes in England and France. Regarding this, Marx's industrial reserve army labour thesis can provide a starting point. Marx had divided the reserve army of labour into different categories. The floating reserve consists of those unemployed workers who have some experiences of work but who are now unemployed, perhaps temporarily, because of a drop in demand, technical change, or the availability of cheap workers. The latent reserve refers to potential workers who have not yet entered the capitalists workforce. Originally this latent reserve was the agricultural work force, but it can also be interpreted to include women who are not currently in the labour force. The stagnant reserve is a residual of the poorest groups in society with the worst employment prospects, where again women are disproportionately, highly represented. Even if they do find work, these workers are usually employed in low paid insecure jobs without any prospects³¹.

²⁹ Louise, Tilly, A. et. al, *Women work...Op. Cit.*, p.229.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

³¹ A.T. Mallier and M.J. Rosser, *Women and the Economy: A Comparative Study of Britain and the USA*, Macmillian, London, 1987, p.196.

Following Marx, a large number of historians had developed new concepts in this area. Braverman in *Labour and Monopoly Capital* had applied Marx's theory in order to analyse the organization and structure of the changing nature of work in modern capitalist societies³². Likewise Irene Bruegel has attempted to render the industrial reserve army of labour thesis open to empirical verification. She defines the industrial reserve army thesis as a labour force which is brought into production when required and disposed of when conditions change and it is no longer needed³³.

Historical transformation of women's labour has shown that till the emergence of industrial revolution, most of the labour was concentrated around the household in which their labour played an important role. In pre-modern societies all family members had contributed to the productive process and women had important responsibility. Here, it is she who manages the household and allocates the resources. In this system kinship plays an important role in determining their labour. But at the same time there exists sexual division of labour, but this division was not the by product of women's natural responsibility of child care. Thus, on the question of why women are in a relatively inferior economic position to men, several theories are put forward. One of the important theories regarding this is the dual system theory.

³² Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capital*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1974.

³³ Irene Bruegel, 'Women as a Reserve Army of Labour: A Note on Recent British Experience', *Feminist Review*, pp.12-23, 1979.

Under dual system theory the concept of patriarchy is taken as the main concept to explain the domination of women by men. The implications of holding on to a dual notion of patriarchy as, first, the control of women's fertility and sexuality in monogamous marriage and second, the economic subordination of women through the sexual division of labour and property means that women's procreative function, or rather its relations are not subsumed, under the sexual division of labour. Hence patriarchy should be understood as more than the mere sexual division of labour. Like the exchange of women, the sexual division of labour requires explanation. It is not itself a cause³⁴.

Thus in the dual system theory control of women's sexuality becomes an important topic of discussion and besides this, sexual division of labour and lack of property rights also become the point of discussion. Several studies have shown that the crucial differentiation that led to the subordination of women was the private property. But Engels' work was the pioneering work among these. Juliet Mitchell's work is an attempt to show how Freud's science of psychoanalysis provides the basis by which an understanding of mechanisms of women's oppression can be achieved³⁵. For Mitchell, it is the operation of ideology and the laws of the human order, within the individual lives of men and women which Freud's work

³⁴ Roisin McDonough et.al 'Patriarchy and relations of production' in Annette Kuhn et. al, (ed.), *Feminism...Op. Cit.*, p. 40.

³⁵ Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1975.

illuminates. She stressed the need for a theory which provides a structural analysis of the ways in which ideology and the cultural construction of sexuality are rooted not only within our consciousness but crucially within our conscious. According to Mitchell, for Freud, the entry into civilization is the entry into patriarchy. There is a homologous relationship between ontogeny and phylogeny and one does not come before the other³⁶. For Mitchell, psychoanalysis is the way to understand ideology and sexuality. Psychoanalysis gives us the concepts which enable us to understand the functioning and mechanisms of ideology and of the place and meaning of sexuality and gender differences within society.

Sheila Rowbotham in *Women's Consciousness, Man's World* emphasises patriarchy as a labour relation. The sexual division of labour and the possession of women by men predates capitalism³⁷. Likewise the control of property is another question. Engels' main argument i.e., 'the world historic defeat of female sex came about with the development of private property' had important implications in further studies regarding property. In his work, Engels argues that the power of men to exploit women systematically springs from the existence of surplus wealth and more directly from the state, social stratification and the control of property by men³⁸. Besides this,

³⁶ Roisin Mc Donough et. al, 'Patriarchy...*Op. Cit.*, p.19.

³⁷ Sheila Rowbotham, *Women's Consciousness, Man's World*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973.

³⁸ F. Engels, *Origin... Op. Cit.*, p. 88.

the study of Stephani Coontz also shows that the crucial differentiation that led to the subordination of women was the development of private property and emergence of men as property owners, whereas, production and exchange was primarily women's work either within the household or agricultural field³⁹. Anthropological studies have also shown how with the growth of agrarian societies, the position of women declined, and a male dominated economy which subjugated women economically and sexually developed.

The dual system theory points out the importance of women's property and also about the segregation in labour process. The distinction between women as labourers and men as property owners became very crucial as since in both feudal and capitalist societies, property had been concentrated in the hands of men and the then prevalent laws of property and inheritance ensured that men acquired property as if by right and women who came to hold property, found themselves being supervised by men. Thus there was glaring inequality in property rights and it is only recently that right of women to landed property had been recognized.

Later, the concept of a unified capitalist patriarchy was developed by Zillah Eisenstein, for whom capitalism and patriarchy are so interwoven as to make their analytical separation impracticable⁴⁰. Thus as the

³⁹ Stephani Coontz, Henderson Peta, *Women's Work Men's Property*, Verso, London, 1986.

⁴⁰ Zillah Eisenstein, (ed.), *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1979.

understanding of capitalism and gendered reproduction advanced, attention naturally turned and focused on domestic economy, of which the household labour debate was one result. A number of articles have appeared as contributions to this important debate. One group considers household labour primarily as labour directed towards the production and reproduction of the commodities and labour power. While the other considers it as labour directed towards the production of use values.

In Marx's social reproduction theory, we can see this. But to situate women's oppression in terms of social reproduction and the reproduction of labour power, several concepts need to be specified. Marx, in his first volume of *Das Capital*, had discussed the reproduction of labour power as follows. Since capitalism requires a constant supply of labour, it must be reproduced in two senses. First the worker must be kept fit enough to work each day and thus must be fed, clothed and sheltered; second, the working class must reproduce itself through producing and rearing the next generation of workers. In the former sense the working class is reproduced through the workers consumption of food, clothing and so on through which the means of subsistence given by capital are converted into fresh labour power⁴¹. The entire household labour of women, irrespective of the character of labour is unproductive labour, as the capitalist is only concerned with the production of commodities as exchange value, for which the labourer is provided with wages. The household labour performed by women is

⁴¹ Ronaldo Munck, *Marxism @2000....Op. Cit.*, p. 91

equated with wages, and hence is not the concern of the capitalist, as wages are meant for the self-preservation of the labourer, no matter how the labourer obtains it.

Thus according to social reproduction theory, in order to cope with periods of expansion, capitalism needs a supply of new labourers or a pool of unemployed to draw on. The sex of the labourers is immaterial. When mechanization eliminates the heaviest physical tasks, and new works could come from a shrinking agricultural sector, immigration, or through natural population growth. If women are to bear children then somehow they must receive means of subsistence while they are unable to engage in paid work, and this is usually managed through the family. For the capitalist this causes a contradiction. Because men were paid enough to support their wives when they could not work as they were bearing children. This difference persisted at other times, as it is difficult to pay different wages to workers doing the same work according to whether or not their wives can work. It was easy, though to pay a lower wage to all female workers as none were expected to support their husbands since men did not have to stop work to have children.

The initial contributions focussed on the family unit and household labour was the work of Juliet Mitchell⁴². Mitchell begins with an intelligent critique of the classical Marxist literature on the question of women. Mitchell

⁴² Juliet Mitchell 'Women: The Longest Revolutions' *New Left Review*, 1966.

analysed the biological differentiation of sexes and the division of labour which she said had seemed an interlocked necessity through history in terms of the division between four structures like production, reproduction, sexuality and socialization. She recognized the importance of the sexual division of labour in the paid labour force. Likewise, Jean Gardiner and Paul Smith have also pointed to the ways in which women's household labour can lower the value of labour power by producing use values which contribute to the reproduction of labour power in the home⁴³. Besides these, John Harison, argues that household labour constitutes a mode of production quite distinct from the capitalist mode.⁴⁴ He has described it as a client mode created or co-opted by the dominant mode to fulfill certain functions within the economic system.

The Marxist analysis of the economic importance of household labour has led some feminists to demand wages for household labour. The demand for wages for household labour was first raised as part of a series of demands in a paper written by Selma James for the National Women's Liberation conference in Manchester in March 1972⁴⁵. Selma James and

⁴³ Jean Gardiner, 'Women's Domestic Labour', *New Left Review*, 1975.

Paul Smith, 'Domestic Labour and Marx's Theory of Value' in Anette Kuhn et. al, (ed.), *Feminism...*, *Op. Cit.*, p.198-214.

⁴⁴ John Harrison, 'The Political Economy of House Work' *Bulletin of the Conference of Socialists Economists*, 1973.

⁴⁵ Ellen Malos (ed.), *The Politics of House Work*, Alison and Busby, London, 1980, P.21.

Maria Rosa Dalla Costa argued that women's oppression is based on the material character of unpaid household labour⁴⁶. Thus those campaigning for wages for household labour argued that the house wife was producing a commodity for capital via her men and her children.

But there are three crucial objections to the idea of individual women being paid wages to care for their individual families. First as Shulamith Fire Stone pointed out, it does not challenge the sexual division of labour, especially since it is now put forward within the women's movement as a demand for women primarily, the bisexual implications of a guaranteed income for all, having been dropped from the campaign as it developed, and it therefore does little to challenge the low paid status of women's labour or the conditions which give rise to the special oppression of women the assumption that her primary role is that of wife and mother. Secondly wages, however generous, would not end the isolation, the twenty four hour responsibility of the house wife with children or of a woman caring for sick or aged relatives, nor would they create a situation in the long run whereby, those burdens would be lightened. Thirdly no society, whether capitalist, socialist or anarchist, utopian, could afford to pay a proper wage for the labour, because in terms of the hours spent and functions carried out, the burden would be enormous⁴⁷.

⁴⁶ Maria Rosa Dalla Costa and Selma James 'The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community' in Ellen Malos (ed.), *The Politics...*p.160-195.

⁴⁷ Ellen Malos (ed.), *Ibid.*, p.33.

Even though a lot of articles had appeared on the household labour debate, it was Wally Seccombe in his article on 'The housewife and her Labour under capitalism' who spelt out rigorously and in some details about this topic. Seccombe argued that household labour produces value but is unproductive labour and labour performed within the family is an essential component of the material process of reproduction of capital⁴⁸. Seccombe develops his argument in four stages, first the house wife's labour is a necessary labour, given that, the commodities which the wages purchase are not themselves in a finally consumable form at the point of purchase. Secondly, in the course of this the house wife creates value, because, all labour produces value when it produces any part of a commodity that achieves equivalence in the market place with other commodities. Thirdly, it matters not all that the concrete conditions of household labour are privatized. Fourthly, household labour creates value equivalent to the production costs of its maintenance. But Seccombe's view on household labour under capitalism is open to criticism. According to Margaret Coulson et. al, it is not true that household labour creates value, and the arguments put forward by Seccombe to show that it does are fallacious⁴⁹.

Thus the household labour debates show that the maintenance of the

⁴⁸ Wally Seccombe, 'The House Wife and her Labour Under Capitalism', *New Left Review*, 1974.

⁴⁹ Margaret Coulson, Branka Magas and Hilary Wainwright 'The House Wife and her Labour Under Capitalism- A Critique', in Ellen Malos (ed), *The politics...Op. Cit.*, p. 221.

domestic sphere as the main site of biological reproduction under capitalism is economically possible only where the value of labour power is sufficiently high for wages to cover the cost of the family's reproduction. Otherwise it is possible only through socialization of household labour.

The position of women's labour process have been particularly popular among sociologists as dual role. For this the sociologists had focussed upon the families and women's position. Talcott Parsons work *Essays in Sociological Theory* belongs to this⁵⁰. In his work Parsons examines the relationship between the kinship system and wider society. Following this there has emerged in post-war Britain a fairly coherent body of sociological studies which have been concerned with married women working, and with the implications of this for relationships within the family⁵¹. These works recognizing the shortage of labour which existed during the post-war period in Britain and have shared the assumption that married women are an important source of labour at all levels of the occupational structure and have investigated the social characteristics of women labourers and their problems. These studies have accepted elements of Parson's functionalist frame work, but since they are formulated as empirical studies, their functionalist assumptions are not always explicit. But they ignore some important questions concerned with the structuring of

⁵⁰ Talcott Parson, *Essays in Sociological Theory*, Free Press, New York, 1954.

⁵¹ A. Myrdal and V. Klein, *Women's Two Roles*, Routledge, London, 1970; Rapoport. et. al, *Dual Career Families*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971; Yudkin, S. and Holme. A., *Working Mothers and their Children Sphere*, London, 1969.

women's labour. Sociologists have stressed the role conflicts that a working wife may experience, the importance of the household structure and the stage of the life cycle.

In economics, the main theoretical approach which has been used to analyse women's labour is human capital theory and dual and segmented labour market theory. According to the human capital theory, difference in earnings can be explained by seeing them as the return obtained on capital invested in acquiring certain skills and levels of education. Further, wages or economic rewards for labour are determined by individual decisions and by innate ability.⁵² Thus in terms of this theory, the key fact which explains people's choice of labour and payment is the difference in individual human capital investment i.e., the time and money the individuals spend for education and training. This theory makes two important assumptions which have been questioned. Firstly, all individuals are seen to have the same opportunities and are therefore, at similar starting points. It has already been suggested that, social hierarchies severely restrict the freedom of opportunity of some people. A second assumption is that earnings are determined by economic forces. This suggests that differences in earnings should reflect only the differential required to compensate for the training undergone⁵³. In reality, the equation between earnings and the level of skill have been shown to be misleading. They can be easily confounded by factors

⁵² Susan Lonsdale, *Work and Inequality* Longman, London, 1985, p.5.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.6.

such as sexual and racial discrimination.

As a part of a critique of human capital theory, the dual labour market theory was put forward. Exponents of dual labour market theory tend to pay more attention to the role played by the demand for labour in determining wages than to the supply of labour. There are a number of theories that fall into this category, of which the dual labour market is one among them. According to the dual labour market, the allocation of labour opportunities has to be understood in terms of a division of the labour market into a primary and secondary sector⁵⁴. First stage of dual labour market theory was proposed by Doeringer and Piore⁵⁵. The primary sector contains good jobs which offer relatively high wages, good working conditions, substantial job security, chances of career advancement and a fair deal in the administration of work rules. The secondary sector has poor jobs which offer inferior social status, low wages and poor working conditions. Particular groups such as women and ethnic minorities could find themselves in this sector⁵⁶. Thus according to this framework, labour market is subdivided into primary and secondary sectors. Applying this model to Britain, Barron and Norris and a number of other writers have argued that the secondary labour market in

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁵⁵ P.B. Doeringer and M.J. Piore, *Internal Labour Markets and Man Power Analysis*, Lesington Books, 1971.

⁵⁶ Susan Lonsdale, *Work and ...Op. Cit.*, p.8.

Britain is pre-eminently female⁵⁷. The description of these two sectors does not answer the question of why they arose or developed in the first place, although a view of how the labour market works is implicit in the internal labour market theory. Under these circumstances, labour and market segmentation is one of the ways of dividing the workforce ⁵⁸

The labour market segmentation attempts to place the dual labour market theory in historical and ideological frame work. This was done by looking at the historical and institutional causes of segmentation. This theory has to be associated with two schools of thought, David Gordon and his colleagues in the United States and Labour Studies Group at the Cambridge University⁵⁹. According to them a multiplicity of segments like mode of production , social division of labour, capital accumulation, institutions in society, state etc had effected the status of labour. Among these segments, institutions such as the family have created role for men and women which directly affect their labour opportunities. Free of household labour, male labour is preferable to employers and female labour is available at lower wages because domestic responsibilities limit their availability and flexibility both geographically and in time. This theory argues that changes in family and other social institutions could have an important effect on the supply of

⁵⁷ Veronica Beechey and Tessa Perkins, *A Matter of Hours; Women, Part-time Work and the Labour Market*, Polity Press, p.134.

⁵⁸ Susan Lonsdale, *Work and ...*, *Op. Cit.*, p.9.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.10.

labour and on expectations of reward and self value.

Here we can see that the Dual and labour segmentation theory has focused on the division of labour market and important institutions like family. The institution of family has created roles for men and women and this was the main reason for the secondary labour status of men and women. Since the household labour places an extra burden on women that naturally decreases their labour status in the public. Here, economics of gender offers an approach to the broad question of how and why men and women are different? Why do women earn less than men? Why is there so much occupational segregation? How does segregation relate to the earning difference? And do changes in female labour force participation lead to changes in the home environment or vice versa?⁶⁰.

Thus the gender economists are challenging the statusquo in economics in a number of ways. They have suggested that the dualistic hierarchical and value-laden way of thinking has become a fundamental principle in economics. One attempt is made by Julie Nelson. Nelson's starting point is that the central programme of economics is metaphorically linked with the hierarchical dualistic conception of gender and a privileging of a particular conception of masculinity⁶¹. Their concentration on the economic policy for family was a great shift in this field.

⁶⁰ Joyce P. Jacobsen, *The Economics of Gender*, Black well Publishers, 1994, p.4.

⁶¹ Wilfred Dolfsma and Hella Hoppe, 'On Feminist Economics', *Feminist Review*, 75, 2003, p.118.

Historical transformation of women's labour has shown that from the food gathering society to this global era, women's labour is seen as central to the development of society. In the earlier societies, the absence of private property made the productive labour of men and women equal. Since the productive resources were made communally, comparatively women enjoyed freedom. But gradually, with the separation of food production from consumption, it gives rise to a specific labour of food preparation in the domestic setting. History shows that this separation was based on socially determined division of labour and not the byproduct of women's natural responsibility for child bearing and breast feeding. Anthropological studies have proved this. Slowly different spheres for men and women had emerged. When different spheres for men and women had strengthened, men were mainly engaged on food production and women was concentrated on child caring and rearing and food preparation. Besides this the main responsibility of the renewal of new generations of labour also rests on women. And when private property emerges the relations between men and women changed and men began to control the process of production and exchange within and outside the household in general and women were reduced to the domestic cores. Here, it was the emergence of private property which changes women's position. It is through the mediation of property that reproduction, as reproduction of social labour or beings, becomes invested as the perpetuation of a property through the women's family. But since women were the protectors of the next generations labour

they had in a limited way enjoyed some status in the family and had also enjoyed decision power.

Before industrial revolution, most of the economy was mainly based on household mode of production in which the labour was centered around household and there women's labour had played an important role. Thus both in an agricultural economy and in a craft based economy the labour of all family members had contributed to the productive process, and women had an important responsibility. In the domestic mode of production, it was she who managed the household and allocated the resources. It shows that, control over resources had given them an extra power. It also shows that in the pre-industrial economy, it was the labour needs of the household which defined the labour roles of men, women and children in which kinship also plays an important role in determining their labour. But with the growth of capitalist mode of production, the migration of labour led to the break down of the kin-based feudal households. Besides these, a deep antagonism had developed between child bearing on the one hand and wage labour on the other which undermines women's bargaining power in the labour market.

The sociologists position of women's labour have to be looked on women's dual role. On the basis of women's dual role, they had analysed women's attitude towards labour and had assumed that a women's primary role is that of wife and mother. They had also points out the role conflict of women labourers in public and private spheres. They had suggested that women can combine public and private labour with the help of part time

labour. Here, they are ignoring women's basic right to labour and thus by indirectly supports the existing stereotypes about women's attitude towards labour. The most common views are women are uncommitted and even uninterested in working outside house, or that they work only for pin money⁶².

Thus the existing theories about women's labour shows that it can be better understood if viewed from the materialist conception of history. Further in order to understand the economic subordination of women, one should look at the gendered experience and relation as a dynamic aspect. It was only through the gendered aspect that one should trace the changing character of women's labour on the background of the introduction of new technologies and strategies.

The above presentations of labour theories raise a number of questions. Firstly, it shows that most of the labour theories were concentrated on public labour. Because of that women's family labour and reproduction labour had no place in labour history. Secondly, it shows that women labourers had played an important role in pre-capitalist society. Thirdly, it also shows that the introduction of capitalism had break the collective labour process in the pre-capitalist economy. In this context, the present study will examine the role of women labourers as collective labourers in pre-capitalist society, and will also examine how process of

⁶² Pin money is some times used to mean money earned by a married women to buy luxuries for herself or her family

capitalism had broken this labour process. The above hypothesis about women's labour will be tested in the next chapter by taking the experience of North Malabar.

Chapter III

WOMEN'S LABOUR PROCESS IN AN AGRARIAN SOCIETY IN NORTH MALABAR

In early societies labour formed the primary form of production. At a time when household became a part of social relations mediated by private property the concept of household labour also changed. Then onwards the concept of household labour meant women's labour which was identified with domestic labour. Sahlins had discussed the domestic mode of production in his work. According to Sahlins, in primitive society the household is as such charged with production, with the deployment and use of labour power, with the determination of the economic objective. Its own inner relations, as between husband and wife, parent and child, are the principal relations of production in society. The built-in etiquette of kinship statuses, the dominance and subordination of domestic life, the reciprocity and cooperation, here make the "economic" a modality of the intimate. How labour is to be expended, the terms and products of its activity are mainly domestic decisions. And these decisions are taken primarily with a view toward domestic contentment. Production is geared to family's customary requirements¹. Thus here the domestic mode of production refers to economics organized by domestic groups and kinship relations. The household in the tribal societies is usually not the exclusive owner of its

¹ M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1974, p.77.

resources: farmlands, pastures, hunting or fishing territories. But across the ownership of greater groups or higher authorities, even by means of such ownership, the household retains the primary relation to productive resources². Where these resources are undivided, the domestic group has unimpeded access, where the land is allotted. It has claim to an appropriate share. The family enjoys the use-right, but all the privileges entailed are not obvious from the term use right. Thus here domestic mode of production refers to economics organized by domestic groups and kinship relations, where the household is in charge of production, with the deployment and use of labour power, with the determination of the economic objective. However, in these household based economies, even though the household labour like cooking, cleaning, washing, fetching water, caring for elders and children are the main household tasks allotted to women, the women often did men's labour too. This extension of labour can be seen in stratified agrarian societies.

AGRARIAN ECONOMY

Recently, several scholars have underlined the role of household labour in agrarian societies. It is recognized that before the, industrialization process, women's earning from agrarian system supplemented family incomes especially in the low income households. They had better control over the real income component of the total family income generated within

² *Ibid.*, p.93.

the home and outside. Details regarding agrarian economy was essential for understanding women's labour behaviour in an agrarian society. The new theoretical input and impact of Chayanov's theory of agrarian economy remarkably sophisticated the debate of agrarian economy³.

It is surprising that only few studies seriously go into the question of the vicissitudes of female labour in traditional societies. Ester Boserup's *Woman's Role in Economic Development* states that a study of the role of women in economic development may conveniently begin with an examination of women's tasks in agricultural production in various parts of the under developed regions of the world. Boserup was the first to note the prevalence in Africa of female farming systems in which 'food production is taken care of by women with little help from men'. Boserup linked the centrality of women in African agrarian production directly to population density, landholding systems, and technology. So, whatever the limitations of Boserup's initial formulation, her focus on the form and character of agricultural intensification strikes to the core of contemporary ecological and economic change in African agriculture⁴.

³ The general aspect of Chayanov's analysis which captured contemporary attention was the depiction of agrarian family farms as an economic form which differed from capitalist farming even in an environment clearly dominated by capitalism. After Chayanov's work the place of women in agrarian economy was explored a new. For more details see Daniel Thorner et.al (ed), *A.V. Chayanov on 'The Theory of Peasant Economy'*, New Delhi, 1987.

⁴ Ester Boserup, *Woman's Role in Economic Development*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1970.

Indian condition of production is entirely different from the European concept⁵. In India important issues have been raised by Indian economists in the debate on the mode of production in Indian agriculture. According to Utsa Patnaik, when we look at the data on the ownership and operation of land and the ownership of live stock, implements and other means of production, thrown up by the National sample survey and farm management studies, there is one fact which emerges strikingly; the high degree of concentration of both land and non land resources with a minority of cultivators, while the majority have command over a disproportionately low share of resources⁶. According to her, such a degree of concentration of the means of production implies that there is a correspondingly high degree of economic differentiation within the cultivating population. In this concentration, the majority of holdings are so small that the peasant families have to work for others in one form or another hiring out labour taking in land at high rents- in order to make a living. Conversely a minority of large holdings which concentrate possession of land and other resources rely

⁵ In Europe, there existed independent farm holdings satisfying the needs of each single production unit, which is at the same time, a consumer unit. On this family farm, the family equipped with means of production uses its labour power to cultivate the soil and receives as the result of a year work a certain amount of goods.

⁶ Utsa Patnaik, 'Class Differentiation within the peasantry: An Approach to the Analysis of Indian Agriculture', in Utsa Patnaik (ed.), *Agrarian Relation and Accumulation*, OUP, Delhi, 1990, p.193.

mainly on outside labour for production⁷. Besides these, the family labour based peasant holding which neither exploit nor are exploited reduce to a relatively small portion of all holdings and in most regions are by no means typical⁸.

Bina Agarwal's is another work which seriously pointed out the role of women in agrarian economy⁹. She raises the question whether independent ownership of land can be of crucial importance in promoting the well being and empowerment of women. Besides this she also indicates the need for a very different conceptualization of the household and says that the bargaining approach, which indicates the ability of a member of the household to bargain her claims within the household, has particular usefulness in examining gender relations. Besides the works already mentioned some case studies are available. For example, in her work Saradmoni poses these problems¹⁰. In the case of India, the agricultural household can be defined as a part of larger household in which they were tied with so many social relations. Unlike Europe, here there existed land holders, agricultural subtenants and agricultural labourers in which majority

⁷ *Ibid*, p.192.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 196.

⁹ Bina Agarwal, *A Field of one's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

¹⁰ K. Saradmoni, 'Changing Land Relations and Women: A Case Study of Palghat District, Kerala' in R.C. Mazumdar (ed.), *Women and Rural Transformation*, Concept Publications, Delhi, 1983.

of them were related to landlords.

In the Indian condition the agricultural household function more as a social unit rather than an economic unit. Besides these in India, landlord has been used often to denote any non cultivating big land owner, not only one who leases out for rent, but also one who employs farm servants and labourers, or combines both. This usage has rational basis in the specific Indian experience as regards the development of landlord labourer relations. In Europe the employer-labourer relation in agriculture developed from the break-up of petty production during the transition from feudalism to capitalism and therefore was necessarily capitalist in character. In India however pre-capitalist employer-labourer relations have existed in agriculture long before, and well into, the period of colonial rule. The labourers typically belonged to the lowest castes and were in some form of hereditary bondage ranging from outright chattel slavery to milder forms of tying to the land¹¹. These general features of women's labour must be taken into consideration when we study North Malabar. We have to note that conditions prevailing in land lord tenant relations necessitate the deployment of household labour in the field; i.e., household labour and field labour are intertwined. That is probably why through which the labourer families could withstand the exploitation of the landlord, as well as hostile natural conditions in which they were forced to work.

¹¹ Utsa Patnaik, *Op. Cit.*, p.26.

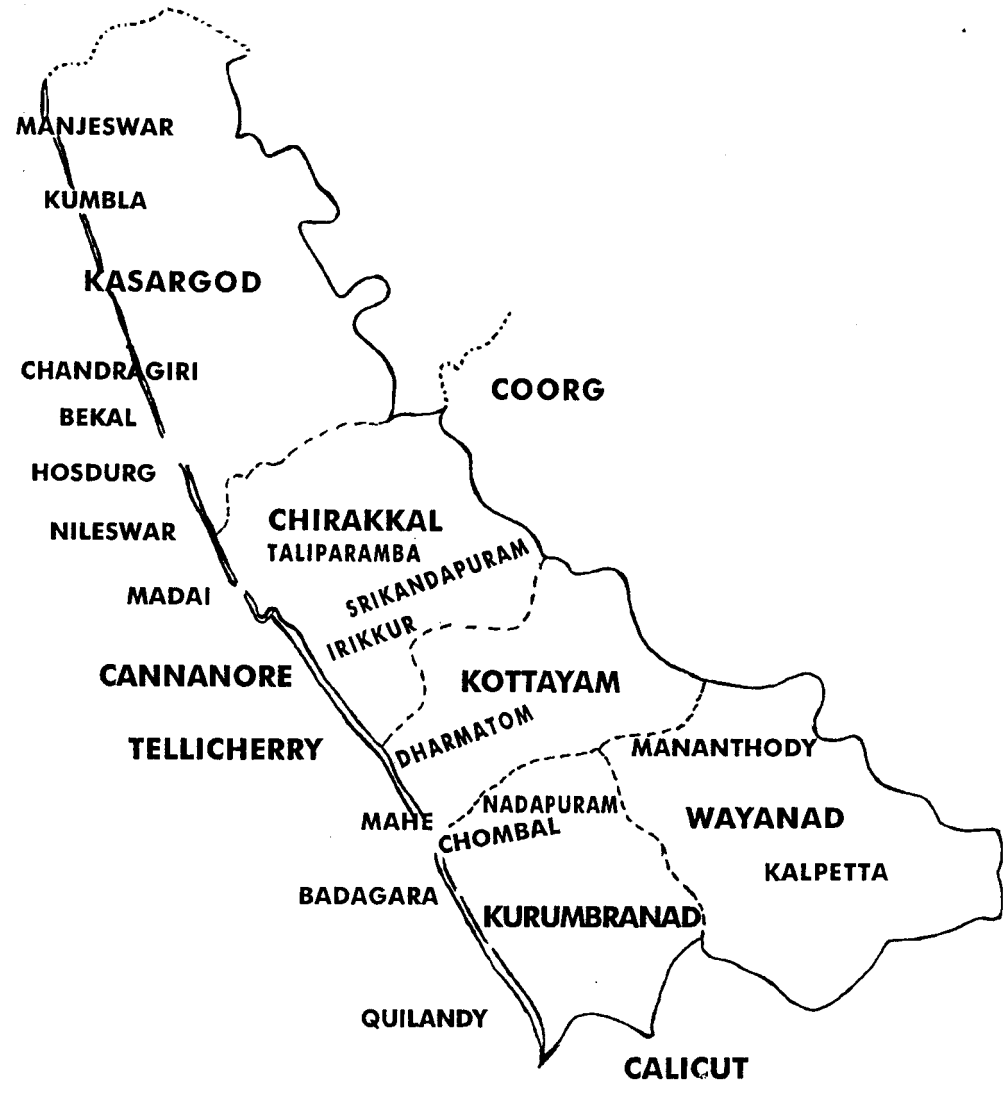
Under this context the present study tries to focus on women's labour in an agrarian economy in North Malabar. Mainly because of the reason that:

First, it shows that kinship played an important role in determining women's labour status i.e., even though they were performing occasional and seasonal labour, it was difficult for them to perform other labour which are not performed by their clan.

Secondly, in North Malabar there existed labour based on *kudis*. This *kudis* was another form of family labour. This kind of labour had domestic and public aspects in which sexual division of labour does not play a predominant role. The surplus labour goes to the *janmis*. It was his land holding capacity which helps the *janmis* to appropriate the surplus labour in the form of free labour/service labour. The appropriation of family labour for the benefit of the same family was a difficult task in this economy. Besides this here existed the system of patriarchy. Under patriarchal system the ownership of land always goes to male member. This was the case of landholding and *pattam* holding class. But one of the peculiarities of this region was that here among some classes there existed matrilineal system of inheritance, in which in a nominal way landholding rights goes to female members also. This property rights helps them to join in the labour process and later in the agrarian struggles.

Thirdly, with the development of capitalism, *kudi* labour becomes disintegrated. Instead of the productive labour, there was only reproductive labour in this *kudis*. Thus *kudis* no longer become an economic unit. Now

MAP NORTH MALABAR



kudis becomes a social category allows reproduction of labour power in a dual form i.e., to make fit the male labourers by providing all amenities and secondly the reproduction of the next generation of labourers. Lastly, the character of the patriarchy also changes. Earlier the patriarchy was based on the ownership of holding. Now the patriarchy continues to exist as a socio-cultural form which decides the type of labour that women should perform and thus prevents her access to social production. Besides that, the patriarchy also legitimises sexual division of labour as natural form. In order to understand this more clearly, let us examine the actual labour representation of women labourers in North Malabar.

NORTH MALABAR

Before analyzing women's labour process we shall attempt a brief sketch of North Malabar (See Map). During the early period Malabar was included in the Madras presidency. North Malabar is conventionally regarded as the region to the North of the city of Calicut in Kerala and includes Cannanore districts and parts of Calicut, Wynad and Kasargod districts. But, Wynad taluk had been excluded from this study because it was not an active area of peasant struggle and the labour conditions prevailing in the region was different from the other parts of North Malabar. According to the first systematic revenue and land settlement survey, Chirakkal, Kurumbranad, Kottayam and Wynad taluks was included in North Malabar. The arable land in Malabar was divided into wet, Garden and dry lands¹².

¹² *Statistical Atlas of Malabar*, 1906, Madras Presidency, Madras, 1924, p. 10.

The wet lands are dependent for their water supply solely upon the copious rain. They are devoted almost exclusively to the cultivation of paddy, occasional plots of plantains and vegetables grown as second crop. In partial cases of such cultivation, sub division was made subject to a minimum of 20 cents, wet cultivation less than 20 cents in extent being ignored. Garden lands are devoted to the cultivation of the coconut, arecanut and jack tree¹³. Many by-products, the most important of which are pepper, betel, plantains, mangoes and the products of the talipot and sago palms are derived from the gardens, as well as numerous species of vegetables. Dry lands are for the purposes of assessment divided into occupied and unoccupied. The former are lands in occupation continued from year to year and usually enclosed and cultivated with various kinds of fruit trees, plantains and vegetables.

The most important and profitable of these lands are the pepper plantations in the North of the district. The unoccupied dry lands includes the slopes of the laterite hills. They are so called not because they are necessarily unoccupied in the strict sense of the word, but because they are either not actually cultivated or are cultivated with shifting or fugitive crops only once or twice in every four or five years. The most important of these dry crops are *modan* or *punam* paddy, ginger, Samai and various pulses. *Modan* and *punam* are the names applied to a rice crop grown on the higher

¹³ *Land Revenue and Settlement Proceedings*, No. 168, Madras Government Press, 16th December, 1935, p.3.

lands and hills, and are practically identical, *modan* is grown in the southern taluks on the open slopes of the laterite hills which are roughly terraced for cultivation. *Punam* cultivation is characteristic of North Malabar and Wynad and is conducted chiefly on hills covered with jungle which is cleared before the cultivation is begun. A *punam* crop is raised on the same land once in six or seven years, and mixed with it dholl, millet and plantains are often grown. *Modan* is usually grown by itself and is frequently preceded by ginger crop in the previous year and usually followed in the same year by successive crops of Gingelly and Samai. *Modan* is sown in Minam (March - April) and reaped in the following Chingam (August-September). *Punam* is grown in the South- West monsoon, the sowing being in April¹⁴. Ginger tubers are planted out at the beginning of May and the crop is on the ground till Dhanu (December-January). The first crop is called the *Viruppu* crop, the second *Mundagon* and according to the availability of water and fertility of soil a third crop *Punja* was raised. The women tell us that paddy seeds like *koivalan*, *chennellu*, *karinbhalam*, *vayan*, *allikannan*, *koombhan*, *pallakkan*, *eron*, *allivayan* etc yielded in *kanni* and *mundon*, *kainra* etc yielded quickly in *Chingam*. Thus the references show that one crop follows another in quick succession and agricultural operation are in progress in the district through out the year. The following tables show in hundreds of acres, the average area of monthly cultivation both of wet and dry lands through out the district.

¹⁴ *Statistical Atlas of Malabar*, 1906, Op. Cit. p.5.

TABLE 3.1

The Average Area of Monthly Cultivation

Month	Chirakkal		Kottayam		Kurumbranad		Calicut	
	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet
April	5,1	11,8	3,3	5,0	3,0	8,5	2,1	3,5
May	20,3	23,9	11,2	8,8	4,1	13,6	4,3	10,7
June	4,7	8,7	1,3	3,7	2,3	5,6	2,2	5,2
July	26,3	2,7	33,9	3	98,6	6,4	41,8	5,6
August	11,4	5	2	6	7	-	1,3	3,1
September	4,8	1,3	1	3,4	1,3	4,8	4,7	7,3
October	1,4	3,4	9	3,5	1,2	1,1	3,1	2,8
November	3	5,2	1	4	4	1	8	1
December	9,8	8	-	-	-	-	1	-
January	7	7	-	-	-	-	-	1
February	1	-	2	-	1	-	-	-
March	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	84,9	59,0	51,2	25,7	111,7	40,1	60,4	38,4

Source: *Statistical Atlas of Malabar*, 1906, Madras Presidency, Madras, 1924, P.5.

The above table indicates that till the month of October more areas of land was cultivated. It shows that first and second crop was raised in almost all lands. Thus we can indicate that more priority was given to cultivation during the monsoon.

TABLE 3.2

Agriculturists

Taluk	Land holders	Agricultural subtenants	Agricultural labourers
Calicut	4,191	13,564	23,921
Chirakkal	5,973	33,035	61,626
Kottayam	6,866	17,762	40,570
Kurumbranad	5,431	26,781	63,679

Source: *Statistical Atlas of Malabar, 1908, Madras presidency, P.11.*

The above table also shows that a vast majority of this area was occupied by agricultural labourers. Besides these other evidences also show that the district of Malabar has been a major exporter of a wide variety of agricultural products to Europe for more than two thousand years¹⁵. Census reports, *Statistical Atlas of Malabar, Reports on Settlement of Land Revenue* and other revenue proceedings show that the miniscule holdings or homesteads form the main agricultural unit in this society. The following tables prove this statement.

¹⁵ T.W. Shea, Jr. 'Barriers to Economic Development in Traditional Societies: Malabar, A Case Study, *The Journal of Economic History*, 19(4), 1959, p. 504.

TABLE 3.3
Holdings in Ordinary Dry Acres

Sl. No.	Grade of holdings	Number of holdings	Areas owned		Areas given on lease	
			Acre.	Cent	Acre	Cent
1.	Up to 1 acre	196,680	116,249	25	14	24
2.	1 acre to 2.5 acres	153,885	276,663	00	60	13
3.	2.50 acres to 5 acres	122,597	453,434	22	130	50
4.	5 acres - 7.50 acres	60,439	379,234	26	152	60
5.	7.50 acres - 10 acres	36,798	319,868	94	99	07
6.	10 acres- 12.50 acres	25,644	285,341	40	103	33
7.	12.50 acres- 15 acres	18,669	254,819	26	97	57
8.	15 acres- 17.50 acres	14,116	232,864	24	20	30
9.	17.50 acres- 20 acres	10,509	196,550	48	52	85
10.	20 acres - 25 acres	11,385	255,169	13	188	16
11.	25 acres - 30 acres	7,321	200,695	40	160	53
12.	30 acres - 35 acres	5,034	172,086	78	97	90
13.	35 acres - 40 acres	3,644	136,697	33	78	66
14.	40 acres - 45 acres	2,778	119,088	96	41	65
15.	45 acres - 50 acres	2,152	102,984	86	53	31
16.	50 acres - 60 acres	2,566	126,554	22	139	85
17.	60 acres - 75 acres	2,215	146,939	22	119	55
18.	75 acres - 100 acres	1,917	164,411	81	206	30
19.	100 acres - 150 acres	1,440	175,673	60	295	14
20.	150 acres - 200 acres	486	86,393	68	155	81
21.	200 acres - 300 acres	329	81,666	88	29	05
22.	300 acres - 500 acres	183	73,783	41	207	05
23.	500 acres-1,000 acres	114	79,038	61	84	46
24.	Over 1,000 acres	93	345,976	53	3,341	72
Total		680,994	4,782,185	47	5,929	73

Source: *Report on the Settlement of Land Revenue of the Provinces Under the Madras Presidency*, Proceedings of the Board of Revenue Government Press, Madras, 1928, p.24.

The above table shows that the revenue paid on *pattas*, the *pattas* of 10 and under contained a large number of holdings shows that majority of them were miniscule holdings. Similar view was expressed by Prakash Karat. According to Karat most probably home steads on predominantly dry lands which Malabar would mean a large number of Parambas (garden plots). Large number of peasants had no other land but their little plots of homesteads (for which *pattas* were issued in Malabar) and were in better condition than agricultural labourers¹⁶. Likewise, T.C. Varghese by conducting surveys in different land holdings in Malabar also held the view that rent receivers owned the largest area per household¹⁷.

The above home steads in which a large number of people had been occupied can be called as *kudis*. In the earlier period, the term *kudi* had been used to denote a particular settlement pattern. After the development of a society based on agriculture, slowly the people in this settlement areas were transformed as agriculturists. Later this settlement rights are termed as *kudima/kudiyayma* etc and the settlement areas of occupational groups were also termed as *kudis*¹⁸. Here, the term *kudi* is used as the small settlement pattern or household of the labourers family which is entirely different from

¹⁶ Prakash Karat, *Agrarian Relations in Malabar - 1925-1948, Part I, Social Scientist*, 2(2) September 1973, p. 28.

¹⁷ T.C. Varghese, *Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1970, p. 138.

¹⁸ K.N. Ganesh, *Kanni Koithu, Udinoor Vilakoithu Samaram 60th Annual Smaranika* (Mal), 2002, p.21.

the large households (*taravads, manas*) of the landowning class. Since the main labourers in this *kudis* acted as *pattakkaran* of the *janmis*, it was the women labourers who manage this *kudis* on the basis of collective labour. Thus it shows that *kudis* is more relative to women than men.

This particular type of *kudis* has been a subject of discussion in the Indian village studies, even though they do not stress the term *kudi*. Eric J. Miller discusses the village structure in North Malabar. In his article on the village structure Eric Miller had discussed the peculiarity of Malayali village¹⁹. He states that instead of living huddled in a street, as so many other Indians do, the Malayali prefers the privacy of his own fenced compound, at a distance from his neighbours. Even the poorest house holder of the lowest caste lives a little apart from his neighbours and kin, though often on a perimeter of the village or close to the fields. With this exception, settlement is usually haphazard, with no special tendency for houses of a particular caste to cluster together. The particular tenorial pattern in this *kudis* are called *pattam* system in which there existed a three tier division of land rights known as *janmam-kanam* and *verumpattam*. According to this tenorial pattern the actual land right was vested in the hands of *janmis*. The ownership in land naturally made possible for the landlord some power including customary power. In this system, besides land control

¹⁹ Eric J. Miller, 'Village Structure in North Kerala' in M.N. Srinivas (eds), *India's Villages*, Asia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1963.

determinants like caste, class, kinship and gender also plays an important role in determining the position in the society. We can discuss the details about *janmam- kanam- verumpattom* and of caste, class kinship in the next chapter. Here the attempt is to reveal women's labour behaviour in the particular *kudi* based agrarian economy in North Malabar.

WOMEN'S LABOUR PROCESS IN NORTH MALABAR

In this background let us examine women's labour in the *kudi* based agrarian economy in North Malabar. It is a fact that women's agricultural labour process is a complex process. Because their labour in the family fields has been and is viewed as an extension of household labour. The labour year book reports show that the total supply of agricultural labour in India comes from families of landless rural labourers, families of part-time artisans or village servants²⁰. Even though the census reports, surveys and year books have reports on women's labour, these reports are often misleading. Because till the 1921 census, the population was divided into actual workers and dependants and women labourers were included in the category of dependants. Because of this, the labour of male labourer was only considered as family labour. Like wise, in the *Prices and Wages of India* volumes, women were not considered as wage labourers. Both the 1921 and 1931 census, specified regularity as a requisite for being called a labourer.

²⁰ *The Indian Labour Year Book*, 1946, p. 244.

Since this was not explicitly defined, and was further more, applied only to women and children, it appears that a number of irregular, paid women labourers may have fallen into the non worker category. This categorization of women labourers as non-workers was mainly based on the idea that women are dependent on the family. The following tables show the facts about women's labour.

TABLE 3.4

Labourer's in Malabar

Occupation	Female	Male
Ordinary cultivators	43, 831	202,075
Farm servants	2,607	4,301
Field labourers	340,212	221,873

Source: *Census of India, 1921, Madras, Part II, G.T. , Boag, 1922.*

TABLE 3.5

Labourer's in Madras Province

Occupation	Female	Male
Pasture and Agriculture	3,052,145	8,219,265
Cultivation	2,974,746	7,861,160
Agricultural labourers	2,055,621	2.230,215

Source: *Census of India, 1931, Madras, MWM Yeats, Madras, 1932*

TABLE 3.6

Agricultural Classes in Malabar

Order	Female	Male
Cultivating land owners	5,584	22,054
Non cultivating land owners	5,401	13,001
Cultivating tenants	72,605	186,288
Farm servants	6	772
Field labourers	267,309	232,110
Rice Pounders and Huskers	21,082	877

Source: *Census of India, 1901, Madras Part II, W. Francis, Madras 1902.*

TABLE 3.7

Agricultural Percentage

Occupation	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage of total population	
	of Actual Workers	of dependents	Actual workers	Dependents
Agriculture	47.5	52.5	29.5	32.7

Source: *Statistical Atlas of Malabar, Madras, 1908, p. 11.*

The above tables show that the percentage of female field labourers/agricultural labourers almost exceeds the percentage of male labourers i.e., the women labourers form the main source of agricultural labour. And it also shows that the percentage of dependents is higher than actual workers. Thus women labourers form the main source of labourers in the agricultural activities.

The women's experiences from North Malabar show that in *kudi* based economy women's labour form the major labour force. They had to

perform their labour inside the *kudis* and in the agricultural field in which most of their labour are extension labour. Thus it shows that *kudis* forms as a deeply cooperative endeavor and women were vital to its daily management²¹. In order to analyse women's labour in this *kudis*, let us look a day in the life of agrarian women in a landless agricultural labour class and a landlord class²².

Usually, the household labour of an agricultural women begins on 4/5 am. After they get up in early morning, sometimes alone, or with the help of daughters they have to clean the house and cook food and take care of children and elderly persons, feeding domestic animals etc. After her household tasks, by leaving her children under elder ones or elder neighbours, she goes back to the *janmis* house in order to do the menial labour in *janmis* house like cleaning or swept the *janmis* house, takes the *janmis* cow out of the shed, husking paddy etc. At about 8/9 am, by carrying a load of green manure or other manure, she goes back to the agricultural field. In the field she is engaged labours like transplanting (including planting and pulling out) weeding, harvesting, irrigating, spreading manure etc or other related labour like carrying seedling from house, threshing, winnowing, carrying harvested paddy to farm house, cutting and carrying

²¹ In order to gather the experiences from North Malabar extensive field work was done in different villages in Kozhikode, Cannanore and Kasargod.

²² Nizar Ahmad and Shahnaz Ahmad, in 'A Day in the Life of Masi Jheelo', in Leela Dube (ed.), *Structures and Strategies*, Sage Publications, 1990.

green leaves to the field, stacking the straw etc²³. In North Malabar, landowning women also joined them in agricultural activities. In order to decrease the burden of transplantation work, they sung *nattipattu*, which in most cases had the themes of *Northern Ballads*, and the themes of exploitation. They had the freedom to sing any songs. They sung *nattipattu* in order to express their frustration. One informant remembers such a song;

Varambathirikkum padakuyilinde

Konathin moodonneli veeti,

Aavam ozhakkari nelladutthu,

Konakam onnangu vangamallo

The informant told us that this song was sung when the *janmis* assistant made an obscene gesture by posing in front of the agricultural women by showing his undergarment. The women ridiculed him by singing that he should buy a new undergarment as it is torn, perhaps bitten by rats. In order to buy a new undergarment, they asked him to sell some grain. She further told us that after that they had no further disturbances from that person²⁴. Thus the above example shows that even the songs were used as an instrument of resistance against sexual exploitation.

In the afternoon at about 1/1.30 pm *kanji* was served near the field. In between, some time they go home to attend the domestic labour in her *kudi*.

²³ Personal Interview with Neeliyam Veetil Cheriya, Karivelloor, on 31.3.03.

²⁴ Personal Interview with M. Narayani, Panikkoti on 9.7.02.

The peasant women again start her work in the field at about 2 p.m. and in between 5.30 pm to 6 pm she returns from the field. If it is harvesting day, she then goes to *kalappura* for threshing paddy. After that she starts her own work in her *kudi*. She starts to wash clothes, inedible paddy has to be made into edible, this is a tedious task in most families. Paddy is processed in every day or in some case every three or four days (Generally agricultural labourers were paid in the form of paddy and this paddy has to be made into edible for daily food). Processing or husking the paddy is a strenuous work and it take two or three hours. Like husking, grinding is also a strenuous work. Cooking food includes many other activities. Fuel and water have to be collected. The time spent on fire wood collection is higher in villages near minor forests and woods. For example in villages situated near hilly areas, like Eleri, Kayoor, Puliyanoor etc the women spent on hours for gathering woods or twigs²⁵. In most cases the land owners would allow them to collect the fuel free from his forests called *kochi*²⁶ and also gave them coconut palms and husk. It shows that agricultural women in everywhere spend some time in fuel collection. After cooking she sometimes wove coconut leaves or make coir ropes etc and after that she served food to all and till 11 pm/12 pm she was engaged in house hold activities.

²⁵ Personal Interview with Valliyot Mani, Eleri, on 8.4.03; and with Matha, Panikotti, on 9.7.02; and with N.K. Nandini, Puduppady, on 1.3.03.

²⁶ The term *Kochi* was mainly used in Kasargode area to denote forest.

When we look at a day of landowning women's labour in North Malabar, we can see that she was always engaged as a full time labourer. This was entirely different from the existing notions about land owning women's labour. i.e., According to the existing notion, as the size of operational land holding increase or with increase in agricultural income, the women tend to withdraw from manual labour²⁷. The landowning women also got up in the early morning and cleaned the cow shed and milk the cow and did the other household labour. In some cases, for outside labour she received the help of landless agricultural women. After household labour, like agricultural women, *janmi* women were also involved in outside labour with their tenants in the field in order to assure good labour and preventing the labourers from idling away their time. As per the working conditions, sometimes they were involved in preparing food for labourers in the agricultural field. And some times they were engaged in boiling the paddy, drying paddy, husking paddy etc with the help of helpers. And after that they went to the field for supervision or joint work. They mainly supervised, when works like tilling and fencing are going on, other wise she was also engaged in labour along with labourers. Thus land owning women's labour time was also distributed between house and agricultural field. But the severity of their labour was different from the women-tenants. By spending

²⁷ Noeleen Heyzer, *Women Farmers and Rural Change in Asia; Towards Equal Access and Participation*, Asian and Development Pacific Development Centre, Kualalampur, 1987, p.17.

her time in field, she made good co-operation with the tenant women labourers. It shows that this type of good co-operation between them are less among men. On the basis of good co-operation that the tenant women take home rice, jack fruit, fuels etc from *janmis* house. North Malabar experience also shows that, so many women who were working under the *janmis* are engaged in some one else's field for wages after quickly finishing her own labour or *Swantham Pani*. This was because of the reason that, here much of the wet land is cultivated by the *janmis* themselves, who were mostly small proprietors, who do not think it a disgrace to cultivate²⁸. Besides this, the particular type of kinship existed in this society also created this atmosphere. We can discuss this kinship relation in another context.

Thus from the experiences of agrarian women and *janmi* women, we find that there were hardly any landowning women who were totally unaware of what was happening in their field. Regardless of their land holding status, some type of commonality existed between all of them in such tasks like, cooking, animal husbandry, grain processing, etc. Even though the severity of their labour varies, both of them have to perform a number of productive, unproductive and reproductive activities in a day. They were involved in productive activities like harvesting, winnowing, cooking, processing, collecting fuels etc., and unproductive activities like caring elderly persons and reproductive activities like care of children etc. In

²⁸ *Statistical Atlas of Malabar, Op. Cit.* p. 401.

the case of agriculturist women, a part of her surplus labour goes to perform menial labour in *janmis* house²⁹. For the agriculturist women, this labour was unproductive labour. But for the landlord this was productive labour. Their experiences tell us that both of them had to perform diverse tasks which needed simultaneous attention. The number of such tasks and the energy and time taken by them may differ. But the fact is that their contribution in household activities are not paid but are crucial for agricultural economy. Thus, on the basis of the nature of their labour, women's labour, can be categorized as visible and invisible labour, paid and unpaid labour, productive and unproductive labour etc.

Since, the paddy crop was seasonal, the women labourers had to depend on other non-agricultural and casual labour. These labour, in which they were engaged in mainly during off-paddy harvesting seasons varies regionally. During the off season, most of them went back to their own caste labour. It shows that in between May and January, that is during off paddy cultivating season, when the paddy fields are kept in fallow, it was the women labourers who took initiative to cultivate vegetables like cucumber, bitter gourd, pea, tubers etc. and stored it for rainy season. And besides these they transacted the remaining portion for barter³⁰. They further tell us that, in the hilly areas like Eleri, it was they who take initiative for *punam*

²⁹ This information was gathered by investigating the experiences of both the landowning women and landless women in different villages in North Malabar.

³⁰ Personal Interview with M. Narayani, Panikkoti, on 9.7. 02. and also with T. Devi, Calicut on 27.2.03.

cultivation³¹. They tell that in early morning they along with men, went to the forest and were engaged in burning scrub jungle for *modan* paddy cultivation or tubers cultivation³². In the early stages of agricultural activities, that is during the land preparation stages like mud leveling etc. they had only half day labour in the field. On such days after their labour in the field, in the afternoons, they were engaged in other labouring activities.

Throughout the year they were engaged in labour related to coconut like matting coconut leaves, coir making, loading coconut shells and coconut, selling coconut shells, drying coconut, toddy processing, jaggery making etc. In that period coconut matting leaves are used for roofing houses. The women from neighbourhood weave coconut leaves cooperatively for this purpose. The house roofing or *purakettu* was a collective work and after roofing, tea, rice flakes etc. were served³³. Coir making was one of the important activities in which women labourers were engaged. Traditionally Ezhavas were associated with this occupation, but others were also associated with them. The coir making consists of primary processing stages of retting of green coconut husk, extraction of fibre by

³¹ *Punam* cultivation is often done in dry areas or unoccupied lands include, the rolling down and slopes of the laterite hills are cultivated with shifting or fugitive crops only once or twice in every four year.

³² Personal Interview with Valliyot Mani, Edolath Chiri and Choorikad Cheriya, Eleri, on 8.4.05.

³³ P. Bhaskaranunni, *Pathonpatham Noottantile Keralam*, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrisur, 2000, p.85.

beating the husk, spinning of coir yarn either by hand or by spindle. The husk beaters and yarn spinners are, mostly women and working conditions in these industry are almost primitive and women coir workers have the lowest wages³⁴.

During that time, it was the woman labourers who were mainly involved in jaggery making by processing toddy. In certain areas in Kasargode like Peringome, Karivelloor, Paadichhal, Karinthalam, Madikkai etc. grass cutting and grass collection was important activities of women. In these areas, varieties of grasses like *neipullu*, *mayyapullu*, *arapullu*, *chamapullu*, *ambam pullu*, *kuttipullu* etc. were richly grown and was used for roofing houses, feeding cattles, making brooms, and are also used as fuels³⁵. In forest areas they were engaged in selling firewoods, green manure, herbals, honey etc. In other areas they were involved in mat making made out of *coragrass*. Like wise, most of the labourers who were engaged in hand pounding of paddy and rice flake pounding were women. Pounding of paddy is a heavy task and it takes hours. Two women should finish a selagai (160-170 l.b) in five to six hours. They may do as much as ½ selagais per day³⁶.

The women belonging to the weaving classes, were engaged in

³⁴ Personal Interview with Kolollathil Nani, Karimbanapalam, on 13.8.02., A woman spinning coir earns one anna six paise to two annas a day. A woman who beats husk earns three annas a day. A man who husk, 1000 coconuts earns eight annas a day

³⁵ Personal Interview with A.V. Janaki, Kozhummal, on 26.9.02.

³⁶ R. A Cecilwood, *Notebook of Agricultural Facts and Figures*, Madras, 1920, p.36.

weaving and agricultural activities at the same time. It was the women who are engaged in the preparatory process in weaving or spinning. All processes except the actual weaving were done by her and in some places they were also weavers. They had no regular duration of labour whenever they are free from household labour, they assist their family members. The women were also engaged in weaving industry also and she is an important agent that contributed to the income of the family³⁷.

Besides these there were so many other forms of labour in which women were engaged but varies regionally. But throughout almost in all areas they were engaged in construction activities, and coconut leave matting. Thus North Malabar experiences show that traditional or occupational labour like toddy processing, weaving etc. had made an important role in providing labour to women labourers especially during off paddy season. Thus this occupational group acts as transactors of labour in agriculture and other tasks.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO WOMEN'S LABOUR

The above references about agrarian women's agricultural and non-agricultural activities show that they had no regular labour time and were often engaged in complementary family labour. Whenever they are free from household labour they were continuously engaged in field or other forms of

³⁷ D. Narayana Rao, *Report on the Survey of Cottage Industries in Madras Presidency*, Madras Government Press, 1929, p.83.

public labour. Both their experiences and the archival reports show that women were continuously working without leisure for the benefit of their families and their income forms the major source of income of the family. Here it shows that certain labour are allotted to them and they receives low wages and they work for longer hours than men. Thus in their case, the possibility of division of labour, low wages, longer working hours like emerged. In this context let us examine these determinants.

When we look at the agrarian women's agricultural labour of North Malabar, we find that generally women were more involved in tasks like transplantation, weeding, cleaning, winnowing, threshing etc. and in some cases both men and women worked together. And men are more involved in tasks like ploughing heavy hoeing etc. Thus the possibility of division of labour clearly emerged in their labour. But when we compare the sex pattern of agricultural activities in different parts of the world, different tasks are labelled as male and female labour. Besides these different wages are received by them. To be an independent farmer is a male task in India and in Europe, but in many other regions, it is a normal occupation for women to farm on own account and perform all the manual labour³⁸.

In African agriculture more hours of work are performed by women than by men and these women own and sell the crops they have produced in

³⁸ Devaki Jain (ed.), *Indian Women*, Publications Division, New Delhi, 1975, p.107.

local market³⁹. In India, there is no uniformity in the women's agricultural tasks. It varies regionally. For example, it is reported that in India ploughing is done by only 2% of women belonging to agricultural class⁴⁰. The rest of them did not do that. In parts of South Kerala and areas bordering Tamil Nadu women do not participate in the work of harvesting. In some villages transplantation and weeding are the exclusive labour of women. While in others, men are also involved in these tasks. Traditionally, in certain parts of Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu, it was a practice that engaged only couples for harvesting. In such cases, women may not be paid separately. Like wise, in Salem district in Tamil Nadu, men and women work for equal wages only during harvesting operations⁴¹.

Since the female labourers acted as the backbone of this economy, clearly the possibilities of division of labour in terms of wage levels and gender bias emerge but varies regionally. In agricultural labour, the transplantation mainly done by women was one of the most difficult tasks. It will need twelve to fifteen women to transplant an acre of land. This task needed speed, patience and artistry. The transplanters had to maintain the same rows and had to stand in back for hours in the slushy field. Likewise, mud levelling, threshing, reaping, winnowing, bundling and carrying

³⁹ Ester Boserup, *Women's Role in Economic Development*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1970, p.20.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p.33.

⁴¹ Vima Majumdar et al. (ed.) *Women Workers in India*, Chanakya Publications, Delhi, 1990, p.35.

manure etc. are tedious tasks. About six to twelve men or women will reap the crop. For spreading manure, six to eight women will be needed.⁴² Women's experience in North Malabar, shows that both the task of men and women in agricultural labour are tedious and equally important. The studies also show that the division of labour in paddy production does not, per se, give rise to gender inequality. These tasks have historically been rendered as complementary tasks, of a technical nature with no single operation harbouring a value higher than the other⁴³. Here, the tasks between sexes is related to natural differences between sex is proved wrong because division of labour has no unit it varies according to regions.

Another problem related to women's labour is regarding the labour time. Here it shows that women have to work within a stricter time schedule and arrange things between *kudi* and field. The results of gender division of labour in the *kudi* and field will emerge comprehensively when we analyse the time use studies in household labour. In the case of agricultural labour women, they had not working hours as opposed to non-working hours. That is why the problem of timing agrarian women's labour raises. For her domestic activities like cooking, childcare, elder care, animal husbandry, firewood collection etc. consume most of her time. According to Bina Agarwal, the collection of fuel wood in most parts of the third world is done

⁴² R. Cecil wood, *Note Book of...*, *Op. Cit.*, p.36.

⁴³ Bina Agarwal (ed.), *Structures of Patriarchy, State Community and Household in Modern Asia*, Kali for Women, 1988, p.66.

primarily by women and children and the actual time taken for collection varies in different regions according to the availability of forest resources, but in most cases it is a strenuous, and time consuming task.⁴⁴ In the case of North Malabar also we can see that women spent on hours for fuel collection. Likewise, she had to spent a considerable amount of time in looking after cattle. Prem Chaudhary traces how the reinforced importance of animal husbandry increased female labour. Thus the timeless nature of their labour makes it inseparable from other activities and naturally it remains invisible and uncountable⁴⁵. The above sources of under counting can be identified.

- (i) Exclusion of certain types of labour.
- (ii) Direct bias on the part of either the respondent or the census enumerator, both of whom are usually male.
- (iii) Problems in the criteria of gainful work, main work, subsidiary, occupational etc. and
- (iv) Difficulties in implementing the criteria arising from the framing and ordering of questions in the census questionnaire⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Bina Agarwal, *Cold Hearths and Barren Slopes, The Wood Fuel Crisis in the Third World*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1986.

⁴⁵ Prem Chaudhary, *The Veiled Women: Shifting Gender Equations in Rural Haryana, 1880-1990*, Oxford Publications, 1984.

⁴⁶ Gita Sen, *Women's Work and Women Agricultural Labourers; A Study of the India Census, Working Paper No. 159, CDS, Trivandrum, 1983, p.2.*

In the case of North Malabar also, it shows that the calculation of labour time is a difficult task. A rough calculation of their labour time according to the field work is given below.

TABLE 3.8

Labour Time of Agricultural women

Activities	Time	Total Hours
Household Labour	4am to 8am	4
	6pm to 11pm	5
Farm Labour	8am to 1pm	5
	2pm to 6pm	4
Total		18 hours

Source: Calculated on the Basis of Oral Testimonies

The above table shows that besides their domestic duties women contribute about nine hours to agricultural activities and nine hours to household i.e. they do not have any time left to themselves. Even though compartmentalization is difficult, a rough calculation about household labour and field labour are given below.

TABLE 3.9**Household Labour**

House hold labour
Cleaning
Washing
Cooking
Care of children and elderly persons
Animal husbandry
Processing grains
Fetching water
Collecting fuels

Source: Calculated on the Basis of Oral Testimonies

TABLE 3.10**Field Labour**

Field/Farm labour
Transplantation
Cleaning
Seed bed preparation
Harvesting
Winnowing

Source: Calculated on the Basis of Oral Testimonies

TABLE 3.11

Labour Performed by Women Labourers in North Malabar

Month	Agricultural Labour	Other Labour
March-April (it was during this period that modan and punam is sown)	Preparing field for paddy cultivation, carrying manure like cow-dung to the field,	Grass cutting, firewood collection*
May	Weeding, transplantation, watering dry lands	Matting coconut leaves* grass cutting, coir work
June-July (This was off paddy season so they were engaged as casual labourers)	Vegetable cultivation	Collecting cashewnut toddy processing, weaving
August-September	Harvesting paddy, Threshing and winnowing, carrying paddy to farm house,	Carrying coconut shells,
October-November	Labour related to paddy preservation like parboiling and drying paddy etc	Drying arecanuts carrying construction materials like sand, stone
December-February	Stacking paddy straws, vegetable work like ginger work, cucumber work, etc.	Making copra, grass cutting, carrying construction materials, jaggery making

* In some areas, throughout the year they were engaged in the labour related to coconut like matting coconut leaves, coir making, toddy processing etc.

Thus the labour time of agricultural women always remained a topic

of discussion⁴⁷. In Europe, especially in Russia, Baskin, Kritsman, Nemichov etc. use different indices to categorise peasant household but had not solved the labour time⁴⁸. With the development of family economics, it emphasizes the interdependence between consumption and production decisions, and naturally it gets its place. Utsa Patnaik in her 'Class Differentiation within Peasantry' tries to categorize peasantry and according to her the use of outside labour in relation to the use of family labour is the most reliable single index of categorizing peasantry⁴⁹. Her view was criticized by Theodor Shanin because of the reason that, her equation does not give an exhaustive coverage of all agrarian relations especially it puts households into classes on assumptions⁵⁰. Even though the debate goes on, women's involvement in production and reproduction in North Malabar has ensured the survival of agrarian *kudis* and also shows that if we include women's household labour along with the existing data from Census Reports their labour participation will again increase.

The wage problem is another related problem. The wage received by the labourers during that period was very low and it again decreases in the

⁴⁷ For further reference about labour time see, U.A. Shimray, 'Women's Work in Naga Society- Household work, work-force participation and division of labour' EPW, April 24, 2004 and Devaki Jain, 'Valuing Work: Time as a Measure, EPW, October 26, 1996, etc.

⁴⁸ T. Shanin, *Defining peasants*, Basil Blackwell, 1990, p.234.

⁴⁹ Utsa Patnaik, *Agrarian Relation...*, Op.Cit., p.195.

⁵⁰ T. Shanin, *Op. Cit.*, p.232.



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case of women labourers. The following songs depicts the wage condition during that period.

Nattuchha monthiyolam paniyaduthal,

Padam parambathu panichaiithale,

Koolikku janmeende veetil chennal,

Ninnu pirupirukkenda, nale vannal,

Ennettetum kondu povam

The above song depicts the deteriorating condition of the tillers i.e., even though the tillers of the soil work from dawn to dusk, they barely get enough wages to sustain.

It shows that women received less wages than men it may be either in cash or in kind. This wage differentiation existed both in the field of agriculture and in the field of other occupational labour. In the case of agricultural labourers, the women who sowed, replanted and harvested, received far less than men who prepared the land, and ploughed the land. This distinction existed in other field also. The wage rate can be differentiated in the following Table:

TABLE 3.12

Wage Rate Compensation Between Men and Women in Malabar

Occupation	Men	Women
For tilling (work done till 1pm)	2 MCLeod ⁵¹ Seers of Paddy	-
Do (the whole day)	3 seers with breakfast	-
For ploughing (work done till 12 noon)	1 ½ seers of paddy	-
For weeding whole day	-	1 ½ nails or 3/8 seers or rice
For reaping	-	10 sheaves for every 100 sheaves brought to the threshing ground
For turning up paramba (till 1 pm)	A. S. 2.6 in money or 2 seers	-
Cooly work (full day) in urban parts	A. S. 4 with 6 pies extra for non-meal if the latter is not supplied by the employer	-
Ordinary Unskilled Labourers	2 to 2 ½ Annas per day	1 ½ to 2 annas
Able bodied	6 nallis heaped (148 ½ cubic inch)	6 nallis streaked (103 ½ cubic inch)
Slave	1 ½ hang of rice daily ½ rupees worth of cloth annually	1 hang of rice daily 1/3 rupees worth cloth annually and also receives oil, salt

Source: Srinivasa Raghavaiyengar, *Memorandum on the progress of Madras presidency*, Madras Government Press, 1893.

⁵¹ The edangally in North Malabar, familiarly known as MC Leod's Seer Contains 100.34 C.I. in Chirakkal, 97.75 C.I. in Kurumbranad and Kottayam.

TABLE 3.13
Agricultural Wages in Select Centers Field Labour (Working Hours 8)

Centre	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1959 -Men												
Panur	2.74	2.74	2.74	2.74	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Thirkkaripur	1.83	1.83	2.00	2.00	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.10	2.10
1959 -Women												
Panur	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.87	1.00	1.00	2.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24
Thirkkaripur	0.87	0.87	1.00	1.00	1.12	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.87	0.87
1960 -Men												
Panur	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50	2.59
Thirkkaripur	2.10	2.30	2.25	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.38	2.37	3.00	2.37	2.62	2.74
1960 -Women												
Panur	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	0.94	0.94	1.50
Thirkkaripur	0.87	0.87	1.24	1.24	1.50	1.00	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.38	1.38	1.38
1961 -Men												
Panur	2.59	2.59	2.19	2.19	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.59	2.59
Thirkkaripur	2.74	2.68	2.50	2.74	2.74	2.74	2.74	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.24	3.24

1961 -Women												
Panur	1.50	1.50	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.39	1.39
Thrikkaripur	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.62	1.62	1.66	1.66	2.00	2.00	1.20	1.24	1.24
1962 -Men												
Panur	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59
Thirkkaripur	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24
1962 -Women												
Panur	1.39	1.39	1.39	1.39	1.39	1.39	1.39	1.39	1.39	1.39	1.39	1.39
Thrikkaripur	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
1963 -Men												
Panur	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.59
Thrikkaripur	3.34	3.34	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.24
1963 -Women												
Panur	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16
Thrikkaripur	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.60	1.50	1.50	1.50

Source: Kerala District Gazetteers, Cannanore District, 1972.

The above references about wages show that the women always received low wages, even though their labour acted as the central powers of production relations in the agrarian economy.

The references about women's labour process in North Malabar raises a number of questions. It shows that women's involvement in the productive functions in an agrarian society is a complex process. Both the archival records and their experiences show that in the *kudi* based household economy in North Malabar, women's labour were vital for its existence. This *kudi's* was a deeply co-operative endeavour in which the women had to perform both household labour and public labour. Even though the severity of their labour varies according to their landholding, both the agrarian women and the *janmi* women had to perform different types of productive and unproductive labour. Women's labour were vital to the daily management of the agrarian society. This centrality of women's labour can be seen in other occupational groups that existed in this society. It was the conditions of the period that created this particular type of centrality of women's labour. At that time, both of them had to struggle hard for existence and the wage rate of both men and women were very low. Since the agricultural process was seasonal, they were also involved in other non-agricultural activities. It shows that they were actively involved in household and public labour at the same time.

For analyzing women's labour process especially in a agrarian society,

time use studies are essential because most of their public labour are extension labour. Besides this, the time spent by women in household activities like fire wood collection, animal husbandry etc are undervalued. Their experiences prove that without leisure they were continuously involved in labour process with out considering day and night. This can be seen when we compare the labour hours of men and women. There is no doubt about it, i.e., it was the women who work longer hours than men. Like wise, the question of wages also creates problem. The concept of wage is entirely different in an agrarian economy that the capitalist. Here, there existed direct relationship between *janmis* and the labourers and here wage is a kind of livelihood subsistence and was not the payment for actual labour performed by the labourer. Thus there existed non-economic criteria for wages in agrarian society. Experiences from North Malabar have shown that the task performed by the women labourers in the field like transplanting, threshing, reaping etc also required skill and they were tedious tasks. It also shows that these tasks have historically been rendered as complementary tasks of a technical nature with no single operation harbouring a value higher than the other. But in reality the women always received less wages than men. But it was also noted that the wage problem was one of the main problem faced by the whole society.

The centrality of women in labour process was one of the peculiarities of North Malabar. Here, irrespective of their landholding status, both the agricultural labour women and the landholding women were actively

engaged in all kinds of productive and unproductive activities. Even though, agricultural labour forms the basis of this society, the women were engaged in other non-agricultural labour also. It also shows that, it was mainly during the off season that they were engaged in other complementary labour. For the women belonging to occupational castes, it was mainly their traditional labour, which provided them this kind of labour. Thus it shows that the complementary labour forms the nexus of women's labour in this society. Later this character of labour was destroyed due to industrialization. Even though women had performed a central role in labour process, in this society certain variables like kinship, caste, etc. had determined their labour status which we can discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter IV

AGRARIAN AND VILLAGE SOCIAL RELATIONS IN NORTH MALABAR

In an agrarian social structure, the role of village social relations is crucial. The present chapter focuses on how the factors like caste, class, kinship determine women's labour in the *janmi-kudiyam* pattern of tenurial structure. This chapter also focuses on how the agrarian women labourers resisted, when the *janmi-kudiyam* relationships changed in the context of the colonial land revenue administration.

In the pre-capitalist society, the ownership of land enabled the landlord to exploit the surplus labour of the downtrodden classes like agricultural labourers, and tenants and other occupational or service classes¹. For the landlord, the ownership of land had enabled him at the same time to extract rent from his tenants and also enabled him to enjoy the free service of his labourers. In North Malabar, these special privileges decided by local customs were called *maryadai* or *nattunadappu*², in which women labourers

¹ Utsa Patnaik in *Agrarian Relations and Accumulation, The Mode of Production Debate in India* has states that the ownership of land had made possible for the landlord some exploitative activities like cultivation with the help of hired labourers, leasing out of land to tenants, usury, trading ingrains and other commodities, investments in various kinds of productive as well as unproductive activities in industries and services related to agriculture and rural society.

² K.N. Ganesh, 'Ownership and Control of Land in Medieval Kerala, Janmam-Kanam relations during the 16th-18th centuries', *IESHR*, 3, 1991, p.303.

played an important role. This peculiar type of bond of contract between the landlord and the labourers was possible only because of the particular categories of kinship system that existed in the village social relations in an agrarian economy.

Even though the categories of kinship prevalent among different castes varied, it was the kinship norms that determined their social relations. In the case of women also, this norm had played an important role in determining their status. It is used to describe women's social relations within the family, to invoke obligations, to determine rights of inheritance and in effect to legitimate the structure of the relations of production and distribution and power authority³.

In the case of North Malabar, special emphasis was placed on matrilineal kinship. Here, *taravad* was the main residential unit of land owning class. And references have shown that matriliney was mainly practised among Namboodiris and Nayar *janmis* in North Malabar. People belong to the same *taravad* are related to each other either through male links or through female links. Since, most of these *taravad* practised matrilineal system of inheritance, women are also entitled to a share in the ancestral property and besides this, they had decision making power⁴.

³ Max Hedley, 'Relations of Production of the Family Farm: Canadian Prairies', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 9(1) October, 1981 p.76.

⁴ K.K. Pillay, 'The Matrilineal System of Inheritance in Kerala' in T.K. Ravidran (ed.), *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Department of History, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1974, p.188.

The major Brahmin *taravads* which followed *marumakkathayam* system of inheritance during that period was Thazhakatmana, Keekkamkottavazhunnor, Eravilvazhunnor, Aroth Vazhunnor, Kundilayar, etc. The major Nayar *taravad's* are Kodom, Echikkanam, Kozhummal, Konottu, Cherippadi, Naranthatta, Kottayil, Edappanichaveri, Bedakathu Kamalon, Panathadi Kattur, Kalingottu Kookkal, Chandra Madiyan, Alathadi Malor, Periya, Mavila, Palattu, Karicheri, Kanyal, Kuttamatthu etc. The Muslim *taravads* includes Trikkaripur, Udumbanthala, Kaikkotkadavu, Padanna, Thuruthi, Echilamadam, Chemmanad, Kasargod Pazhaya Kottakkar, etc⁵. Dr Gundert gives the list of the castes who follow this system of inheritance. Seventeen Brahmin Illams in Payannur, Chirakkal taluk, Kshatriya, Tirumulpad, Nayar, Urali, Andor, Pallichan, Kushavan, Vyabari, Kolayan, Chembotti, Pisharodi, Variyan, Nambi, Teyambadi, Maran, Poduval, Kuttunambi, Attikurichi, Unnitiri, Eradi, Vallodi, Nedungadi, Veluttedan, Chaliyan, Tiyan in North and in Travancore⁶.

Besides these matrilineal *taravads* (households), these villages contain a cross section of other independent castes also. It was the Tiyyas, Muslims and some groups of Nayars who acted as cultivating tenants in this system.

⁵ Personal Interview with K. Madhavan, T. Devi, and P.C. Karthiyayanikuttyamma, etc had strengthened this statement; K. Madhavan, in his book *Oru Gandhayan Communistinte Ormakal*, Creative Arts and Cultural Co-operative Society Ltd, Trivandrum, 2002 p. 28-29 also gives reference about taravad.

⁶ P.J. Cheriyan (ed.), *William Logan's Malabar Manual (in two volumes)*, Vol. I, Kerala Gazatter's Department Trivandrum, 2000 p.155.

Castes like Parayas, Pulayas etc were the main agricultural classes. Most of the agricultural landless labourers were belonging to the low caste and were attached labourers to the *janmis* and were occupying small plots of *janmis* land with a hut⁷. Besides these, other service castes like washermen, carpenters, blacksmiths etc were also engaged as seasonal agricultural labourers. Every agrarian village had within it all the essential artisan and servicing caste. In these villages, the institution of *tara* right guaranteed the availability of the services of the occupational groups within the specified area. These servile class or the occupational class formed the basic and permanent group in these villages⁸. Experiences from North Malabar show that, among these servile classes it was the women who often had to take on the responsibility of continuing caste based occupation. These classes rendered their service according to *jajmani* system i.e., the craftsman was not paid in exchange for each item he produced, but was considered as a village servant on a hereditary basis⁹.

In this network, the local members of each castes were united by kinship bonds and the categories of kinship bonds also changed according to different castes. That is why a separation between the land owners and labourers was possible in this society. On the basis of kinship, this society

⁷ The Regional Records Survey Committee(ed.), *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala, Vol. I*, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1970, p.56.

⁸ M.R. Raghava Varier, *Village Communities in Pre-Colonial Kerala*, Place Names Society India, Mysore, 1994, p.13.

⁹ Personal Interview with Kannan Puthanpurayil, Onchiyam, on 3.8.02.

provided more detailed criteria of a ritual and occupational nature which clarified the rank of each caste in relation to all others of the locality.

In this kin based society, there existed a particular type of tenurial system called *janmi-kudiyam* pattern. In this pattern there existed a three tier division of land rights known as *janmam*, *kanam* and *verumpattam*. *janmam* is a word of Sanskrit origin and is usually interpreted as birth or birthright and therefore the hereditary rights in the soil conferring absolute rights of ownership. In these relations, when the *janmis* found themselves in need of money they leased out their lands for enjoyment as compensation for the money received by them. This is the origin of the *kanam*, *kuzhikanam*, and *verumpattam*. The word *kanam* has been explained in many ways. Dr. Gundert derived it from *kanuka* to see, and explained it as meaning that which was seen, or the visible right of the *kanamdar* by virtue of his being in possession as opposed to the invisible right of *janmi*¹⁰. Usually the *kanam* tenure was granted for a period of 12 years. There was much difference between a *kanam* in South Malabar and North Malabar. The former was a tenure under which nominal amounts are received by the *janmis* mostly as security for rent. But in the latter case, it was really a mortgage with possession. *Kuzhikanam* was a tenure under which the tenant was allowed to make improvements. *verumpattam* was name given to simple leases of wet

¹⁰ *Report of the Malabar Tenancy Committee, Vol.I, The Report, Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press, Madras, 1940, p.9.*

lands for cultivation in South Malabar¹¹.

In North Malabar, the corresponding name was *verumkozhu*. *verumkozhu* in North Malabar, on the other hand, means lease of trees alone which was otherwise known as *melpattam*¹². The Origin of this tenure was the same as *kuzhikanam*. *Verumpattam* was a simple lease usually for one year duration on *pattam* or *varam*. *melayma*, *karayma*, *otti*, *kozhukanam*, *kattakanam* etc was also prevalent there. Among these *kozhukanam* and *katta-kanam* are the amounts given as security for the *varam* by the tenant. Beside these, the *janmis* are making several other service tenures. The rights of the *janmis* over the land were expressed by *kiliyakam* and the obligations of the tenants were determined by custom *maryadai*¹³. The actual form of the privileges and rights exercised by the *janmi* and the obligations of the tenants were also becoming localized.

The above tenurial patterns based on rules and obligations were possible because of the village social relations existed there. In North Malabar, there existed a typical village system that is entirely different from other parts of India. Here, settlement is usually haphazard, with no special

¹¹ *A Statistical Atlas of the Madras Presidency*, Compiled from existing records by Charles Benson, Madras, Government Press, 1895, p. 401.

¹² *Report of the Malabar Tenancy Committee, Vol.II, The Evidence*, Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press, Madras, 1940, p.274.

¹³ K.N. Ganesh, *Ownership...Op. Cit.*, p.303.

tendency for houses of a particular caste to cluster together. Besides these, in the Kerala villages, the four varna concept is not suitable¹⁴.

In the typical villages in North Malabar, caste rank was closely correlated with relationship to the land, especially paddy field. Here the head of the family of the village usually a male member, sometimes still remained the chief land owner. Although the head of family may till more than enough land for its own needs, the bulk of it is parcelled out among tenants, who may cultivate it themselves or sub-lease it yet again. Nambudiris and chieftain castes tend to be land owners, the higher Nayar sub-castes are either land owners or non-cultivating tenants (customary *kanamdars*), the inferior Nayar's and some Thiyyas are cultivating sub-tenants, either on permanent leases (cultivating *kanamdars*) or on annual leases (*verumpattamdars*). But the concept of head man as defined by Eric Miller is not applicable in the case of North Malabar. Most of the settlement patterns in North Malabar are in the form of *kudis* in which direct relationship between *janmis* and labourers existed.

Experiences from North Malabar show that *avakasam*, *maryadai* and the existence of *kootam* appear to have decided the structure of power relations. In the *janmi kudiyan* tenurial pattern, both the men and women had to render their service. In the case of women, they had to provide social and reproductive labour. For men, they had to provide rent and labour. Besides

¹⁴ Eric. J. Miller, 'Village Structure in North Kerala' in M.N. Srinivas (ed.), *India's Villages*, Asia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1960, p.42.

these, both of them had to perform certain caste obligations. Evidence from North Malabar shows that the burden of caste obligations are more on women. In this social system, women along with men also share the essential task of removing pollution of upper caste. It may be noticed that the Malayalis distinguished two kinds of pollutions, viz, by people whose very approach within certain defined distances causes atmospheric pollution to those of the upper section, and by people who only pollute by actual contact¹⁵. So in this society the service of removing pollution was essential. So washer classes are distributed in all the *desam* and there are two types of them. One is performing for the upper section alone and another for the entire village community including all *jati* groups probably excepting the lowest agricultural workers. Those who claimed a higher social status are called *veluthedan* where as the other group is called *vannan*. The service of both these functionaries has religious as well as secular aspects. Clothes washed and supplied by both the groups are required by brahmanical and non-brahmanical temples, thereby linking them closely with the sphere of religious practices¹⁶.

In Malabar, washer women's ritual functions are indispensable for the washing of soiled clothes during the ceremony that goes with the first menstruation called *vannathimattu*. According to this custom, a few days after the first menstruation of girl, the washer woman must supply purified

¹⁵ P.J. Cheriyan (ed.), *William Logan's ... Op. Cit.*, p.118.

¹⁶ M.R. Raghavavariar, *Village... Op. Cit.*, p.19.

cloth to the girl. The same is done in the case of pregnant women after child birth¹⁷. During the period of peasant struggles, there are lot of instances in which the *janmis* ostracized the tenant by preventing washer women from taking *mattu. vannan*, the lower category of village washerman has another duty of performing ritual dance during the festival and special occasions in the non-brahmanical *kavu* temples. They are traditional physicians and their women functioned as midwives in the rural settlements until the proliferation of modern medicine and hospital facilities¹⁸. Thus it shows that, in the village social relations, women were asked to perform household labour and community's demand of labour.

In this system it was their class that determines the severity of women labour. Through the experiences of Pallar women in Tamil Nadu, Karin Kapadia, brings out clear and useful connections between, gender, caste and class¹⁹. She points out that it is impossible to deal with class and caste as categories without incorporating the dynamics of gender. Her book also points out the categories of kinship prevalent amongst different castes, in that region, with a special emphasis on matrilineal kin and the unique functions of the mothers brothers²⁰. In North Malabar, the severity of labour

¹⁷ Personal Interview with R.K. Janaki, Pazhassi, on 24. 4.03.

¹⁸ M.R. Raghavavariar, *Op. Cit.* p.20.

¹⁹ Karin Kapadia, *Siva and her Sisters: Gender, Caste and Class in Rural South India*, Delhi, OUP, 1996.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.19.

can be seen in the case of agricultural labourer women. They were mostly low caste and landless and were largely attached to the *janmis* land with a hut. While the men belong to this class acted as general plough servants, the women belong to this class performed all the hard works like transplantation, weeding, threshing, sowing and so on and along with this they also performed menial labour in *janmis* household. Their landless condition faced them to work at the same time as *janmis* menial labourers and also to work at *janmis* farm. Thus they had to perform triple burden of labour. Here the variable of caste helps to shape ideas about the household composition of women's labour.

Caste shapes the boundaries about individual member's rights to its resource base and about intra-household and inter household relationships. It also shows that caste, also results in one additional feature of the sex/gender system. That is the general sexual availability of the lower caste women to the upper caste men, particularly to the men of the landlord family. The more feudal the area, the more this system of sexual availability is enforced. For example, the agricultural women labourers were not allowed to cover the upper part of their body before the *janmi*. The sexual exploitation was of two kinds one was forcing a women who were pregnant and feeding the child to hard labour in fields and in *janmis* house. The second one was forcing the women labourers to satisfy the sexual desires of the landlord. There are a lot of instances in which pregnant and feeding women were forced to hard work. In the Eleri area, the tribal agricultural

women took no rest before and after pregnancy. After three or four days of pregnancy, these women tested the strength of her hand by plucking *kurunthotty* shrubs and starts work. They were forced to work at night, and at low wages and were severely beaten²¹. Besides these, they also becomes the prey of landlords.

The subordination of the tenants to the *janmis* results in the general sexual availability of the tenants women to the *janmis* men. The condition of the lower caste women became more worse. There were lot of instances in which good looking women belonging to the tenant families were being molested by the landlords²². *Pazhassayikundam* was a deep pit in between the hills near Kalliat and it was here that the dead bodies of the punished persons were dumped by the Kalliat *janmis*. And Odattupalam was another place near Srikandapuram where the Karakkatidam *janmis* hanged their enemies²³. These two *janmis* were notorious for their cruelties. In one instance, the Kuttoor *janmi*, one of the members of the Kalliat family raped an agricultural labourer woman while she was suffering from severe eye disease²⁴. At a time when there were no peasant organizations, two peasants, Vannathan Raman and Kodilon Raman questioned the *janmis* when the peasant women were being molested by the *janmis*. The infuriated *janmi* by

²¹ Personal Interview with Podora Kunjiraman, Eleri, on 4.4.03.

²² Report of the Malabar.... Vol.II, *Op. Cit.*, p. 259.

²³ *Kavumbayi Samara Smaranika*, 50th Anniversary, 1996, p.66.

²⁴ A.K. Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha* (Mal), Chintha, Trivandrum, 1999, p. 275.

way of treachery hospitalized Vannathan Raman and cut the veins of his legs and made him handicapped. And the latter one was killed by breaking his head²⁵.

The village social relations had enabled the *janmis* some privileges. Likewise the dependent should obtain some privileges from the *janmis*. The *janmi* had enjoyed privileges to use good dress, good language, and to use bronze and copper vessels and to wear slippers and also had the privilege to construct houses made of bricks. Besides this he also enjoyed certain privileges on different occasions. For funeral ceremonies and *kathakali*, fees was levied. And demanding plantains, banana and other vegetables for rice-giving ceremony. If the *janmis* are Muslims, demanding fowl and ghee during Ramzan; they demanded this by letters and the tenants comply with their request. Muslim *janmis* also set a part the yield from the *parambas* in the possession of tenants for mosque purposes²⁶. On the occasion of marriage also there existed different customs in different areas. For example, in certain parts of Kasargod, Certain customs like *padikanikkal*, *vettilavekkal* etc. had been existed. According to the custom of *vettilavekkal/chekkanchellal*, in order to fix the marriage of their daughters, the tenants, need to seek prior permission from the *janmi* by putting a bundle of betel leaf in front of the *janmi*²⁷. According to the custom of *padikanikkal*, on the wedding day the girl

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

²⁶ *Report of the Malabar... Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, p.258.

²⁷ Personal Interview with C. Chirutha, Thillenkeri, on 26.4.03.

along with her relatives, have to visit the *janmis* house and the girls were made to stay there for three months²⁸. These customs vary regionally. In some areas of Kasargod, on the wedding day, the couples and the whole relatives including men, women and children have to visit *janmis* house by performing *bayipanipattu* and *kali* (certain song)²⁹.

Likewise, according to the customs, the dependents should obtain manure and fuels from the forests maintained by the *janmis*. But if the relation between the land owners and the dependents become strained, women became the worse sufferers. They were no longer allowed any such privileges. One of the informants told us that in one instance, when she went for another landlord's labour, the *janmi* tried to prevent her from taking fuels from the forest³⁰. The cattle were allowed to graze only in waste lands. Besides these, during the festivals of *Vishu*, *Onam* etc labourers were expected to present gifts in the form of farm produces as an expression of allegiance. The agricultural labourers had to provide vegetables like cucumber, yarm etc. Weaver had to provide cloth, vaniyan presented oil, carpenter presented wooden articles³¹ etc. On the occasion of marriage in *janmis* house the tenants had to provide most of the ingredients required for

²⁸ N.K. Kamalasanan, 'Kuttanadum Karshaka Prasthanavum' paper presented at the international congress on Kerala Studies 27-29 August 1994 at AKG Centre, Trivandrum.

²⁹ Personal Interview with Undacchi Padinjara Thodiyil, Noonji, on 4. 4.04.

³⁰ Personal Interview with Kaarichi, Aallai, on 6.4.04.

³¹ Personal Interview with T. Raghavan and K.K. Raghavan, Pazhassi, on 24.4.03.

feasts. They had to provide milk, butter, curd, plantation leaves, banana and coconut. It was mainly the women`s work to supply plantain leaves for feast and to escort the landlords women during ceremony and other occasions, bringing water, washing utensil etc³². But in the case of liberal *janmis*, they made a show of generosity on dependents by giving presents like grain, cloth and money to the dependents during festivals. The above references shows how the appropriation of women labour was decided by *nattunadappu* and *maryadai*.

It shows that regarding their land holding status, there existed some commonality between the *janmi* women and agricultural labour women. Besides this we had already discussed that there existed good co-operation between these women. It was on the basis of this, that the agricultural labour women had to take manure from the forest, and also take some other goods from *janmis* land. Here, most of the *janmi* women were engaged in field labour in her own field with the agricultural labourers. For the *janmi* women perhaps it was her matrilineal background which provided her this freedom. This labour freedom was one of the peculiarities of North Malabar. There existed a good labour relation between all women regardless of their land holding status. Facts show that women belonging to the occupational group simultaneously acted as helpers in their own family and acted as agricultural labourers especially during harvesting season. It was agreed that this society would have a continuing need for the services of the carpenters, blacksmith,

³² G. Arunima, *There comes papa...* Op. Cit., p.24.

leather worker, potter, barber and washer man³³. In these villages, there were scarcely any families which, did not have a connection with the land throughout the year even if only to supply supplementary labour for the harvest³⁴. In North Malabar, evidences show that it was the women labourers who acted as the main agent who provided this supplementary labour in the occupational class.

Studies from different parts of the country also show that land being the most important source of agriculture, its availability and distribution determine the agricultural development and overall labour use in a region³⁵. The land settlement records and experiences from North Malabar also emphasize this statement. The land settlement records in North Malabar confirm that the number of women property holders in North Malabar were comparatively high. Their experiences testify that in North Malabar, women belong to the *janmi* family were also involved in field labour this was due to their decision making power. So in order to analyse women property holders in North Malabar, we may compare the settlement and re settlement registers of certain taluks in North Malabar. The land survey and settlement register of North Malabar prove that the number of women property holders in this area are comparatively high. Even though the settlement registers do

³³ M.N. Srinivas, *Village, Caste, Gender and Method; Essays in Indian Social Anthropology*, OUP, Delhi, 1996, p.19.

³⁴ Eric. J. Miller, *Village Structure.... Op.Cit.*, p.44.

³⁵ Bina Agarwal, *A Field of One's Own*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

not present a clear picture of the extent of concentration of land, a rough calculation can be made from the following Tables.

TABLE 4.1
Chirakkal Taluk,
Karivelloor Desam, Settlement and Resettlement Register

Acres of Land Holdings in Karivelloor Desam	Settlement	Resettlement
Area	2494.5	2494.5
Garden	677.1	853.42
Wet	915.74	920.11
Women Land Holders		
Area	77.23	237.26
Garden	40.23	102.7
Wet	29.99	70.05

Source: Settlement and Resettlement Register of Chirakkal Taluk Karivelloor Desam, Malabar District, printed by Superintendent Government Press, Madras, 1905, 1937.

TABLE 4.2
Chirakkal Taluk, Mayyil Desam,
Settlement and Resettlement Register

Acres of Land Holdings in Mayyil Desam	Settlement	Resettlement
Area	741.62	752.99
Garden	173.62	180.43
Wet	86.21	88.50
Women Land Holders		
Area	67.69	74.06
Garden	26.42	40.9
Wet	6.37	13.76

Source: Settlement and Resettlement Register of Mayyil Desam, Malabar District, Printed by Superintendent Government Press Madras, 1905, 1937.

TABLE 4.3
Chirakkal Taluk, Kandakkai Desam,
Settlement and Resettlement Register

Acres of Land Holdings in Kandakkai Desam	Settlement	Resettlement
Area	699.4	527.8
Garden	187.24	196.83
Wet	131.10	129.73
Women Land Holders		
Area	40.09	95.11
Garden	20.02	45.3
Wet	2.18	8.55

Source: Settlement and Resettlement Register of Kandakkai Desam, Malabar District, Printed by Superintendent Government Press Madras, 1905, 1937.

TABLE 4.4
Chirakkal Taluk, Timiri Desam,
Settlement and Resettlement Register

Acres of Land Holdings in Timiri Desam	Settlement	Resettlement
Area	5737.44	6180.13
Garden	26.23	28.11
Wet	11.46	12.24
Women Land Holders		
Area	8.95	1.0
Garden	7.82	0.55
Wet	--	--

Source: *Settlement and Resettlement Register of Timiri Desam*, Malabar District, Printed by Superintendent Government Press Madras, 1905, 1937.

The above table confirm that except in the case of Timiri, the total number of women landholders increased during the period of re-settlement as compared to the settlement. The wet land indicates the cultivating land. The tables show that in all villages there existed a small percentage, that is above one fourth, of total land was under women land holders. Thus it confirms that this small percentage of women had their own decision making power over land. In the case of Karivelloor Village, they had the highest number of women land holders. Experiences show that this was one of the areas of active peasant struggles in which zealous participation of women can be seen. Even today, this active participation of women in public activities can be seen in Karivelloor. Likewise, Kandakkai-Mayyil and Timiri are areas of active peasant struggle. In Timiri paddy harvesting struggle, Kandakkai grass cutting and *kalamkettu* struggle, active women participation can be seen. Here, it shows that women's property right (it leads to decision power) and their direct participation in the struggle had some linkages. For example, in the Timiri paddy harvesting struggles it was the women who took initiative. These linkages are discussed in another section.

Thus it shows that in this social set up women have acted as the main link which preserves and plans the continuation of this kinship and caste structure. It shows that women were asked to perform social, economic and customary rules and obligations. But these rules and obligations changes according to their land holding capacity. The landholding provides them

more decision power. That decision power helps them to involve more in private and public activities. The community also demanded labour of women especially in the occupational and agricultural labourers. Thus references have shown that the community's demand on labour in this economy was mainly based on women's labour. Besides these, the bond of contract which ties labourers to their masters is understood to include the services of both the husband and wife. Caste works differently among men and women. i.e., men and women in the same class often have a differential access to forms of social privilege, to wages and to the means of production.

Both the primary sources and secondary sources regarding North Malabar have shown that women in North Malabar worked continuously for hours and their labour formed the backbone of this society. It also shows that certain determinants like caste, class kinship had an important role in determining their labour status. Besides, these determinants place certain rules and obligations on their labour. Thus the centrality of women's labour in North Malabar questions the existing notions about women's labour. Here, both the landless and landowning women had equal participation in the household labour and field labour. This equal participation of women labourers was not the same everywhere. Thus the women labourers in North Malabar remained as a different category. This was due to the peculiar kinship system that existed in that area which we already discussed.

But the centrality of women's labour gradually began to change with

the emergence of colonial rule. The colonial rule affected the whole village social structure. In the place of old village assemblies, new administrative systems emerged. The work of local administration was performed in urban areas by district municipalities or the corporations. In rural areas, it was performed by district boards and Panchayats³⁶. Besides these the property rights over the lands which were earlier vested with the hands of *janmi's* were replaced by the rights decided by the British legal code.

The settlement register was the foundation on which the whole revenue administration rested. It formed a complete domesday book regarding accurate information regarding every separate holding, large or small. From the register a ledger known as the *chitta* is prepared which gives each ryot's personal account within the government. Every field or fraction of a field held by the same ryot is picked out from the settlement register, and entered in this ledger under his name with particulars of the area, assessment and other details³⁷. Besides these every thirty years, the valuation of the states share of the produce of the land is re-examined. This process was known as resettlement.

Due to the above conditions, certain new developments had been created. i.e., a) The direct producers were increasingly deprived of their

³⁶ *Hand book of Information on the Administration of the Presidency of Madras*, Government Press, 1939, p.145.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 244.

share of the total yield and in many cases the rent ate into their subsistence. This set in process the deterioration of the conditions of the peasantry. b) The surplus thus appropriated forms the basis of a struggle for rent between two sections of the rent-receivers in a situation where new capitalist relations were penetrating the economy. This contradiction resulted in the *janmi* using his legal powers to extract as much renewal fees from the *kanakkaran* as possible and resorting to precapitalist oppression along with the new-fangled legal process. c) The vast masses of the peasantry were increasingly impoverished and *kanakkars* gained at the expense of the old debilitated landlordism. There emerged a new type of landlord who can be described as 'semi-feudal' from the ranks of *janmis* and big non-cultivating *kanakkars* who combined inadequately developed capitalist features with pre-dominant pre capitalist relations of production³⁸. But North Malabar experiences show that there existed no *kanakkaran* in this society instead their existed direct relation between the landlord and the labourers.

The growing commercialization of agriculture and the industrialisation process also led to the destruction of the traditional agrarian economy. In those days exchange of the major cash crops like pepper, ginger, coconut, cashewnuts, cardamon, arecanuts etc had existed. The economic depression which appear in 1929 and reached its climax in the

³⁸ Prakash Karat, 'Agrarian Relations in Malabar-1925 to 1948', Part I, *Social Scientist*, P. 34.

year 1932, according to many economists made agriculture a less paying occupation than it was before. It was at this period, the industrialists utilized the opportunity to the fullest and was able to get an unlimited supply of labour by offering rates which were slightly higher than the very low rates that they were getting in agriculture³⁹.

Regarding the industrialization process in Malabar, Prakash Karat came into two conclusions i.e., (1) The industries which developed in Malabar, were predominantly extractive, the majority being based on small-scale commodity production. There were no capital good industries (2) There was an extensive spread of cottage industries producing commodities for market, but these did not develop to the higher stage of factory industry⁴⁰.

It was the Basel Evangelical Mission who took initiative to establish industries in North Malabar. From 1837 onwards they had set up textiles industries in Malabar and their textiles industry at Cannanore was the important one⁴¹. The peculiar feature of industry in Malabar is that there existed all stages of industry side by side. The ordinary weaver with his handloom, a little advanced weaver with his loom fitted with flying shuttle, the well organized handloom factories and the power loom factories⁴². Along

³⁹ Madras Labour, July 1937-October 1938, Government of Madras, 1938, p. 104.

⁴⁰ Prakash Karat, *Agrarian Relation...Part II, Op. Cit.*, p.40

⁴¹ R. Prakasam, *Keralathile Trade Union Prasthanathinte Charithram*, Prabath Publication, Trivandrum, 1979.

⁴² Prakash Karat, *Op. Cit.*, p.41.

with textiles, the mission had also set up tiles industry. The first tiles company was started in 1874 at Puthiyara near Kozhikode⁴³.

Cashew was another industry that developed during this period, and the working conditions of Cashew labourers were deplorable. In this industry women had been working without necessary facilities and cleaning was done by low caste women⁴⁴. By 1920's the adjacent coastal towns of Cannanore and Tellichery in Malabar had developed into important beedi manufacturing centers. It became firmly established in North Malabar after the first world war when Muslim merchants utilized their trade connections to start exporting beedis to Ceylon and later to Burma. The reports show that the wage of women beedi labourers in Kerala was comparatively high, which might be due to influence the strong trade unions.

The All India Agro-Industrial Exhibition, that was held at Cannanore in 1907 was enough proof of the Industrial mobilization in Malabar⁴⁵. The commercialization of agriculture led to the development of agro-processing industries, the most important being the coconut industries. These included toddy tapping, copra making, oil pressing and coir processing. The coir industry rapidly became a major non-agricultural occupation became a major non-agricultural occupation along the coast. With the emergence of

⁴³ R. Prakasam, *Keralathile... Op. Cit.*, p.9.

⁴⁴ K.P. Kannan, *Of Rural Proletarian Struggles*, OUP, Madras, 1988, p.88.

⁴⁵ C. Samuel Aaron, *Jeevitha Smaranakal*, Desamithram Publishers, Cannanore, 1974, p.32.

coir weaving factories, household based workers in coir processing who were engaged in the retting de-fibring and spinning coir yarn shift to factor based weaving which produces coir mats and mattings. A major chunk of those working in this sector were women and children. The major coir industries in North Malabar are concentrated on Badagara, Quilandy, etc.

Until the process of industrialization, most of the labour processes were used to be done by the women labourers in conjunction with household task and agricultural tasks. In those days most of the agricultural activities like harvesting, carrying harvesting paddy, threshing, winnowing, parboiling paddy, drying paddy, hand pounding of rice etc were used to be the exclusive, preserve of female labour. But now that complementary task was completely wiped out. That type of labour was clearly undergoing transformation.

The industrial process seems to have adversely affected the position of women in different ways. In North Malabar, with the growth of industrialization, the domestic mode of production based on *Kudi* was transformed into nuclear families in which household units are separated from labour place. Thus the pre-capitalist family is to be replaced by nuclear family in which women had to shoulder the responsibility of children. In the pre-capitalist society, child rearing was a collective task performed by all the members of the society, especially old people and the siblings looked after them. As a result of nuclear family now the children were in school and

women were responsible for educating the children and providing them other facilities. Nuclearisation confined women to the domestic domain. They were knocked out of the labour market and lost their economic independence. Studies prove that capitalist production and exchange have caused a decrease in women's labour. With the emergence of modern technologies, many manual operations were taken by the machines. Previously women had combined weaving, beedi making, coir making etc with other agricultural labour. But now they were brought under factory in which they became wage labourers. Like wise, rice husking was one of the important labour of women which require heavy labour and provided labour to so many women. But the introduction of ricemill posed a severe blow to them. There were only two choices before them, either to remain agricultural labourers or as industrial labourers.

Slowly capitalism also limited women's mobility. Earlier they were actively involved in market transactions. It was they who acted as the main transactors who sold goods like jaggery, pottery, mat, fish, oil, etc. In the neighbouring villages and also in daily/weekly markets. Some evidences regarding market systems are available in the form of letters in the archival records. The extracts from some letters are given below;

In a letter, a merchant from Mukkalibazar requested to the Malabar district board president to extent the area of Mukkali fish market and also about the necessity to open one vegetable market in Mukkali because of over

crowding in the existing market... This letter further states that in between 3 pm to 7pm, about 500 persons including men and women were gathering in that small area... In this market, articles like coconut, arecanut, tapioca, jaggery, muram, pottery, coir, basket etc were transacted⁴⁶.

Another letter states about the opening of a regulated market at Perambra market for coconut and arecanuts... In this letter there is also reference about Uralungal market at Kunnummakara Panchayat⁴⁷.

Likewise, a letter states that, weekly markets has inter village and even inter taluk importance and agricultural products are brought to the market from far away place...⁴⁸.

The above letters sites that both men and women were active in market transactions. Besides that, inter village and inter taluk markets existed in which produce from far away places were transacted. During that period, these market places also fulfilled a variety of non-economic functions, as centres of inter village contact, information, gossip, sociability etc. Slowly women were excluded from to this type of meeting and exchange

⁴⁶ Public Market, Daily Market at Chombala, Malabar district opening, p.p. 2,76, Calicut Regional Archives, bundle No. 73, 10045, 23.5.40.

⁴⁷ Perambra Market, Opening of a regulated market by the market committee regarding letter No. 74169/55 dated 27.11.1955, Calicut Regional Archives, bundle No. 21060/56, 4.5.56.

⁴⁸ Daily/weekly market, Feroke Panchayath, Malabar District. Transfer of the control of the market to the Panchayath, Letter No. 17911/56 dated 4.5.56, Calicut Regional Archives, bundle No. 27729156, 17.9.57.

centers. In *Capital*, Marx had described the market system in which all modes of production re intervene in the circulation network. For example, both the mill made clothes and hand made clothes circulated in the market.

In the capitalist society, because of their double burden of domestic activities and bread winning women became backward in their skills and men were given more labour opportunities like the operation of machineries. They entered the labour force as a result of poverty and the consequent struggle for survival. And most of the capitalist industries were utilizing womens cheap labour. Thus when the character of women's labour was changed, they were standing in a vulnerable position. The nature of the exploitation itself changed and the exploitation against them varied according to the hours of labour, condition of labour and wages and even in the form of sexual exploitation by the factory holders.

Besides this, certain patriarchal norms such as physical weakness of women for manual labour got reinforced during this period. But we can see that most of the labour that they were performed hard and tedious. The division of labour and wage had been strengthened because of the reason that the power was vested in the hands of men. Thus the existence of women labourers became crippled and as a result they were marginalized and they did not attain leadership.

The degradation of women's labour can be seen in this transition period. It further led to intense feelings of opposition between one's private

life and public life. And this forms the basis for a series of powerful ideological structures. Later, this isolation of the units of domestic labour appears to be a natural separation of women from men as well and resulted in conflicts between men and women in private life. The newly emerging industrial classes and the stages had affected the society. Because of this, the period witnessed the emergence of various movements. When the exploitation increased, the agricultural labourers and industrial labourers became organized. Unions were developed among the industrial labourers during 1930's. This period also witnessed many general strikes. Since most of the industrial labourers belong to agricultural family, there existed deep co-operation between agricultural labourers and industrial labourers. This can be seen in the December 6, 1937 Beedi Unions Strike⁴⁹. In this general strike, peasants from villages carried bananas, jack fruits, mangoes and so on for the striking workers. Like wise strong movements was developed among agricultural labourers under *Karshaka Sanghams*.

When the emerging situation had questioned their earlier labour privileges, women labourers also participated in all this struggles. Their participation in this agitation showed that they formed an important part of the social labour process. Under this situation, the participation of women labourers in agrarian struggles is an important aspect.

⁴⁹ A.V. Anilkumar, 'C', Chintha Publishers, Trivandrum, 2002, p. 37.

Chapter V

ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRARIAN STRUGGLES AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The experiences of North Malabar show that it was the active involvement in the production process that had brought the women into the struggle. Similiar view has been adopted by Tanika Sarkar. She states that women, who were not involved in the production process, stayed out of class struggle. Thus there seems to be then a definite equivalence between the potential for politicization and a direct involvement with the production process¹. Regarding the tribal women in North Bengal, Renu Chakravarthi states that they were active earning members as well as important political agitators².

The main object of this chapter is to analyse why so many women had participated in the struggle. First, the British administrative policies and their new revenue demands and the depression that occurred due to the world war created a crisis of subsistence. This subsistence problem had led them into the struggle. Even though some crisis had emerged in the pre-capitalist economy, the peculiar village social relations and the *taras* that

¹ Tanika Sarkar, 'Politics and Women in Bengal-the conditions and meaning of participation' in J. Krishnamurthy (ed.), *Women in Colonial India: Essay on Survival, Work and the State*, OUP, Delhi, 1989, p.236.

² Renu Chakravarthi, *Communists in Indian Women's Movement*, PPH, New Delhi, 1980.

existed in the village community had helped them to overcome the crisis. But the newly emerging situation, the only way before them to overcome the crisis was to take part in the struggle. Secondly, with the emergence of capitalism, the village production relations had come under money nexus and the concept of wage labour had been strengthened. Under this situation most of them went for outside labour and naturally this had led to the degradation of the *kudi* based economy. Thus the question of the break-up of *kudis* had made the women labourers to participate in the struggle.

It is an interesting fact that it was only after the formation of *Malabar Karshaka Sangham*, an *All India Karshaka Sangham* was organized at Lucknow in 1936. In those days the *Karshaka Sangham* had developed as a protest against *janmis* exploitation. And it had taught the peasants that they have to struggle against landlordism on the one side and imperialism on the other. Neeleswaram Raja, Kurumathoor Namboodiri, Karumarat Namboodiri, Kalliat *Yagamanan*, Karakkattidam Nayanar, Koodali Nambiar, Vengayil Nayanar etc are some of the important *janmis* in North Malabar in which the *Karshaka Sangham* had raised their voice. Since for centuries the peasants had suffered insult and injuries at the hand of the landlords, the organizational work among the tenants was a difficult task for *Karshaka Sangham*. Besides this the conditions of serfdom and caste practices had enforced restrictions on them. There were references to numerous methods of torture by the landlords for extracting rents from the tenants. Andalat and K. Madhavan

has given ample examples in their work³.

With the organization of *Karshaka Sangham*, the struggle against the landlordism had strengthened. The first regular unit of the *Karshaka Sangham* in North Malabar was founded at Karivelloor on September 1934⁴. Similar units of *Karshaka Sangham* were organized at several villages of Malabar. On 1935 July, the Kolacheri *Karshaka Sangham* was organized at Naniyur in Vishnu Bharateeyan's house, with Vishnu Bharateeyan as president and Keraleeyan as Secretary⁵. The newly formed Kolacheri *Sangham* had raised its voice against Karumarat Illathu Namboodiri. After this the *Sangham* expanded its activities. The organization of the All India Kisan Sabha in April 11, 1936 by the congress socialists and communists with Swami Sahajananda Saraswathi as president and N.G. Ranga as secretary had greatly inspired the Malabar peasantry.

The hunger *jatha* organized by the leftists and *Karshaka Sangham*⁶. In Malabar had conducted a march from Malabar to Madras and presented a

³ Andalat, Rekhayillatha Charithram, (Mal) Chintha Publications, Trivandrum, 1987; K. Madhavan, Oru Gandhian Communistinte Ormakal, Creative Arts and Cultural Co-operative Society, Trivandrum 2002.

⁴ Along with this period i.e., 1934-35. One *Kera Karshaka Sangham* was organized in Travancore, with Changanassery Parameswara Pillai and M.N. Govindan Nair as president and secretary respectively.

⁵ V.M. Vishnu Bharateeyan, *Adimakallengane Udamakalayi*; Prabath Publications, Trivandrum, 1980, p.80; Personal Interview with Pavor Kunjiraman, Peralam, on 26. 9.02.

⁶ A.K. Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha*, Chintha, Trivandrum, 1999, p.93.

memorandum to the government regarding the poverty of the people. A pamphlet titled *pattinijatha* was distributed among the people⁷. Eventhough the government did not accept the memorandum, the march through the villages aroused a spirit of co-operation and joint action among the peasants and workers for their common cause. On their way the *jatha* was received by the people from different parts. In order to receive the *jatha*, special meetings were conducted throughout Malabar. In the meeting, the leaders reminded them about the necessity of an organization. One of the meetings that was held at Westhill in Calicut was presided over by Dr. Chandu. In that meeting, Chandroth Kunjiraman addressed the women and talked to them about the necessity of an organization. In the same meeting, one student called N.K. Sunitha, bought the *jatha* pamphlet by auction. Besides, Smt. Kunjikkavamma sent a message to the participants of the *jatha* and sent one 'para' paddy for them⁸. So the involvement and attitude of women towards the *jathas* and meetings shows that they were very much involved in the existing situation.

During the earlier period itself, the women were active participants in the struggle against untouchability and unapproachability and were active in the civil disobedience movement. They were active participants in the *Karshaka Sangham*. Interdinings were conducted in various villages. M.K. Parvathi remembers one such interdining that was conducted at

⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, June 30, 1936.

⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, July 10, 1936.

Puthiyavayal near Kutoor. She and C.P. Kunjatha participated in the procession conducted by the *Karshaka Sangham* against the *janmis*⁹.

In order to expand *Karshaka Sangham* activities in Chirakkal taluk a conference was held at Parassinikadavu on First November, 1936 with A.K. Pillai as the president and this was one of the turning points of the *Karshaka Sangham* Malabar. In order to brake the barriers of caste, interdinning was also conducted along with this conference. Later the *Karshaka Sangham* had extended its activities at other taluks like Kottayam, Kurumbranad and Valluvanad.

The *All Malabar Karshaka Sangham* was organized in 1937 in Calicut with P. Narayanan Nair as president and K.A. Keraleeyan as secretary. Later the activities of the *Sangham* was shifted to Kalliasseri. After that the *Sangham* intensified its activities by leading *jathas* to the respective areas and presenting grievances and demands of the peasants before the *janmis*. The *Mathrubhumi* news cites that women were also active in conducting meetings and *jathas*¹⁰. Along with this period so many eviction had taken place and the eviction of Kidaran Chandu by the Alakkad Manipuzha Namboodiri was one of the evictions in Chirakkal Taluk.

The second *All Malabar Karshaka Sangham* was organized at Chevayoor, Calicut on December 18, 1938 and *jathas* from different parts

⁹ Personal Interview with M.K. Parvathi Kotoor, on 19.3.03.

¹⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, September 22, 1934.

united at Calicut¹¹. When the peasants began to press for their demands, the Revenue Minister T. Prakasam visited all over Malabar and had demanded for the Malabar Tenancy Committee. When the *Karshaka Sangham* was extending its activities, the government took repressive actions against the *Karshaka Sangham* and charged several petty cases against the activists. Wherever the *Karshaka Sangham* organized its meetings and conferences, a women conference was also organized under its purview. In the peasant women's conference that was held at Blathur on 17, January 1939, which was presided over by Ondan Thayamma, about five hundred women participated. On January 18, a peasant conference was held at Blathur and was presided by N.G. Ranga¹². In another conference which was held at Blathur on May, 1940 a separate women's conference was held¹³. All these conferences show that from the very beginning itself, special conferences were conducted for women, which is a very clear indication of the fact that, from the very inception of the *Karshaka Sangham* women were also actively involved along with men in all its activities.

The second World War had led thousands of men and women into politics. The pro-war attitude of colonial Government had resulted in the resignation of congress ministry. And most of the congress leaders were arrested. The World War created the possible situation of starvation. At this

¹¹ *Prabhatham*, December 19, 1938.

¹² *Mathrubhumi*, January 20, 1939.

¹³ *Mathrubhumi*, May 5, 1940.

time the *janmis* exploitation increased. The *janmis* hoarded the food grains and decreased the ratio of grain that was given to the peasants as wages. During the war period the activities of *Karshaka Sangham* increased and it turned into militant organization. *Sangham* had conducted *jathas* in different parts and women's active involvement can be seen in this *jathas*. And in many places police had interfered in the meetings and *jathas*. And on December 1939 the Kerala Communist Party was organized at Pinarayi¹⁴. The Communist Party had mobilized the people and had brought peasant organizations and trade unions together for a united action.

When the World War crisis worsened the situation, the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC)¹⁵ decided to observe 1940 September 15 as anti-repression day or protest day¹⁶. For this purpose meetings were held at different places like Tellichery, Mattanur, Morazha, Pappinisseri Calicut etc. But the police had interfered in the meetings and in Tellichery two labourers named Abu and Chathukutty were killed. And at Morazha a Sub-Inspector was killed. Following this the *Karshaka Sangham* and KPCC was banned. And all of them went for underground activities.

North Malabar incidents prove that women were active in all the activities. The leaders took special interest in mobilizing women. K. Devayani remembers one incident in which P. Krishnapillai, asked her to

¹⁴ K.K.N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot*, Sandhya Publications, Calicut, 1978, P.16.

¹⁵ Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee had formed in 1920.

¹⁶ K.K.N. Kurup. *The Kayyur...*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 41.

take up the issues of women and to organize them¹⁷. Besides these the male members of the *Sangham* also sent their wives and sisters to political classes under the assumption that if women were trained and sent out among the villages it would be useful for the party¹⁸. In the study classes they talked about the existing situations like war, food crisis, *janmis* exploitation etc. Most of the study classes were centered around village libraries and these village libraries played an important role in creating public opinion and spreading political ideas. In those days the state had burned the libraries in so many instances. This shows the importance of libraries. Navajeevan library at Eranjoli, Sri. Harshan Library at Kalliasseri, Velam at Mayyil etc are some of the libraries¹⁹.

In those days *punam* cultivation was the main source of livelihood of the tenants and when the relation between the *janmis* and tenants worsened the *janmis* stopped it. At this juncture the *Karshaka Sangham* interfered in it and organized the people. In 1941, the tenants in Kurumbranad taluks like Perambra, Balussery, Kuthali, etc and on 1947 February 22, the tenants of Karakkatidam Nayanars in Ellaranji with the help of *Sangham* over powered

¹⁷ K. Devayani, 'Ente Rashtriyacharyan', in C. Bhaskaran (ed.), *Keralathile Communist Prasthanathile Adyapathikan* (Mal), Chintha Publishers, Trivandrum, 1998, p.76.

¹⁸ Vasantha Kannabiran and K. Lalitha, 'That Magic Time: Women in the Telangana People's Struggle' in Kum Kum Sangaria and Sudesh Vaid (eds), *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History, Kali for Women*, New Delhi, p.186.

¹⁹ Personal Interview with Nellikka Atchuthan, librarian, Navajeevan Library, Eranjoli on 14.2.03 and with U. Kunjappa, Mayyil 21.9.02.

the *punam* cultivation. Following this, the Karakkatidam *janmis* destroyed the schools in Ellaranji and Blathur²⁰.

The World War crisis had created the problem of food scarcity and it led to epidemics like cholera, typhoid etc. A lot of people died due to these epidemics. To overcome this situation, the *Karshaka Sangham* trained volunteers including women. Folk arts were initiated against hoarding etc. Mahila organizations played an important role in this. A lot of references about *Mahila Sangham* had been received. During that period there existed different *Mahila* organizations like *Desasevika Sangham*, *Bharatha Mahila Sangham*, *All Malabar Mahila Sangham*, *Kerala Mahila Sangham* etc. The reference of new nine members working committee including Mrs. Saradhakrishnan, Devakipallam, V.P. Devaki, P.C. Karthiyayanikutty, P. Yasodha, Mrs. K.N. Krishnan, Mrs. Battathiripad, Mrs. Kayar Narayanan has been given in *Mathrubhumi*. The main motive of this working committee was to organize an *All Malabar Mahila Sangham*²¹. The activities of *Mahila Sangham* varies regionally. During the World War period, when there emerged food deficiency, they took initiative to distribute food and medicine. They also worked against untouchability and unapproachability and had conducted signature campaign and collected funds for *Karshaka Sangham*.

²⁰ Personal Interview with M.P. Narayanan Nambiar, Mangad, 15.11.02.

²¹ *Mathrubhumi*, June 20, 1940.

The *Karshaka Sangham* had special interest in conducting cultural programmes they had performed several art forms like *thira*, *theyyam*, *drama*, *kurathipattu*, *thacholikkali*, *kaikottikkali*, *kummi*, *kolkkali*, *poorakkali* etc. These were either conducted as a part of fund raising programmes or to make the people aware of the existing situation. Most of these programmes, were conducted as a part of festivals or *melas*. K. Janaki, P. Nani, Edoth Janaki, etc were some of them who had actively involved in the cultural programme. From 1942 onwards, the *Kerala Mahila Sangham* began to change into a communist organization. This was revealed from a resignation letter given by E. Ammukuttyamma²². The *All Malabar Mahila Sangham* had worked along with *Karshaka Sangham* and actively participated in the *Karshaka Sangham* conferences and were had previously trained them for that purposes. In those days it was through pamphlets and newspapers like *Desabhimani* that the *Sangham* spread its ideas. In order to raise its fund, the *Deshabhimani* had conducted *melas*²³ all over and they had received good response from the labourers. Most of them had contributed in kind. One of the striking contribution was Palora Matha's²⁴ contribution of her only calf. She belongs to Peravur and later she also worked along with A.K. Gopalan

²² *Mathrubhumi*, December 5, 1942.

²³ Personal Interview with Koliyadan Kunjikkrisshanan Nair, Nandavanam, on 26.3.03.

²⁴ Personal Interview with P. Krishnan Chirakkuni, on 14.2.03.

in the fund raising programme. Cheriyanamma²⁵ from Kavumbayi, Ponnammada Chemmaruthi from Puliyanoor, Erikkulam Kaarichi, Komathupoyil Manikam from Mokeri had also worked in the *Deshabhimani* fund raising programme²⁶. A *mela* was also organized at Karivelloor which can be discussed later.

Thacholikkali was another important folk art which was widely used in Badagara, Onchiyam areas.²⁷ *Poorakali* was widely spread in Chirakkal Taluk. The main centre of *poorakkali* was Parassinikkadavu, here a political *Poorakali* troop was organized. In Parassinikkadavu A. K. Kuttiyappa was the *poorakali* Panikkar and C. Koran master was the composer of *poorakali* songs. This troop had toured in various parts and had performed the art at Bombay party conference. Along with this troop the women also accompanied. Chandroth Yasodha the sister of Koran Master, Kannothe Karthiyayani, Kannothe Lakshmi, Comrade Nani etc. were some among them. *Poorakkali* was enough to raise voice against *janmis* exploitation²⁸

Kattakalathilekethikkunnu,

Athilpatteedum nellumedichidunnu,

Mediyunakki, podi kalanju

²⁵ Personal Interview with E.K. Narayanan Nambiar, Kavumbayil, on 11.2.03.

²⁶ Personal Interview with K.P. Balan, Mokeri, 14.8.02.

²⁷ Personal Interview with Kumaran, Onchiyam on 10.8.02.

²⁸ Personal Interview with C. V. Krishnan, Appakkutty Koliyatt Valappil, Chandroth Yasodha, Parassinikkadavu, on 18.11.02.

Janmikku varamalakkuvanai
Anthakarmikkupavasicheeduvanai
Pakaliravum, dinampakalum paniyeduthu,
Prathiphalamam potta kinaram
Paravazhiyai janmimar thattiyeduthidunnu

The lines say that the tenants did hard labour day and night, but the fruits of the labour were denied to them. They were cheated using fake measuring devices.

P.M. Madhavi (Karinchi) was one of the founding members of the Parassinikadavu *Mahila Sangham*. She became the participant of the Kozhikode communist party conference that was held in 1943 and besides this she had also participated in several *Karshaka Sanagam* conferences. She was one of the main supporters of the *Karshaka Sangham* in Parassinikadavu²⁹. Chandroth Madhavi (Paidal) was another *Mahila Sangham* worker in Parassinikkadavu. She worked along with P. Yasodha, C.V. Krishnan and others. In connection with the *Karshaka Sangham* conferences and also as a part of fund raising programmes they had collected coconut, *pidiyari* (a fistful of rice) from different houses. In most cases *pidiyari* was collected in weekends. This collection did help them to keep contact with the women in different areas and make them aware of the existing political

²⁹ Personal Interview with K. Janaki, Bakkalam, on 10.2.03; *Pinarayi-Parappuram...*
Op.Cit., p.220.

situations³⁰.

P. Yasodha was the founding members of the Keecheri *Mahila Sangham* that was organized in 1937 and she become a teacher at the age of fifteen and was one of the first teacher of Kalliasseri South L.P. School. She was an active communist party worker and acted as the local correspondent of the *Deshabhimani* daily³¹. As a correspondent she had made direct contact with different people. She visited many areas of agrarian struggles like Kayyur, Kandakkai, Punnappra-Vayalar etc and clearly depicts her experiences in her editorial column in a different angle. As a correspondent, a striking event in her life was her visit and interaction with the four Kayyur comrades who where sentenced to death after Kayyur incident³². These four comrades regretted that the women had no freedom and they asked the women to come forward. They added that before their death, they were very happy to know the fact that Kerala women also came forward for struggle³³. But the interesting fact is that, although this statement of Kayyur comrades, reported by Yasodha, is quoted by many prominent Kerala historians, they

³⁰ Personal Interview with Chandroth Madhavi, Parassinikkadavu, on 18.11.02; K. Janaki Bakkalam on 10.2.03.

³¹ Personal Interview with P. Yasodha Kalyasseri on 2001.

³² These comrades were sentenced for having joined a riot in the Kayyur village on the occasion of an anti-imperialist procession on 28th March 1941 in which a policeman was killed. Later they were hanged on 29th March 1943 at the Kannur Jail.

³³ *Deshabhimani*, April 11, 1943.

never mentioned the identify of the reporter. Because of her active work she was attacked by the local *gundas* at her residence. After this attack she was doing clandestine work for three years. While she was hiding herself, her name was Devaki and during this period she made wide contacts with many prominent party leaders. On 1952 under the initiative of the party Yasodha married Kanthalat Kunjambu, who was her fellow comrade and they had no issues. She traveled widely in different parts and had attended several national conferences.

A *Mahila Sangham* was organized at Mokeri, Calicut under the leadership of V.P. Ammalu. She was the local correspondent in that area. During that period, under the leadership of Komattupoyil Manikkamma and Kotta Achama a *Mahila Sangham* was organized at Komattupoyil³⁴. In those days, the *Mahila Sangham* focused on major women issues like education, employment etc.

From 1942 onwards K. Janaki from Bakkalam became the active *Mahila Sangham* worker in Bakkalam-Morazha area and also became a teacher. She spread the ideas of *Karshaka Sangham* along with P. Yasodha and had supplied party pamphlets in fairs and festivals. She had performed several dramas as a part of the cultural programmes organized on different fund raising programme. She had married Kottayadan Raghavan an active *Sangham* worker³⁵. Likewise, P. Nani from Morazha also worked along with

³⁴ Personal Interview with K.P. Balan, Mokeri, on 14.8.02.

³⁵ Personal Interview with K. Janaki, Bakkalam, on 10.2.03

K. Janaki, P. Devaki, G. Janaki etc, Nani belonged to an agricultural labour class and she came forward through the *Bala Sangham*. She was one of the earliest teachers in Morazha, who had lead the cultural programmes of the *Desabhimani* fund raising procession. As a part of it she had conducted a female drama. Most of the these dramas depicted the exploitation of the *janmis* and in those days it was unthinkable for women to act in dramas. But these women came forward and enlightened others. She actively participated in preparing and supplying the printed matters and later married C.H. Narayanan Nambiar, a fellow comrade belonging to upper class. Thus through intercaste marriage they were fighting against existing customs³⁶. In Taliparambu farka, Edoth Janaki had played a major role in organizing *Mahila Sangham*. During the Japanese invasion period, several *Japvirudha mela* was organized and at that instance Edoth Janaki, along with T. Janaki had organized the women in that area and had created opinions against the invaders of Japan. She has acted the secretary of Chirakkal Taluk *Mahila Sangham*³⁷.

Likewise, N.K. Nandini was *Mahila Sangham* worker in Chovva and had acted as the worker of Vanitha Industrial association³⁸. K.T. Janaki from Manjodi was yet another *Mahila Sangham* worker. She had participated in different state conferences that was conducted in different places like

³⁶ Personal Interview with P. Nani, Morazha, on 10.2.03.

³⁷ Personal Interview with Edoth Janaki, on 15.3.03.

³⁸ Personal Interview with N.K. Nandini, Puduppadi, 1.3.03.

Kannur, Palghat, Tellichery etc. during the period of 1952 she played her role as the district board member. She was a needle work teacher and had worked with P. Yasodha and conducted needle work class for women at Mahe. And also participated in the signature campaign following the KPR Gopalan's Punishment³⁹.

A.V. Janaki from Peralam near Karivelloor had also worked along with P. Yasodha and had attended *Karshaka Sangham* conferences held at Kottayam. She had worked along with Thankamma Krishna Pillai, Kalyaniamma, P.C. Karthiyayanikutty etc. And also supplied printed matters⁴⁰ Kadingiyil Narayani was one of the active *Mahila Sangham* workers belonging to a *janmi* family in Karivelloor. Important political leaders became regular visitors of her house and their political dialogues and political work stirred her consciousness⁴¹.

P.C. Karthiyayanikutty had been one of the active *Mahila Sangham* leaders and she belonged to a *janmi* family and came forward under the inspiration of her husband T.S. Tirumumbu, who was a famous *Karshaka Sangham* leader. She became the participant of the famous Kodakkat *Karshaka Sangham* conference and had participated in the interdinings. She had widely inspired women in different villages through her speeches at a period

³⁹ Personal Interview with K.T. Janaki, Manjodi, 14.2.03.

⁴⁰ Personal Interview with A.V. Janaki, Peralam, on 26.9.02.

⁴¹ Personal Interview with Kadingiyil Narayani, Karivelloor, on 5.4.03.

when it was unthinkable for women to speak at a public platform. In the Cheemeni *Tholvirakusamaram*, even though she does not participate under the *Mahila Sangham*, she played an important role in organizing women⁴². C. Lakshmikutty⁴³ was one of the important organizers of Teacher's Union and worked along with Achayi teacher. Her husband T.C. Narayanan Nambiar was the president of Chirakkal Taluk Teacher's Union. Along with Thankamma Krishnapilla, K. Devayani, Priyadutta and so on, she had participated in the Kozhikode Commune. The main centre of the *Mahila Sangham* in Kozhikode was the house of advocate Tharammal Krishnan. K.O. Ambujakshi⁴⁴ from Vesala, M.K. Parvathi and C.P. Kunjatha from Eramam, K. Saradha and Thondikkot Janaki from Chirakkuni⁴⁵, Chemmaruthi from Kayoor etc are some of the other *Mahila Sangham* workers.

The problem of food crisis had demanded the *Karshaka Sangham* to initiate new techniques of struggle. And *vithittavan vilakoyyum* was their main slogan during this period. When the tenants were not allowed to reap their crops, the *Karshaka Sangham* had harvested the paddy and had taken the reaped crop to the tenants house. In the paddy harvesting struggles known as *vilakoittu samaram* a large number of women had participated directly. Besides paddy, they also cut grass from the fields called grass

⁴² Personal Interview with P.C. Karthiyayanikutty, Pilikkode, on 5.4.04.

⁴³ Personal Interview with C. Lakshmikutty, Kolacheri, on 20.11.02.

⁴⁴ Personal Interview with K.O. Ambujakshi, Vesala, on 19.11.02.

⁴⁵ Personal Interview with P. Krishnan, Chirakkuni, on 14.02.03.

cutting or *pullupari samaram*. In the *nelledukkal samarams* wide participation of women could be seen. The *nelledukkal samaram* often ended in clashes with the police. The Palayi, Udinoor, Madikkai, Basmayithar, Puliyanoor etc. were the important harvesting struggle in which the *Karshaka Sangham* put forth their slogan *vitthittavan vilakoyyum*. Most of the struggle had taken place when the *janmis* of that area did not allow the tenants to reap crops.

One such harvest had take place in Palayi, a place near Kayyur. A major portion of land in Palayi was under Neeleswaram Raja. On February 1941, the *Karshaka Sangham* members in Palayi had harvested the crop of Tandalat Ambadi and Kovval Ambadi, when the *janmi* Ayala Valappil Kunjkrishnan Nambiar did not allow them to harvest the crop⁴⁶. Kunjamma, one of the participants of the struggle remembers that along with the men, women like Karippiyamma and others also participated in the harvest⁴⁷. Following this the *janmi* had filed a petition against the *Karshaka Sangham*. Similar type of struggles had taken place in Udinoor⁴⁸. It was a place near Kanjangad and in the Udinoor harvest of September, 3, 1942, the *Karshaka Sangham* had harvested Vengalat Kunjambu Nairs field. Kizhakool Lakshmi,

⁴⁶ Andalat, *Rekhyillatha... Op. Cit.*, p. 110; K. Madhavan, *Oru Gandhiyan ... Op. Cit.*, p.128, 129.

⁴⁷ Personal Interview with Kunjamma, Madathil Kottan, Thandaalat Kannan, Palayi, on 3.4.03.

⁴⁸ For more reference about Udinoor see Kannikoithu, Udinoor Vilakoithu Samaram, 60th Annual Smaranika; Andalat, *Rekhyillatha... Op. Cit.*, p. 124.

tells that on the previous night itself all the members of the *Karshaka Sangham* in the nearby places gathered at the Thadiyan Kovval L.P. School. She further tells that it was the women who took initiative to collect sickles from neighbouring areas and hoarded the sickles in the paddy field⁴⁹. According to Kolavalappil Parvathi⁵⁰, another participant tells that after harvesting they had reaped the crop and threshed it and brought to their own homes⁵¹.

In the Puliyanoor harvesting struggle of 1944, about hundred women participated. This was one of the harvests in which large number of women participated⁵². According to Meethale Purayil Kunjatha, one of the participants of the struggle, leaders like Subrahmania Tirumumbu, M.G. Kammat, A.V. Kunjambu, V.V. Kunjambu, K.A. Keraleeyan etc had visited their village and stayed in Kovval Gopalan's house. These leaders inspired them to start struggle against the *janmis*. During that period, most of the land in that area was under the Thazhakat Devaswam. She further tells us that while they were harvesting the paddy, the police at first tried to stop them. But when the peasant women stood firmly, the police retreated. After the harvest the police arrested thirteen male members including her brother

⁴⁹ Personal Interview with Kizhakool Lakshmi, Udinoor, on 10. 4.04.

⁵⁰ Kizhakool Lakshmi, Thattakod Puravankara Ammaru, Kanichu Kulangara Uchira, Theke Vengalat Meenakshi etc are the other participants of this struggle.

⁵¹ Personal Interview with Kolavalappil Parvathi, Udinoor, on 10.4.04.

⁵² *Andalat, Rekhayillathe...Op. Cit., p. 122; Kannikoithu... Op. Cit., p. 29.*

Ambadi and put them in Jail for nine months⁵³.

In 1941 and in 1948 the tenants of Timiri harvested the crops⁵⁴. In the 1948 Timiri harvest, the women were brought before the court. Out of the twenty eight, eight of them were women. On 1948 Unniyadan Narayanan Nair, the Karanavar of Thazhakatmana and also the leader of *Karshaka Sangham* was imprisoned. Following his imprisonment only three female members were left in his *mana*. At that instance, the congress leader Unnikrishnatirumumbu tried to prevent them from harvesting their crop. Under this circumstance, Nangayikutty one of the members of the *mana* along with others⁵⁵ had harvested the crop even though the police interfered⁵⁶.

Kattacheri was a place near Karivelloor and on 1942 the *Karshaka Sangham* heard that one Koran Panikkar had forcibly harvested the crop of a

⁵³ Personal Interview with Meethale Kunjatha, Chandran, Puliyanloor, on 9.4.04.; Along with her Cherikkal Chemmaruthi, Cherikkal Kaarichi, Puthiyapurayil Cheriya, Kalakarante Manikam, C.V. Cheriya, C.V. Kunja, C.V. Kunjamma, Thazhathu Veetil Parvathi, Kunjipurayil Chettichi, T.V. Kunjanga, Padinjaravalappil Madhavi, Puthiyaveetil Madhavi, Vannathadichi Karichi etc had been reaped the crops.

⁵⁴ Andalat, *Rekhyallatha...Op. Cit.*, p. 112.

⁵⁵ Like Pochakadichi Uchira, Pandara Purayil Eruvadi, Manikam, Pothatti Umbichi, Palerikumba, Mekkara Meenakshi, Aatakkari Bhavani, Poduvatti Parvathi etc.

⁵⁶ Personal Interview with V. Kammaran, Sridevikuttyamma, P. Kunjambu, Timiri, on 5.4.04.

poor tenant Kaadakannan. Then the *Sangham* held a meeting and decided to reap the crop of Koran Panikkar. Thotoon Veetil Krishnan tells that people from nearby places gathered and harvested the crop and in the harvesting, along with them, women like V.V. Mani, V.V. Unnagamma and so on. had actively participated⁵⁷.

In the Eleri⁵⁸ harvest, a large number of women's participation can be seen. Valliyot Mani, one of the participants tells us that, on the previous night itself, a large number of women from distant places like Karyankode, Mayeecha etc had gathered at different houses in Eleri. And on the next day they reaped the crop of Veluthedan Kelu Nair and had taken the crop to their house⁵⁹. Podora Kunjambu tells us⁶⁰ the names of the other participants. Thazheveetil Kaarichi, one of the participants, went for the harvest with her three month child and kept her child near the field while they reaped⁶¹.

Grass cutting struggle or *pullupari samaram* was another type of

⁵⁷ Personal Interview, with Thotoonveetil Krishnan, Karivelloor, on 2.4.03.

⁵⁸ For more reference about Eleri see K. Madhavan, *Oru Gandhian ...Op. Cit.*, p. 196.

⁵⁹ Personal Interview, with Valliyot Mani, Katoor Parvathi, Chirutheyi, Thambayi, Edoloth Chiri, Churikad Cheriya on 7.4.03 to 8.4.03; Valliyotmani, Valliyot Paatti, Edoloth Chiri, Thottiyil Cheriya, Katoor Parvathi, Katoor Madhavi, Kuruvatee Mani, Kuruvatee Parvathi, Valliyot Cheriya, Valliyot Lakshmi, Tazheveetil Karichi etc were the participants.

⁶⁰ Personal Interview with Podora Kunjambu, Eleri, on 4.4.03.

⁶¹ Personal Interview with Thazheveetil Kaarichi, Eleri, on 7.4.03.

struggle in which women were actively involved. Kandakkai *pullupari samaram*, Peringome *pullupari samaram*, etc were some of them. During that period the tenants thatched the roof of their house by using particular grass that was thickly grown in barren lands. When the relation between the *janmis* and tenants worsened, the tenants were no longer allowed to cut those grass. It was the duty of women to collect those grass and naturally they took initiative to start the struggle. It shows that they participated in the struggle when the issues related to their direct livelihoods like paddy, manure, etc had been questioned. So they came forward in order to protest such injustice towards them.

The Peringome Vayakkara grass cutting struggle was conducted in 1946 November 23. According to Pilakoo Meenakshi and Pilakoo Chiri, the participants of this struggle, they had cut the grass from Echilampara. And along with them Maniyerilakshmi, Puthiyaveetil Lakshmi, Avarottinarayani, Kana Cheriya etc, had cut the grass from Echilampara⁶².

The Kandakkai grass cutting struggle of December, 19, 1946 was one of the important struggle. When E.P. Govindan Nambiar, the Assistant of Karakkatidam Nayanar had restricted the peasants from cutting grass, the peasants violated this by jointly cutting grass from Nambiars land. The women participants were Vayalprathu Kunjathi, Edavan parvathi, Maruthiyot Thambayi, Cheeyayi, M.V. Devaki, P.K. Kunjakkamma, Cheriya,

⁶² Personal Interview with Pilakoo Meenakshi and Pilakoo Chiri, Chandravayal on 27.3.03.

P.K. Lakshmi, Sridevi etc. The infuriated *janmi* filed a petition against them and the *MSP* brutally attacked the tenant's house, destroyed their property and injuring them. When the *janmis* agents molested their life and property, P.K. Kunjakkamma, a tenant women led a procession of women to the *janmis* house on January, 22, 1947. In their procession, they carried the destroyed pots and vessels. This procession was called *Kalamkettu*. By carrying the destroyed household articles, the women expressed their anger towards the *janmi*. According to Meenakshi, the daughter of one of the participants, on the next day, the *MSP* caught three women belonging to this group. They were taken to *janmi's* house and were asked them to remove the destroyed things but they refused. The infuriated *janmi* filed a petition against the peasants and along with men, they arrested Kunjakkamma on February 18, 1947⁶³.

The *Deshabhimani* daily of that period provides details regarding the sufferings of the people in Kandakkai, on which P. Yasodha⁶⁴ was the reporter. As a local correspondent she made direct contact with different people. She reported that, in the Kandakkai village, the *MSP* had brutally attacked the tenants and destroyed their and property. She had visited Kunjakamma, one of the leaders of the Kandakkai struggle, and fourteen

⁶³ Personal Interview with P. Mani, K.O. Narayani, E.V. Meenakshi, P.P Narayanan Nambiar, Kunjiraman, Kandakkai on 23.9.02.; *Kandakai Karshaka Samaram 50th Anniversary Smaranika*, p. 78.

⁶⁴ One of the founding member of the *Mahila Sangham* in Kalliasseri.

year old Kunjiraman⁶⁵. Kunjiraman, wrote and displayed a board that the MSP should not attack poor people⁶⁶. Thus through her reports Yasodha clearly depicts the courage of Kandakkai tenants.

Similar types of *kalamkettu* had taken place in Uduma in 1948. In Uduma when the MSP destroyed their property a 15 year old girl named Santha led a procession to the magistrate court along with Pullaikodi Chirutha and other twenty six women⁶⁷. When the MSP had destroyed their property, the women in Aalai under the leadership of Kunjammar led a procession to the congress president's house. In the Aalai *kalamkettu* along with Kunjammar, Chaappayil Linkamma, Vadakkekara Manikam, Kallinkeel Ammara, Karuvakkal Kunjatha, Aalai Vellachi, Cheriyoil, Vazhakkodacchi Kumba, etc⁶⁸.

Like the paddy harvesting struggle, women's participated in the paddy grabbing i.e., capturing paddy forcibly from *janmis* godowns or preventing the agents of the *janmis* from capturing paddy also. In the paddy grabbing struggle, the *Karshaka Sangham* grabbed paddy from *janmis* store houses or grabbed paddy while the *janmis* agents collected the rents. The *Karshaka Sangham* had grabbed paddy from different *janmis* like Kunnath

⁶⁵ *Deshabhimani*, September 7, 1947.

⁶⁶ Personal Interview with P.P. Kunjiraman, Kandakkai, 23.9.02.

⁶⁷ Andalat, *Op. Cit.*, p.167.

⁶⁸ V. Kuttiyan (ed.). *Nerippu, Madikkai Gramapanchayat*, Development Programme, 2004, p.138, and Personal interview with Panakool Veetil Ammaramma, V. Kotti, V.V. Kaarichi, Chappayil Ammu, Aalai, on 6.4.04.

Illam, Kanjirapalli Illam, Elaneer Madam from Kazarakode, Kundulayar from Pulloor, Kakkothayar from Madikkai, Karinthalam Raman, Kottayil Raman from Eleri.

On December, 20, 1946 this type of paddy procuring had taken place in Kuniyan, Karivelloor. When the women in Karivelloor heard about Kuniyan action, a group of them, V.V. Mani, V.V. Unnagamma, M.V. Parvathi, M.V. Kalyani, Aithale Veetil Lakshmi, K. Devayani etc rushed to the spot with their sickles but they were stopped by the men⁶⁹.

In Tillenkeri, when the Kottayam Rajas agents had taken the rented paddy to Koothuparamba, *Karshaka Sangham* members stopped the vehicle of the paddy and distributed it among the people following this struggle in 1948, a large number of men were arrested including old men. At this instance a group of old women labourers⁷⁰ had decided to stop the *MSP*⁷¹ van that containing the arrested persons. For this purpose they waited for the *MSP* vehicle in a particular junction. As soon as the group heard of the noise of the vehicle, they rushed to the spot. But the *MSP* heard of their plan

⁶⁹ Personal Interview with V.V. Manikkam, V.V. Sarojini, M.V. Kalyani and Thotton Veetil Krishnan, Karivelloor on 2.4.03; K. Devayani's *Chorayum Kaneerum Nananja Vazhikal*, Chintha Publications, Trivandrum, p.45.

⁷⁰Including Kallikalyani, Kadamberi Chappila, Narothu Cheerutti, Kelembeth Kunjimanikkam and Kelambeth Matha along with Narothu Kunji Kannan and others

⁷¹ During war years, the Malabar Special Police was largely occupied in guarding vulnerable points. Four companies of *MSP* continued to be on special duty throughout the year in North Malabar to combat communist activities.

and took precaution against this attempt⁷². Here, they were even ready for open clashes with police. A similar incident was cited in Telangana struggle. In Penukonda, two hundred peasant women stood together and chased the police out of village. In Appajipet, women encircled a police van, attacked the police with pestles and chilly powder and secured the release of their *Sangham* activists⁷³.

In Erikkulam, when the *Karshaka Sangham* marched to Uravil Kakkothayar's house to grab paddy, the frightened *janmi* permitted them. At the same time the *janmi* secretly transported the paddy to Neeleswaram. At this instance, including some women like Thalayat Korambi, Umbichi, Kunjammara Erikkulam Karichi, etc. had grabbed the paddy near Erikkulam rock⁷⁴.

Following the Kavumbayi paddy grabbing on December 30, 1946 the landlords let loose oppressive measures with the help of *MSP*. When their oppression increased, the tenants, including women conducted a procession in front of the Erikoor police station⁷⁵. Another reference about paddy grabbing can be seen in A.C. Kannan Nair's diary. He had watched a group of people including men, women and children armed with sticks had

⁷² Personal Interview with Narothe Kallu, Kelambeth Janaki and Madhavi, Velakki Cheerutti, Chalil Janaki, Kalli Kunjikannan, Karathan Janaki, Tillenkeri, on 25.4.03.

⁷³ Vasantha Kannabiran et.al., *That Magic...*, *Op.Cit*, p.188.

⁷⁴ Personal Interview with A.V. Atchuthan, Erikkulam, on 11.4.04.

⁷⁵ *Kavumbayi Smaranika*, *Op. Cit.*, p.81.

marched to the landlord named Kundalayar⁷⁶.

Thus throughout the villages the relation between the *janmi* and peasants became strained. The cordial relations that existed in the earlier period did not remain. The *janmi* imposed many restrictions upon them. He sent his agents to tenants and they punished the tenants even for minor things. Whenever the tenants questioned them, they hanged the bark of certain trees (*thol*) on tenants well or house. After putting *thol*, the tenants were not allowed to touch that thing⁷⁷. When the tenants went for another *janmis*, work the *janmis* did not permit him further work. Restriction was imposed even on the collection of firewood and fodder⁷⁸. Under such situations, the tenants began to resist. During that period a lot of women were involved in the collection of *thol* and this was one of their major sources of income⁷⁹. In the *Tholvirakusamaram*, that took place in Kasargod in 1946 November 15, hundreds of women had participated⁸⁰. This can be cited as one of the instances in which women labourers directly led an agitation. This struggle took place when the women labourers were forcibly prevented from

⁷⁶ K.K.N. Kurup, A.C. *Kannan Nair; A Study* (Dairies of A.C. Kannan Nair) Mal, State Institute of Languages, Kerala, Trivandrum, 1985, p. 159.

⁷⁷ Personal Interview with Kizhakool Lakshmi, Udinoor, on 10.4.04.

⁷⁸ Personal Interview with Kaarichi, Madikkai, on 11.4.04.

⁷⁹ Andalat, *Rekhayillatha Charithram (Mal)*, Chintha Publications, Trivandrum, 1987, p.161.

⁸⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, Personal Interview with E.T. Karthiyayani, Cheruvathoor, on 26.3.03.

entering the forest and collecting firewood and fodder as that area was transferred to Joseph Kottukappalli a planter for setting up an estate. The women labourers demanding their rights for entering the forests and forcibly entered the forest breaking the barricades by singing the song.

Tholum virakum Nangal edukkum

Kalan vannu thaduthennalum

Aarum swantham Nediyaithella

Varidipole kidakkum vipinam

Krishiyavashyathinnayi tholum,

Veetavashyathinnayi virakum

Nangaledukkum kaattilninnu

Engathil samsayamarkkum venda

This song had been sung when the landlord prohibiting them from taking firewood and barks from the forest.

After this, there was brutal police oppression in which one woman was sexually abused; another was molested and others were thoroughly beaten up. Kutoor Paattiyamma played an important role in leading this struggle⁸¹. According to E. T. Karthiyani and C. Madhavi, some participants of this struggle, women from nearby villages like Kodakkad, Puthhilot, Karivelloor, Puliyanoor, Timiri Klayikode, Cheruvathur etc. had been

⁸¹ Andalat, *Rekhaillatha...*, Op. Cit., p.209.

participated in this struggle⁸².

They carried party publications secretly and distributed it day and night. This was the case of Pulikkodon Veetil Kunjammaramma⁸³. During that period, she like a man, wore shirts and dhotis and carried the pamphlets at night. They were able to travel alone even at night. Here the existing norms about women's travel at night was questioned. It was the women who took initiative to sell party literature during *Sangham* meetings and other festive occasions. Women's involvement in agrarian struggle has to be understood as part of anger class and also their frustration against *janmis* and their increasing awareness mediated by socio-economic situation.

Most of the villages came under the control of punitive police and Malabar Special Police (*MSP*) After the agrarian struggles most of the male members of the *Karshaka Sangham* had gone to forest because of the severe brutalities and atrocities from the hands of the *janmis* and authorities. At this instance the agrarian women struggled hard to protect their family. Besides these they were involved in supporting the *Sangham* worker's by supplying printed matters, food and shelter. In these activities, some of them were even put behind bars. There was brutal police repression in which they were sexually abused and molested and they were thoroughly beaten up. The women from different agrarian villages tells us about the cruelties that they

⁸² Personal Interview with C. Madhavi, Nandavanam on 26.3.03.

⁸³ Personal interview with Pulikkodon Veetil Kunjammaramma, Madikkai, on 6.4. 04.

had suffered in those days.

After the Palayi harvesting struggle on 12th March 1941, the *Karshaka Sangham* in Kayyur had decided to organize a procession against the existing situation. Following the police interference in the procession, one constable was stoned to death by the crowd. Vast arrests took place and four of them were sentenced to death. After this incident this village had come under police control⁸⁴. The days of terror continued for several months in Kayyur Village. At this juncture all the *Sangham* members had gone to forest for shelter. Most of the *Karshaka Sangham* leaders admitted that in those days it was due to the women's prudence and constant support that they survived. Kanisan Veetil Mani, A.C.Paatta, Koyithattil Paru, K.V. Manikkam, Chemmaruthi, Chirutha, Kunjamina etc are some of them who had protected the *Sangham* in Kayyur. Subrahmanya Shenoy, one of the leaders of the *Karshaka Sangham* still remembers one Kunjamina Umma, who had helped him by supplying rice flakes and water. She makes her livelihood by husking paddy and rice flake. And following the riot her son Aboobacker was hanged⁸⁵. K.V. Mani tells us, how the police had brutally lathicharged her while she was sleeping. Besides that the *MSP* had lathicharged her husband Madathil Kunji Raman and others. They had lathicharged Madathil Appu

⁸⁴ For more reference see K.K.N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot*, Sandhya Publications, Calicut, 1978.

⁸⁵ Personal Interview with Subrahmanya Shenoy, Payyannur, on 18.9.02

while he was sleeping in his teashop on the basis of a false message⁸⁶. Both Kanisan Veetil Mani and her neighbour A.C. Paatta had talked about E.K. Nayanar who had been in their house in underground. According to Mani, Nayanar's arrival was like lightening and nobody had known about his arrival and departure. He always came with a bag full of books. Her husband Ambu Jyolsyan was an active *Karshaka Sangham* worker and had participated in the struggles. A.C. Patta had provided shelter to leaders like K.T. Kammaran, E.K. Nayanar etc. At that time when the *MSP* had heard that she had provided shelter to K.T. Kammaran, they brutally beat her even though her child was up in her arms. She says the 'the golden coloured Nayanar has turned into charcoal during his stay in their house' Koyithattilparu had provided food to the *Sangham* workers in the forest in the disguise of collecting manure and firewood in the forest. Whenever the *Karshaka Sangham* workers reached their house Araya Kadavil Chirutha provided them food⁸⁷.

Chemmaruthy tells us about the terror that was created by the *MSP* during that period. Since their house was a shelter to *Sangham* workers, they were always haunted by the *MSP*. The doors and windows of their house had been destroyed. Pot, vessels, and paddy sacks had been put in the wells. Her mother secretly provided shelter to the leaders in the upstairs of their

⁸⁶ Personal Interview with K.V. Manikkam, Kayyur, on 25.3.03.

⁸⁷ Personal Interview with Kanisan Veetil Mani, A.C. Patta, Koyithattil Paru, and Gopalan, Kayyur on 29.3.03.

house. After supplying food to them in upstairs they will spread the paddy on the floor for drying. Otherwise the neighbours will suspect them. Like wise, when her brother was brought someone for food at midnight the remains of the food were secretly destroyed⁸⁸.

Eleri village near the border of Karnataka was a hilly area consisting of forests. This was one of the safest areas, in which most of the *Sangham* workers had been in under ground for several months. In view of various cases like Kayyur, Karinthalam, Klayikot Panthal, Paddy grabbing etc. *Sangham* leaders like N. Narayana Variar, E.K. Nayanar, V.V. Kunjambu, Maniyeri Kannan Nair, Pariyarathu Krishnan Nair, Palliyathu Raman Nair etc had been there. In this village the neighbours were very co-operative to provide support to the *Sangham* workers. From 1935 onwards, Podora house was one of the important shelters of the *Sangham*, and the *MSP* had continuously looted that house and the women of this house severely harassed. Chiruthayamma in this house was one of the victims of this. The *MSP* had broken her hands and later she lost her life because of the assault. This house had provided shelter to leaders like A.V. Kunjambu, Subrahmania Shenoy and others⁸⁹. Since, the women in this village were actively involved in underground activities, they were brought to the *MSP's* camp and were sexually molested.

⁸⁸ Personal Interview with Chemmaruthy, Kayyur, on 25.03.03.

⁸⁹ Personal Interview with Podora Kunjiraman, West Eleri, Kasargod dist. On 4.4.03.

Katoor Chiruthayi tells us that, on one day, when all the male members had gone to forest the infuriated police caught them and brought them to their camp and severely beaten up. They even threatened them by saying that, till their leaders came forward, they will be continuously harassed. They also threatened that they will be marched to Cheruvathur by putting paddy sacks on their heads⁹⁰. But these threatening and the fear of rape and sexual torture did not deter women from keeping secrets and protecting the *Sangham*. Though the *MSP* severely harassed them, they continued their risky activities. Some of them were wandering in the forest carrying beedi, sugar, rice and other printed articles to the *Karshaka Sangham* members. Kuruvat Parvathi, Valliyot Paatti, Maniyeri Akkuvamma, Palliyath Lakshmi, Edoloth Chirutha, Podoramani, Vadakketh Parvathi, Katoor Parvathi, Thazhaveetil Mani etc were some of the women suppliers⁹¹. The *MSP* had severely beaten up Thazhaveetil Karichi and Katoor Parvathi for distributing pamphlets. Valliot Mani tells us how she, along with Thambayi and Akkuvamma, had carried food to the members in the forest and late early morning took, back the empty vessels. Further she tells us how they secretly attended the *Karshaka Sangham* meeting by wearing black clothes at night⁹².

Kaini Devi from Nandavanam, was even brought to Jail for her secret

⁹⁰ Personal Interview with Katoor Chiruthayi, Mankam, Eleri on 7.4.03.

⁹¹ Personal Interview with Kuruvat Balakrishnan, Eleri on 7.4.03.

⁹² Personal Interview with Valliyot Mani, Eleri on 8.4.03.

activities. In one instance when Koliyadan Kunji Krishnan, one of the *Karshaka Sangham* leaders were hiding in her house, the *MSP* captured and arrested them. When she was brought before the court the congress tried to pacify her by saying that if she had changed her ideology they will soon release her. But she never changed her ideology⁹³. This shows that they were even ready to sacrifice their life for *Karshaka Sangham*.

Devaki Antharjanam, from Korom Pulleri Illam was one of the Staunch *Karshaka Sangham* supporters. She had provided shelter to many *Sangham* workers like A.K. Gopalan, Vannan Chindan and so on in her own illam irrespective of their caste. The threat from the police and her husband Narayanan Nambudiri's congress stance never changed her attitude towards *Sangham*. A.K. Gopalan considered Devaki Antharjanam as his mother⁹⁴. Besides these, Chiruthayi, Cheeru, Markkavil Mathi etc. from Koorkara had protected the *Karshaka Sangham* members⁹⁵. In Kalikadavu, Punnakkodan Raman's⁹⁶ house was the main shelter and meeting place of the *Sangham*. His mother Paru and his wife Chirutha, actively participated in Kodakkad conference. And P.C. Sridevi had protected Nayanar and Paatatu

⁹³ Personal Interview with K. Sukumaran son of Kaini Devi, and with Koliyadan Kunji Krishnan Nair, Nandavanam on 26.3.03.

⁹⁴ A.K. Gopalan *Noothandinde Orma* Souvenir, P.243, *Pinarayi-Parappuram Conference 50th Anniversary Smaranika*, p.217.

⁹⁵ Personal Interview with P. Raman Nambiar, Koorkara on 14.3.03.

⁹⁶ *Kavumbayil Smaranika*.

Padmanabhan⁹⁷. Annikkadan Kumba had suffered a lot while her husband was in jail she went for outside labour⁹⁸.

In Parassinikkadavu, Chandroth house, Atchumaster's house, Panachikkal house etc became the main shelters and Madappura Paru, P.M. Madhavi, Panachikkal Cheeyayi, Palakkayil Manikam etc were the main women supporters⁹⁹. Kottila Veetil Kunjathi of Eramam, Kunnummal Sridevi etc were some of the women who were sexually abused and molested by the *MSP*. In Kuttoor, after the Kuttoor Madam paddy grabbing, it was the women like C.P. Kunjatha, Kanaparu, Kalyani, M.K. Parvathi, Paattiyamma etc had protected the *Sangham*¹⁰⁰.

Since the Communist Party and *Karshaka Sangham* were banned, they were not in a better position after independence. In this period the *Sangham* adopted a revolutionary tactics. The situation of food crisis resulted in the clashes with police and labourers. Between April and May 1948, police firings had taken place at Onchiyam, Pazhassi, Tillenkkeri, Peralam, Munayankunnu, Padikunnu and Korom.

Following the Onchiyam firing of April 30, 1948 seven persons died in the firing and two were incarcerated. After that action, the *MSP* let loose a

⁹⁷ Personal Interview with C.Krishnan Nair, Kalikadavu on 24.3.03.

⁹⁸ Personal Interview with T.V. Shankaran son of Kumba, Pollapoyil, on 24.3.03.

⁹⁹ Personal Interview with Krishnan C.V., Parassinikkadavu, on 18.11.02.

¹⁰⁰ Personal Interview with M.K. Parvathi and with M.K. Kunjappan, Kuttoor on 19.03.03.

reign of terror in this village for several months and all the men went in hiding. The atrocities suffered by the women at that time were numerous. In that village Mandodi Kannan was one of the popular leaders who inspired the women. Most of them tells us about Kannan. Even though he belonged to *janmis* family he worked along with the labouring women and inspired them. He inspired them through songs. Mandodi Kuniyil Manikkam, Cheeru, Kalyani etc are some among who were taught by Kannan. His wife had sung that song¹⁰¹.

Edavum valamotta pennungale
Chuttum valanjulla pennungale
Nammalu krishikkaru koolikkaru,
Nellum, kizhangum, pazhakulayum
Gothambum, chembum, karimbum, kambum
Epperi, petta muthalukalum
Nammalundakki kodutholanam
janmi, muthalali, mooppanmaru
Endu kathayanu nattukara,
Entu kathayanu pennungale...

This song depicts the severity of *janmis* exploitation. Even though the tenants cultivated grains, tubers and fruits for *janmi*, the *janmi* exploited them.

¹⁰¹ Personal Interview with Janaki Mokeri, on 14.08.02.

Kannan's house was one of the shelters of the *Sangham* leaders. His niece Matha tells us that in one instance, when they had heard about MSP'S raid in their house, the whole family along with the children had to leave their house. At that time nobody provided them shelter so they confined themselves in a temple. When they returned, they found that all the household articles, including the cucumber that had been hanged on the roof top destroyed¹⁰². After his death, Kannan's mother had died of mental illness. While her son was hiding in forest, his mother had covered the food packets in blankets and supplied it in forest.

Following the Onchiyam action, the condition of the family of *Karshaka Sangham* members became worse. C.K. Kalyani, who had lost her brother C.K. Chathu in the firing tells that following the action, the *janmi* had vacated their house and threatened them with the help of *gundas* and poured kerosene in their well. Meethale Devaki, Illathu Cheeru also tells us the atrocities suffered by them and their parents and about the mental agony of their parents. Likewise Karakkayil Kannan also tell us how his mother Karichi had protected the under ground workers. Illath Cheeru tells us how she had provided shelter to Krishnapillai and others. Kattil Parambathu Mathu tells us how her mother Manikkam had dressed the wounds of *Karshaka Sangham* members following the Onchiyam action. Achuthan, son of Menon Kanaran, says that his mother Manthi had provided shelter to

¹⁰² Personal Interview with Mandodi Matha, neice of Mandodi Kannan, Onchiyam on 1.8.02.

leaders like Krishnapillai and others. K.P. Kunjiraman Master told us how the police had molested the women¹⁰³.

T.V. Narayani from Puthiyappu told us how she had provided food and shelter to *Karshaka Sangham* leaders like E.K. Nayanar, M. Kelappan, M. Narayanan, Vannathan Raman etc. Since her husband Achuthan Mesthiri was an active *Karshaka Sangham* worker. It was she who provided the family by carrying stone. Along with this, she also found time for *Mahila Sangham* work and other activities. Here she carried the double burden of reproductive labour and productive labour¹⁰⁴. Thavarattu Cheeru from Cheruvannur tells us about the *MSP* atrocities. A few days after her pregnancy she fell ill and at that time *MSP* had searched their house for her brother Illathu Kelappan. They had looted the whole house and had broken the fingers of Cheeru and had also beaten up her old father¹⁰⁵. In Narakkad, Rayaroth house was one of the shelters of *Karshaka Sangham*¹⁰⁶.

All these show that the uncountable atrocities suffered by the women at the time when men left for clandestine activities. For their risky activities, the women were even sexually abused and molested and were thoroughly

¹⁰³ Personal Interview with C.K. Kalyani, Meethal Devaki, Illath Cheeru, Kattil Parambathu Mathu, Achuthan, K.P. Kunjiram, Puthan Purayil Kannan Onchiyam on 3, 4.8.02.

¹⁰⁴ Personal Interview with T.V. Narayani, Puthiyap, Badagara on 10.7.02

¹⁰⁵ Personal Interview with Thavarattu Cheeru, Cheruvannur, Badagara on 13.7.02.

¹⁰⁶ Personal Interview with R. Kannan and Sathyabhama, Narakkod, Meppayur on 11.7.02.

beaten up. Some of them were even brought to jail and lost their relatives. But, even in that situation they stood firmly and had supported the *Karshaka Sangham* and their family. Thus they had the double burden of combining household labour with public labour. We have already stated that, in an agrarian society the household labour and field labour are intermixed. Now their burden of labour in the field increases because of the absence of men. They struggled hard to combine all types of labour. At the same time, they had to protect their family and the *Karshaka Sangham* workers. In the day time they were involved in field labour and at night they were involved in supplying printed matters food and shelter to the *Karshaka Sangham*. Thus it is a clear evidence of the fact that it was the labouring women who had acted as the main supporter of the *Karshaka Sangham*. In those days most of the family had survived because of women's hard labour and their courage.

The above references about women's participation in the various activities tell us what the ordinary history doesn't. It shows that all women, irrespective of their status had become a part of the public activities. And they became part of it, when their very existence was questioned. It also tells us that the women in North Malabar had a history of their own.

Here we can raise the question 'why they had participated in these activities. North Malabar experiences shows that it was their active participation in the production process that had brought them in to these activities. Studies had also shown that only those who were involved in the

production process could actively participate in the struggle¹⁰⁷. So, the participation in the production process was one of the reasons for their active participation and these is a dialectical relationship between these two.

Another question regarding this was how the struggle affected them? we can see that, most of the women who directly participated in this struggle were agricultural labourers and most of them belonged to the down trodden class. They came forward, when their position as labourers was questioned. This can be seen from their participation in different struggles like *nelledukkalsamaram*, *pulluparisamaram*, *tholvirakusamaram*, *kalamkettu samaram* etc. In the *tholvirakusamaram*, Kandakkai Pulluparisamaram, Kuvumbayi Police action etc we can see the direct participation of women clashing with police. In the *kalamkettu samaram* the women resisted the *janmis* by taking pots and pans as instruments of protests. For them everyday items became their instruments of protests, they raised their voices when it was questioned. This was the case of paddy grabbing, grass cutting and *tholviraku samaram*.

The question regarding their cause of motivation for participation was different. Here we can see that in the case of middle class women, most of them belongs to *janmis* class. In their case, it was their education that kept them abreast of the current situation and most of them were school teachers. Another thing is that most of the male members of their family were

¹⁰⁷ Tanika Sarkar, 'Politics and women in Bengal... *Op. Cit.*, p.236.

important political leaders or active members of the political party and they had sent their wives and sisters to politics. For the agricultural labourer women, it was their involvement in the production process, which had brought them into the struggle.

In those days *Mahila Sangham* played a major role in organizing women. Most of their activities were centred around libraries. It was the middle class women who organized *Mahila Sangham* and illiterate agricultural labourers had accepted the average educated leaders as natural leaders. The middle class's educational background which provided them this opportunity. We have already discussed the good cooperation between the landlord women and agricultural women. *Mahila Sangham* worked among different working class people like beedi workers, textile workers and among *Karshaka Sanghams*. One of the prominent trade union leader C. Kannan remembers that the *Mahila Sangham* workers like Gracy Aaron, P. Yasodha, V.P. Devaki, Palora Matha, Cheriyyamma, Kunjacha and others had played an important role in developing consciousness among the Beedi workers¹⁰⁸. They focused on major women issues like education, employment untouchability etc and had activated interdinings and intermarriages. Besides these, they had played a major role in spreading the ideas of *Karshaka Sangham* through *jathas*, meetings and cultural programmes like drama, *Poorakali*, *Kummi* etc. They sold the party pamphlets during

¹⁰⁸ A.V. Anil Kumar, 'C' Chintha Publishers, Trivandrum, 2002, p. 56.

Karshaka Sangham meetings, temple festivals etc. Besides these, as a part of *Karshaka Sangham* meetings and other occasions, they had collected *Pidiyari* from houses. During the cholera period they worked as volunteers. Some of them had even conducted *Karshaka Sangham* meetings. And some even travelled widely and attended conferences in North India. But some women never came at the forefront. During the period of struggle also they had kept in touch by different modes of communication. This can be compared with the different patterns that had been discussed by Ranajit Guha¹⁰⁹.

Another interesting thing is that, women in precapitalist period were more mobile than the capitalist period. During that period, women were active in meetings, *jathas* and were also active in under ground activities like distributing printed matters, escorting and protecting *Sangham* leaders and so on. Besides this the fear of rape and sexual torture did not deter them from keeping secrets and protecting the *Sanghams*. We can see that after the fight against landlordism, some of the open forms of sexual exploitation of women are less. But all forms of sexual exploitation are not done away with. Slowly, sexual vulnerability of women became the standard for in capitalist society. It was this position which prevented women from occupying the same position as men in the public sphere.

¹⁰⁹ Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, OUP, Delhi, 1983. In this work the insurgent consciousness of subalterns in India has been identified and defined by Ranajit Guha in terms of Negation, Ambiguity, Modality, Solidarity, Transmission and Territoriality.

gendered processes, as well as women's and men's institutionalized social roles, get incorporated into social movement strategies¹¹⁰. Besides these, pots and pans are utensils that are in many cases, accessible because of and symbolic of, the domestic labour to which women have been relegated in the gendered division of labour. In the case of *tholvirakusamaram* the women resisted because fodder and firewood used by them were denied. This can be seen in the case of *nelledukkal samarams* also. It was the deficiency of articles which led them to come forward for struggle. So, their participation in these struggles shows that they were aware of the existing situations.

With the help of North Malabar experience, we can understand that the main reasons behind the mass participation of women in the agrarian struggle was the problem of subsistence and the question of the disintegration of *kudis*.

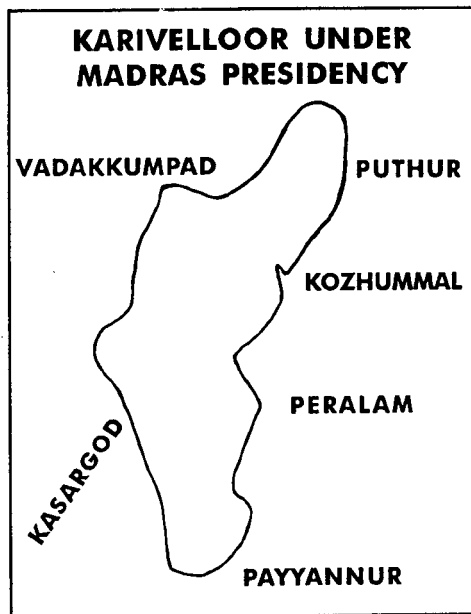
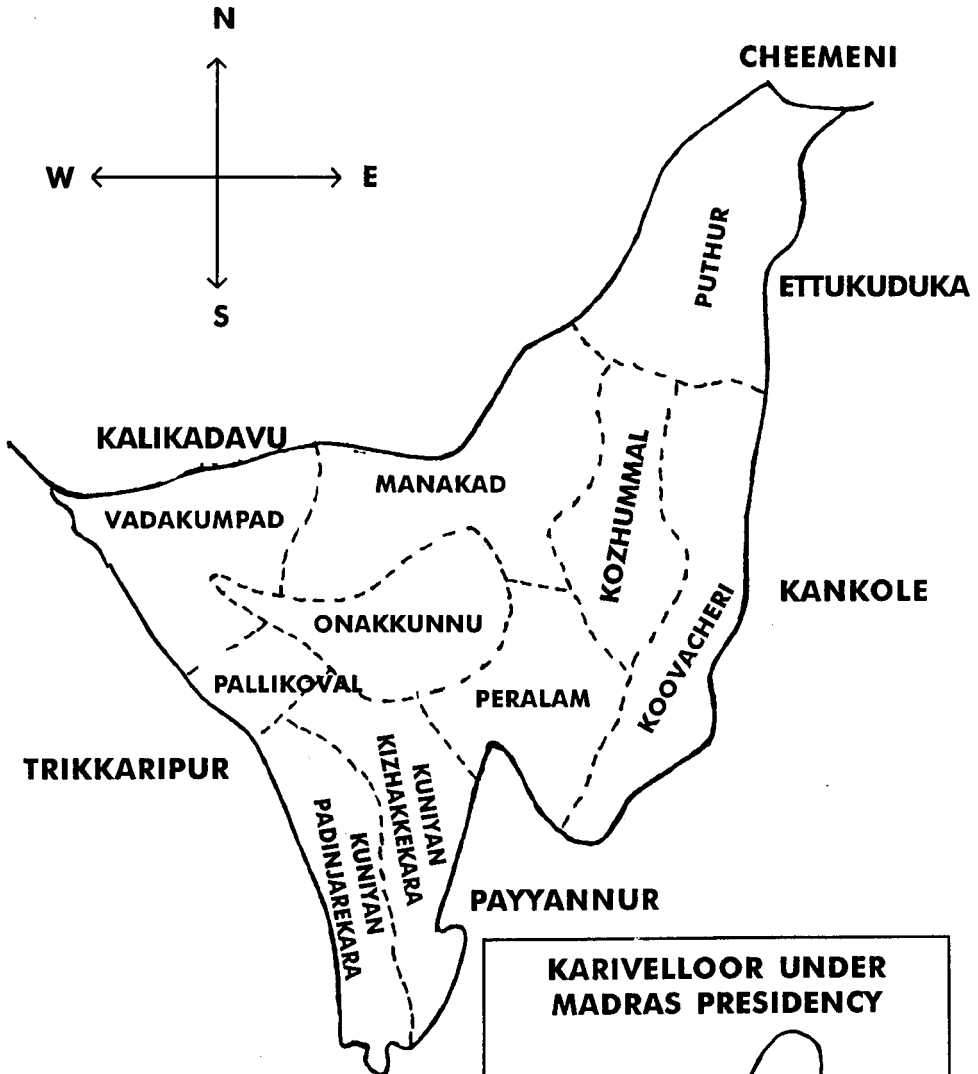
But it shows that their struggle do not result in the preservation of *kudis*. This was due to the reason that under capitalism the character of land itself changed and it was not possible to survive with the *kudis*. It also shows that their participation in the struggle had in a limited way facilitated their survival.

¹¹⁰ M. Bahati Kuumba, *Gender and Social Movements*, Rawat Publications, New Delhi, 2003, p.95.

30.A

MAP

KARIVELLOOR - PERALAM



Chapter VI

KARIVELLOOR VILLAGE; A CASE STUDY

The main objective of this chapter is to show how the pattern of women's labour in an agrarian economy works in a particular village. Since Karivelloor Village had shown all the characters of village economy, it has taken as a case study.

Karivelloor village is situated in the old Chirakkal taluk, about 26 miles north west of Cannanore. In the earlier period, places like Vadakumpad, Puthoor, Kozhummal, Peralam etc. were not included in this village. Later, with the formation of Karivelloor Peralam Grama Panchayat, all these places were included in it (see Map). It shows that from very early period itself, this village was related to agricultural activities. The name itself is related to agriculture. It argues that in the earlier stage this may be a part of Velloor village and due to its prosperity in agriculture, the prefix *Kari*, which means agricultural land, was added to it. The socio-religious factors in this society also prove the agrarian character of this village. The worship of Annapurna and social dining are examples¹.

This village consists of hilly areas and slopes. Palakkunnu, Onakunnu, Chedikunnu, Koolipara, Vettuvankunnu, Kottakunnu etc. were high lands, and Ayathravayal, Varakotvayal, Thottichal, Vellavayal,

¹ N.V.P. Unithiri, 'Karivelloorinde Samskarika Paithrukam' on *A.V. Smaranika*, 1992, p. 102.

Malapoovayal, Mundicheeta, Eereeracvayal etc were important low lands suitable for cultivation². During the earlier period, this land was situated at the boundary of Chirakkal Raja and Neelaswaram Raja and later it came under the control of Chirakkal Raja. Kotoor Devaswam, Kutoor Vengayil, Puthoor Devaswam, Valiyeri and some Muslim *janmis* like Talayillattu, Nalupurappatil etc were some of the minor *janmis* in this period.

According to the settlement records (see Table 6.1) a major part of the women landholders in this area belongs to Nayar caste and next comes the Muslims, who were following matrilineal system of inheritance. And most of the agricultural labourers class belongs to low caste. In the previous chapter with the help of settlement registers we had already posed that women landholders in this village were comparatively high. It also shows that here the women were actively participated in labour process and agrarian struggles.

² Vikasana Rekha, Vol. 140, *Karivelloor Peralam Grama Panchayat, Janakeeya Suthranam*, 1996, p. 25.

TABLE 6.1

Area of Land Under Women Holders in Karivelloor Desam

Name of Holders	Area Under Settlement		Area Under Resettlement	
Choornapallineelamana Adithi Antharjanam	1.91	-	-	-
Choornapallineelamana Saraswathi Antharjanam	-	-	3.93	-
Kotoormadathil Savithriyamma	-	-	6.3	-
Savithri Antharjanam	-	-	3.71	2.72
Kutoor Vengayil Janakiyamma	-	-	31.25	1.31
Valiyeri Chirutheyi	3.25	15.2	3.09	10.45
Puthiyamundilat Radhiyamma	-	-	6.34	-
Nalupurapattil Beepathu	10.86	7.53	2.62	8.1
Nalupurapattil Pothiyumma	-	-	-	0.49
Talayillat Paatha	11.81	3.57	-	-
Talayillat Sarumma	-	-	5.09	-
Talayillat Aliyumma	-	-	-	2.48
Mangattil Aasumma, Mariyam	-	-	-	3.2
Suppiyadathu Veetukar	-	-	-	0.68

Source: Settlement and Resettlement Register of Karivelloor Desam, Chirakkal Taluk

Since an agrarian economy is mainly based on family labour, here women labourers form the main labour power. The women labourers have to perform diverse tasks and most of their labour was an extension of their household activities. Study shows that certain agricultural activities like paddy transplantation etc are the activities that were monopolized by

women labourers that requires long hours of skilled and disciplined labour under scorching sun. In the household also they have to perform certain unavoidable activities like fuel collection etc. for this purpose they are forced to walk greater distance that required some extra hours. The tenants had claim to collect fuel and fodder from the forest but most of these forests were far away. According to some respondents it was the duty of the women to collect fodder and fuel irresponsible of their tenants status. This fuel collection was providing them a meeting place.

The role of village social relations is crucial here and certain factors like caste, class, kinship etc determine women's labour. Here *kudi* forms the main source of family labour and both the women belong to the landlord class and agricultural labourers class had to perform their labour inside the *kudi* and in the agricultural field. Besides this, they were also involved in other non-agricultural activities. The other occupational classes like weavers, blacksmith, carpenters, masons, oil pressers, fishermen etc. were also included in this village.

This village is famous for weaving and from 1948 onwards, the weavers in this area formed their own organization. Most of them were settled in Karivelloor *teru*. This *teru* is one of the four important centres of weavers. During the earlier period, primary weaving process was tedious task and it was the women who were engaged in these tasks. Besides weavers, here we can see the presence of oil pressers. It was the women who

mainly transacted the oil. Among the washing class, besides washing, the women labourers also performed as menial labourers in *janmis* house and were also asked to perform certain social customs as well. It was the Ezhavas who were mainly engaged in the cultivation of coconut palms and related works like coconut plucking, toddy tapping and processing. And women among this class played an important role in toddy processing and jaggery making. Likewise, rice husking was another important source of women's labour.

Another fact is that, when the men belonging to the occupational class remained in the same occupation, the women at the same time acted as helpers of their class and also acted as agricultural labourers. This was one of the important centres of beedi making and majority of them were women. Like wise, coir making also flourished in this area and women were skilled in this work.

The sea coast is 10 kms away from Karivelloor and Mayilvalappu colony is the main centre of fishery class. Besides, from sea, they also captured fish from nearby rivers like Kangirapuzha, Kuniyan etc³. among this class, women had played an important role in fish processing. They also acted as transactors. Most of them were transacted from house to house and also in the markets. Barter system prevailed among them and they exchanged it for paddy, pepper, arecanut etc. They had also marketed fish in

³ Vikasana Rekha, Karivelloor... *Op. Cit.*, p.50.

the nearby villages like Kodakkad, Cherupuzha, Kankole, Mathamangalam and so on. Saturday markets were famous for 'dry fish'⁴. Onakunnu was the important village market in Karivelloor. Besides fish goods like mat, fodder, basket etc were also transacted in these markets. Thus the markets formed the nerve centre of village in which inter-village contact and sociability took place where women labourers played an important role⁵.

This was the place where radical and national politics took deep roots and wielded considerable influence. We can receive some reference about grass cutting struggle in Peralam during the initial stage of *Karshaka Sangham* when the *janmis* had restricted the grass cutting, under the initiative of *Karshaka Sangham* about 1500 men and women in this village had cut the grass from an area covering from Kodakkad to Puthoor⁶. According to Mannian Veetil Krishnan, one harvesting had also taken place in Kozhummal near Thazhakatmana.

Karivelloor was the place where the first regular unit of *Karshaka Sangham* in North Malabar was organized. Before the *Karshaka Sangham*,

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.52.

⁵ Personal Interview with Neeliyam Veetil Cheriya, Karivelloor on 31.3.03

⁶ Andalat, *Nurugukal, Desabhimani*, 10.7.1988

other organizations like *Abhinav Bharat Yuvak Sangham*(ABYS)⁷ had organization in this soil. Some of the leaders in this village like A.V. Kunjambu had got the opportunity of have contact with revolutionary leaders in jail. And later it led to the formation of ABYS. It is interesting that most of the *Karshaka Sangham* leaders had come forward through ABYS.

We can see that from its very inception itself women were active participants in all these organizations and the leaders were aware of this fact. Before the *Karshaka Sangham* these women were active in *Atmavidhya Sangham* and ABYS and they fought against untouchability and casteism. This was the case of K. Devayani, one of the active *Karshaka Sangham* workers. She belonged to Allepey. She remembers that, in the initial phases she had recited Aryabata Swami's written speeches and later she became the secretary of *Atmavidhya Sangham*. After her marriage with A.V. Kunjambu she shifted to Karivelloor and became an active *Karshaka Sangham* worker⁸.

We can see women's participation in the ABYS conferences. The first

⁷ The Abhinava Bharat Yuvaksangam which was organized in Karivelloor in Kasargod district was organized on April, 13, 1934 at Manakkad Vannalakot field at Karivelloor village. It was organized on the basis of Naujavan Bharat Sabha and the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association formed by Bhagat Singh and others. The architects of this organization were A.V. Kunjambu, M.P. Appu, K. Kunjiraman, and others. The Sangham had conducted four conferences within the period of 1939 and when the peasant organizations was strengthened, the sangham was dissolved in 1939.

⁸ Devayani. K, *Chorayum Kanneerum Nananja Vazhikal*, Chintha Publishers, Trivandrum, p. 9.

annual conference of the ABYS was convened at Vannalakot field at Manakkad, Karivelloor on April 5, 1936. The second conference was convened at the Manakkad, Deshiya Vidhyalaya in 1937, and the third conference on April 1, 1938 at Ayathravayal, one of the informants told us that her mother along with other women had participated in that conference at Ayathravayal and she heard from her mother that some one fell in the nearby well at the time of conference⁹

Likewise women's mass participation can be seen in the *Karshaka Sangham* also. On January 14, 1939 the fourth annual conference of the ABYS and the second annual conference of the Kasargod taluk *Karshaka Sangham* was organized at Kodakkad near Karivelloor. On this occasion a women's conference was also arranged. The annual conference of the ABYS was presided over by A. Kameshwara Rao. The *Karshaka Sangham* took place under the chairmanship of N.G. Ranga. At that time, Chenan Veetil Lakshmi and P.C. Karthiyayanikutty were the president and secretary of the *Mahila Sangham*. They along with others had received the leaders from the Cheruvathur railway station¹⁰.

The interdining conducted as part of the Kodakkat conference had shaken the whole village because interdinning with low class people was unthinkable during that period. One of the participants, who was a small

⁹ Personal Interview with V.V. Mani daughter of V.V. Unnangamma, Karivelloor, on 2.4.03.

¹⁰ Personal Interview with P.C. Karthiyayanikutty, Pilikode on 5.04.04

child during that period still remembers about the interdinning¹¹. She said that the food was prepared at Kunji Krishnan Nair's compound and both men and women had prepared the food. The food was served at Vadakke Valappil. Two of other participants who had sung the prayer song still remembers that song¹². In some instances *Karshaka Sangham* meetings were also conducted under the leadership of women. On October 27, 1935 a meeting of *Karshaka Sangham* was held under the leadership of M. Karthiyayani Amma at Pallikoval Karivelloor¹³. Thus when *jathas* and meetings were conducted in different villages, we can see that women in Karivelloor also actively participated in it.

During second World War, a great famine had engulfed the whole village. The second World War ended with food scarcity and a lot of people died because of cholera. Women became the great victims of famine for a fist of rice they waited for hours in front of the shops¹⁴. The exploitation of the *janmis* increased and they hoarded paddy and illegally transacted it. Besides this, they also decreased the ratio of grains that was given to the peasants as wages.

¹¹ Personal Interview with Chennan Veetil Kalyani, daughter of Chennan Veetil Lakshmi, Vellachal, Karivelloor on 24.3.03

¹² Personal Interview with P.P. Madhavi, Shantha, Vellachal, on 24.3.03.

¹³ *Mathrubhumi*, November 1, 1935.

¹⁴ A.V. Kunjambu, 'Karivelloorindekadha' in 50th Anniversery, Karivelloor Smaranika, 1996, P.1.

At this juncture strong demonstrations was conducted by the *Karshaka Sangham* and Communist party against hoarding and black marketing of essential commodities. On the basis of this a supply stores was established and the main aim of this society was to distribute the excess paddy from the *janmis*¹⁵. In the first stage, the *Karshaka Sangham* intensified its activities by leading *jathas* to the respective areas presenting their grievances and demands before the *janmis*. And in the later stage they marched towards *janmis* granaries and grabbed the paddy by giving government prices to the *janmis*. This activities varied regionally. In some places they harvested the *janmis* crops, most of the marches had been organized in payyannur, Neeleswaram farkas and in these marches also we can see women's participation.

Most of the *jathas* at last resulted in clashes, and oppressive measures were taken by the landlords. Since the Chirakkal Rajas can survive without the levied paddy from Karivelloor, the tenants had lead a *jatha* to Chirakkal Kovilakam and requested the rajas to levy in the form of cash. Instead the Raja collected the levy in kind and stored it in his granary near Kuniyan river¹⁶.

Along with this period, on November 1946, a conference was held at Calicut town hall and this conference gave birth to further activities against

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, P.1.

¹⁶ Personal Interview with Thottonveetil Krishnan, Karivelloor on 2.4.03.

hoarding and black marketing¹⁷. As a part of this, on 17th December 1946, a committee of agricultural labourers was held at the Karivelloor central school and they had decided to grab the paddy from the Chirakkal Raja. For that purpose all the precautionary measures had been taken. Weapons and stones were collected and training was given to volunteers by retired military hands. At last on December 20, 1946, while Ponnann Kumba was cutting grass, she saw the arrival of landlords boats at Kuniyan and had informed the news to others¹⁸. People from all parts of the village rushed to that spot. Previously the *Karshaka Sangham* had decided that, if necessary, women should also participate in the struggle. Thus according to that decision a group of women named V.V. Mani, Unnangamma, Paattiyamma, K. Devayani, M.V. Parvathi, Mandiyam Veetil Kalyani, Aithale Veetil Lakshmi, etc. had rushed to the spot with sickles but they were stopped by the men¹⁹.

Following the paddy grabbing struggle, the life of women labourers became more miserable. After the struggle, all the men had left for underground, or in prison and naturally the whole burden of the family fell on women. Thus, they had to protect their family and the *Karshaka Sangham*

¹⁷ A.V. Kunjambu, *Karivelloorinte...* Op. Cit., p. 5; Personal Interview with Thaivalappil Kannan, Peralam on 26.9.02.

¹⁸ C.S. Chandrika, *Keralathile Sthree Munnettangalude Charithram*, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 1998, p. 87.

¹⁹ K. Devayani, *Chorayum Kanneerum...* Op. Cit., p. 45

at the same time. The experiences of some of the women will reveal this fact.

Neeliyam Veetil Cheriya sustained her family by carrying stone, husking rice and collecting grass and fodder from Cheemeni and Puthoor forests. When here husband Puthiyerdattu Raman went to the jail the burden of the family fell on Cheriya. She carried stone even in the tenth month of her pregnancy. And thirty days after here pregnancy, she went for labour by leaving her new born child under the control of a two year child by locking the house from outside. When the *Karshaka Sangham* leaders like Payangappadan Kunjiraman, Koliyadan Narayanan, Tengunthara Kuttan, K.V. Sadanandapai, etc. were in underground in the Puthoor forest, she in disguise of collecting fire wood, distributed the packed food among them. While they were taking the food, she climbed a tree and gave signal to them on the approach of the police²⁰.

When her husband Krishnan Master went to jail, the burden of the family fell on Kizakeveetil Lakshmi. She went to work labour in Kanjangad by leaving her child under the control of her neighbours. She told us that because of her over consciousness about her six month child, once she rowed the boat alone and lost her way and at last some other boatmen came to help her²¹. Likewise, Kuthirummal Chiri sustained her family by engaging in agricultural labour after her husband Thottathil Kunjappu went to jail. In

²⁰ Personal Interview with Neeliyam Veetil Cheriya, Karivelloor, on 31.3.03.

²¹ Personal Interview with Kizhakeveetil Lakshmi, Kattacheri, on 31.3.03.

those days she had also received the help of party workers also²².

Since her husband had to spent a large part of his life in prison, the police had continuously haunted Pariyarathu Narayani. She sustained herself in those day by leaving her children under the control of her mother and went for fodder collection and also carried stone²³. V.V. Mani's house was one of the shelter of *Karshaka Sangham* and because of that the police continuously haunted her family and destroyed so many household articles and beat her. All these days her husband V.V. Kunjambu was underground. In those days, she had to sustain her family by engaging in agricultural labour²⁴.

Ambileri Lakshmi had protected the *Sangham* workers at Paliyeri Koval and had supplied them food in disguise of cattle rearing and due to this she had suffered police brutality²⁵. K.V. Kunjakkam was the only communist among the congress in the weavers *teru* and had actively participated in all the *jathas* and meetings²⁶. Kukkot Pattumma had secretly

²² Personal Interview with Kuthirummal Chiri, Kuthiru, on 31.3.03.

²³ Personal Interview with Pariyarathu Narayani, Chooladi, 31.3.03.

²⁴ Personal Interview with V.V. Sarojini, daughter of V.V. Mani, Karivelloor, on 2.4.03.

²⁵ Personal Interview with Ambileri Balakrishna, Son of Ambileri Lakshmi, Karivelloor on 2.4.03.

²⁶ Personal Interview with K.V. Kunjakkam, Karivelloor on 5.4.03.

supported her only son Ibrahim in his *Karshaka Sangham* activities²⁷. Thoton Veetil Laskshmi's house was one of the important centres for *Karshaka Sangham*. Most of the *Sangham* leaders like Keraleeyan, A.V. Kunjambu, Krishnapillai etc were the visitors of her house and number of *Karshaka Sangham* meetings were held in her house. Her son Thoton Veetil Krishnan was one of the staunch supporters of *Karshaka Sangham*. She had supplied food to Krishnapillai, Keraleeyan, Bharateeyan, P. Kunjiraman, Pattattu Padmanabhan etc²⁸. Keeneri Chiri, Padoli Chiri, Thoton Valappil Chiri, Thekkumbadan Madavi etc had lost their relatives due to the struggle and were the worst victims of the struggle²⁹.

Kunnummal Sridevi was one of the worst victim of the *MSP* brutality. Since her husband Payangappadan Kunjiraman, one of the *Karshaka Sangham* activists was in underground, the *MSP* had continuously haunted her and she had to seek shelters in different places. A lot of household articles were destroyed, clothes were torn, and kerosine oil was poured in the well. During the struggle, she lost her brother and uncle. Once the police brought her into the police station and beat her with lathi and boot. But the torture

²⁷ Personal Interview with Kukkot Ibrahim, Son of Kukkot Pattumma, Karivelloor on 2.4.03.

²⁸ Personal Interview with Thotton Veetil Krishnan, Son of Thoton Veetil Lakshmi, Karivelloor on 2.4.03.

²⁹ Personal Interview with Keeneri Janaki daughter of Keeneri Chiri, and with Padoli Chiri, Kuniyan on 31.3.03.

did not deter her from protecting the *Sangham*³⁰. The police also inserted lathi in her uterus and for long years she had to suffer from bleeding³¹.

V.V. Unnangamma, was one of the active *Karshaka Sangham* workers and she had participated in the Ayathravayal Conference. She had also engaged in *Mahila Sangham* activities and had worked along with P.C. Karthiyayani Kutty Amma etc. The *MSP* had haunted her and had captured her son for washing their clothes in the *MSP* camp³².

K. Devayani's work *Chorayum Kaneerum Nananja Vazhikal* had clearly depicted the atrocities of that period. She told us that after her husband A.V. Kunjambu was brought to jail, she always had threats from the police. And because of this, she had stayed in different houses. Later this shelter was also denied due to police threats. When no place was left for her, she had spend in a cowshed in a crematory ground near Paliyeri Kovval. She had stayed there with the help of Mandiyan Veetil Kalyani³³. M.V. Kalyani had also remembers this incident and she tells us that for one month in spite of police threat she protected Devayani³⁴. M.V. Kalyani had to sustain her family by carrying stone and collecting fodder. She was one of the participants of the

³⁰ P. Muraleedharan, 'Karivelloor Samarathile Pen Sahanangal' in *Neru*, Manakkad Samskarikavedi Souvenir, 2001, p.29.

³¹ Personal Interview with E.V. Kunjikannan, Mathil, on 19.9.02.

³² Personal Interview with V.V. Manikkam, daughter of V.V. Unnangamma, Manakkad, on 2.4.03.

³³ K. Devayani, *Chorayum... Op. Cit.*, p.49.

³⁴ Personal Interview with M.V. Kalyani, Karivelloor on 5.4.03.

Vannalakot *Karshaka Sangham* conference and according to her, it was after the conference that the women in this area began to wear blouse.

These women were active in supplying secret pamphlets and Kudukkon Manikkam, Kuttur Chiri etc were Prominent among them³⁵.

This village had also witnessed the *Desabhimani mela* and the women had responded quickly that, for the *mela* they had contributed bronze vessels and other household articles. In order to attend the *mela*, women from distant areas had also led a procession to Karivelloor.

From its very beginning, *Mahila Sangham* was strong in this area. P.C. Karthiayayanikutty, Vadasseri Kalyani, Chenanveetil Lakshmi, Kalyaniamma, Kadingiyil Narayani, K. Devayani, A.V. Janaki from Peralam were important *Mahila Sangham* workers and they got educated during the period. A.V. Janaki had also suffered *MSP* brutalities due to the fact that her brother A.V. Kunjikannan and husband was active *Karshaka Sangham* workers. The police had even broken her mother's leg. Besides this *gundas* did not allow them to harvest the crop and graze the cattle. P.C. Karthiayayanikutty was one of the active *Mahila Sangham* workers in this area. She became the participant of the Kodakkat conference and had participated in the interdinings. She had widely inspired the women in this village through her speeches. Because of her *Karshaka Sangham* activities, she had threats from the police. Like wise, Kadingiyil Narayani was also one of

³⁵ Personal Interview with Toton Veetil Krishnan, Karivelloor on 2. 4.03.

the *Karshaka Sangham* worker and she belonged to *janmi* family. Important political leaders became visitors to her house. She had got the opportunity to get modern education, and had also studied Hindi from A.V. Kunjambu. Since her uncle Kadingiyil Ezhuthachan was a staunch British supporter, she had secretly engaged in *Mahila Sangham* activities and had conducted the meetings when her uncle was not there. She had protected the *Karshaka Sangham* leaders in her house without knowing her uncle and most of the *Mahila Sangham* workers like P. Yesodha, P.C. Karthiyayanikutty Amma etc. had also visited the house³⁶.

Chenanveetil Lakshmi the president of the *Mahila Sangham* was also from a *janmi* family. She had played a major role in organizing the women in this area. She had received traditional education. And important *Karshaka Sangham* leaders like A.K. Gopalan, Bharateeyan, etc. became the visitors of her house³⁷.

The case study of this village shows that both the agricultural labour women and the middle class women had actively participated in all the activities in this village. The agricultural labour women and other women who belonged to occupational class, had to act as the main labour force.

In an agrarian society, knowledge about agricultural activity is essential and those women had a lot of knowledge about it. They were very

³⁶ Personal Interview with Kadingiyil Narayani, Karivelloor on 5.4.03.

³⁷ Personal Interview with Chenanveetil Kalyani daughters of Chenanveetil Lakshmi, Vellachal, on 24.3.03.

much aware of the coming monsoon rains, changes in climate, seeds etc. they also know about measurements. Though centrality of the family and household in their lives cannot be separated, they played a central role in the agrarian society.

In this society certain forms of co-operation have been used by them for cleaning ground, gathering and looking after cattle, for building a new house and so on. Rice transplantation, irrigation etc. would be often done by village teams, including both men and women and neighbouring villages, often without wages. Besides these there were so many occasions in which the agrarian women were being molested by landlords and their assistants. One of the informant told us about an incident³⁸. While her mother's sister was carrying manure for cucumber cultivation, one of the *janmi* assistants pinched her breast. At that time, she poured a basketful of ashes on to his head. The infuriated assistant destroyed all her household articles and evicted her family from the house. It also shows that since most of their husbands were *Karshaka Sangham* workers, the police and the *janmis* always showed their anger towards the women. Most of the women had pointed out that, in most cases it was their children who acted as their protectors from police. And it also shows that even during pregnancy period, they were forced to do hard labour.

Some of them were even brought to the police station. They even

³⁸ Personal Interview with M.V. Kalyani, Karivelloor on 5.4.03.

inserted lathi in their uterus. But the fact is that even though they were sexually abused and molested they never deviated from their paths.

In the case of middle class women, Since most of them belonged to *janmi* class, they had received the opportunity for education. Besides this, important political leaders became visitors to their house and by hearing their political dialogues and political works they became more politically conscious. In the case of labourer women they came forward when their very existence was questioned. Regarding the middle class women, their area was limited in the *Mahila Sangham* activities and they never came to the forefront. And their role in the labour process was also limited.

The continuation of women's participation in labour process and socio-economic activities in Karivelloor can be seen even today. The labour proportion according to the 1996 survey is given below:

TABLE 6.2

Labour Proportion in Karivelloor

Labour Participation	Women
Agriculture	1430
Beedi	1222
Teachers and other Government workers	175
Weaving and traditional industries	192
Brick Klin and construction work	395
Fish	80

Source: Vikasana Rekha, Karivelloor Grama Panchayat, p. 86.

Thus the case study of Karivelloor village helps to clarify the questions regarding women's labour that was posed in the previous chapter. It proves that women had emerge as the main labour force and besides that they had emerged as active agents of the struggle.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

Studies on the historical transformation of women's labour have shown that in the early stages of society, productive resources were utilized communally and the absence of private property made the household labour of women and productive labour of men equivalent. With the emergence of private property, the relation between men and women changed. After that men began to control the process of production and exchange within and outside the household in general and women were reduced to the so-called domestic cores.

Even though from the very early times itself women acted as the main labour force, they were removed from the social labour process. It is normally done by advocating the myth that domestic labour is the time honoured natural duty of women. The market centred nature of labour theory itself justifies this myth. Under this situation, the present study is an attempt to draw on some experiences of women labourers in the agrarian society in North Malabar. The conclusions from this study need not be used to make a generalization of women labourers in India. In this study special emphasis was given on women's role as labourers. On the basis of this we would have to rethink and redefine many concepts about women labourers especially some of the misconceptions about women's physical labour.

In the traditional village economy in Kerala, women labourers composed a substantial part of the labour force. But the studies regarding women labourers are very few¹. Oral testimonies have formed an important source of information for this study. Besides the oral testimony, other sources like Archival sources, Newspaper records and available literary sources had also formed as sources for this study.

The market centred nature of labour theory creates separation between women's labour and men's labour. Thus it creates private and public spheres of work. several theories are put forward regarding the inferior economic position of women and most of them talks about women's body and serious studies regarding women's labour are meagre.

The post structuralist theories of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault etc have some impact on Sociological thinking about gender relations. They offer a set of theoretical tools which help the feminists to understand power relations of class, gender and race. Their discourse on language and power relations was central to the reconstitution of social norms of femininity, the patriarchal subjection of women and their exclusion from most aspects of public life.

¹ K. Saradamoni, *Filling the Rice Bowl*, Sangam Books, Hyderabad, 1991; 'Changing Land Relations and Women: A Case Study of Palghat District Kerala' in R.C. Mazumdar (ed). *Women and Rural Transformation*, Concept publications, New Delhi, 1983; Praveena Kodoth, 'Gender, Property Rights and Responsibility for Farming in Kerala', *EPW*, May 8, 2004. etc. are some works describes about women's condition in agrarian society.

These post modernist deconstructionism raises the issue that there is a gender subtext in research formulations and analyses, which are male-implicit. As a response to this in 1974, Maria Mies laid down methodological guidelines for feminist research. She made two important points; the postulate of value free research, of neutrality and indifference toward the research objects, has to be replaced by conscious partiality toward their struggles for change; and there was need to create a research that fosters conscientization of both the researcher and the researched².

The suggestions of Mies have raised certain important questions. Men and women have different experiences and in the traditional historical writings that experiences are rarely discussed. That is the reason why arguments are made for a methodology which is grounded in the consciousness of the subject's own experience. It also argues that the oppression of women is due to the particular structure in the society (patriarchal). In order to rectify this, an understanding regarding the power differential between men and women is needed. Understanding regarding the power structure lead us to family relations. Even though the gender relations are constructed differently, family relations played a crucial role in determining women's status. The main problem faced by the researcher was to take the general concepts of traditional theory and applying them to

² Partha Nath Mukherji (ed.), *Methodology in Social Research: Dilemmas and Perspectives*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2000, P.35.

women issues. Under this situation we have to look for general theories regarding property rights.

Sources regarding the pre-capitalist village economy in North Malabar shows that women labourers forms the main source of labourers in this society. In this society, *Kudi* forms the main source of family labour in which women labourers are performing complementary labour. The complementary labour forms the nexus of women's labour in this society. Here, besides agricultural labour, the women were also engaged in other non-agricultural labour also. It was mainly during the off-season that they were engaged in other complementary labour. This complementary character of the labour disappeared with the onset of capitalist relations. Now she had either to remain as household labourer or as industrial labour. And here, women's labour process is a complex process in which most of their labour is an extension of household labour. In the *kudi* kinship plays an important role. And caste was closely correlated with relationship to land.

Evidence shows that *nattunadappu* or local custom that plays an important role in determining the social use of the labour of both men and women in which the occupational labourers had to perform the labour. Even though both the men and women had to face same type of exploitation in this society, the women labourers had to face an additional exploitation i.e., sexual exploitation of labour. Here both the agricultural women labourers and women landholders had actively participated in the productive and

reproductive labour inside and outside the kudis. In the case of landholding women, they had to perform household labour and field labour. And for the agricultural labourer women, besides the above labour they had to perform menial labour in *Janmis* household. Here, women belonged to the occupational class that performed social labour. They at the same time acted as the helpers of their family and also performed agricultural labour.

In North Malabar, *Janmi* women were also engaged in field labour. Thus the labour experience of women in North Malabar tells us that all women had to perform diverse tasks complementary labour which needed simultaneous attention. But the fact is that their contribution in household activities are not paid but is crucial for agricultural economy and most of their household labour is invisible labour. Women thus were involved in reproduction of their progeny, reproductive labour related to their family and productive or public labour outside the family. The complementary pattern of the *kudis* enabled them to perform these forms of labour. Besides this, in this society there existed certain type of collective labour and both the labour of men and women was not always wage labour and sometimes, it may be free labour.

Besides, it shows that, most of the tasks which was performed by the women labourers in this society required certain skills and they were specialists in harvesting, winnowing, rice husking, making coir fiber etc. The skilled labour of women forms the main characteristic of this society. But this

skilled labour was transformed during the capitalist period in which they had to perform public production and household production. Besides this in the capitalist society, her burden of labour had also increased and only her public labour was calculated as wage labour. In the capitalist society, she is being treated as domestic labourer, consumer, victim or as a sexual thing.

The North Malabar experiences show the women's active involvement in the production process³. Like the production process here women were actively involved in the agrarian struggles like *pullupari samaram*, *tholviraku samaram*, *nelladukkal samaram*, *kalamkettu samaram* etc⁴. It was the skilled character of their labour that makes her participation in the agrarian struggle. Thus their active participation in the production process that had brought them into these struggle. Another reason behind the mass participation of women in the agrarian struggle was the problem of subsistence and the question of the survival of *kudis*. They came forward when their position as labourer was questioned. It also shows that their

³ Tanika Sarkar in 'Politics and women in Bengal- the conditions and meaning of participation' in J. Krishnamurthy (ed.), *Women in Colonial India: Essay on Survival, Work and the State*, OUP, Delhi, 1989 also argues that it was the active involvement in the production process that had brought the women in to the struggle.

⁴ Vasantha Kannabiran and K. Lalitha, 'That Magic Time' Women in the Telangana People's Struggle' in Kum Kum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (eds). *Recasting women*, Kali for women, New Delhi, 1993; Lalitha, Susie Tharu et. al (eds), *We Were Making History: Life Stories of Women in the Telengana People's Struggle*, Kali for women, 1989 are some other works regarding women's participation in agrarian struggles.

struggle do not result in the preservation of *kudis*, but in a limited way facilitated their survival. The case study of Karivelloor village shows that while women were rushed to the spot of the struggle to participate in it, they were stopped by the men, probably because of the men's concern for the survival of the *kudis*. After the struggle the burden of family came under the shoulders of women. It is, however, clear that this substantially large participation of women in the agrarian struggle was not accidental.

For men one of the reason behind their participation in agrarian struggles was agrarian legislation. But to the women their main reason was the problem of subsistence and they were not bothered about agrarian legislation⁵. In the case of women labourers other factors like socio-economic situation had also been increases their awareness. During the course of struggle, they had gained great courage and had actively participated in the struggle. And in those days the patriarchal norms like traveling alone at night, climbing on the tree etc had never restricted them. But when the struggle was called off they had to return to their household.

Studies from different parts of the country⁶ show that land being the most important source of agriculture, its availability and distribution

⁵ From the oral testimonies, we have receive very little information about the effect of agrarian legislation on women.

⁶ Shahra, Razavi (ed.) *Agrarian Change, Gender and Land Rights*, Blackwell Publishing, United Kingdom, 2003; In this edited work, leading feminist scholars in different regions like the Sub-Saharan, Africa, Tanzania, India and Uzbekistan provide searching treatment of the long neglected matter of gender and access to land.

determine agricultural development and overall labour use in a region. In this context, women's rights on land and decision making power had an important role in determining their labour status. Until recently women's land right in India has received little attention and Bina Agarwals work is one of the important work that raises this question⁷. Even though the Revenue settlement registers of the British period do not present a clear picture of the extent of concentration of land, the available settlement registers of Kandakkai, Karivelloor etc proves that the number of women property holders in this area are comparatively high. Besides these we can see the active participation of women in the agrarian struggles and also in the production process. Thus we can trace a link between their right to property, and their contribution to social production and exchange.

⁷ Bina Agarwal, *A field of one's own*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 1994; *Gender and Legal Rights in Landed Property in India*, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1999.

Participants in the Agrarian struggles of North Malabar



P. Chiri
(Peringome)



P. Meenakshi
(Peringome)



C. Madhavi
(Nandavanam)



E.T. Karthyayani
(Cheruvathoor)



P.K. Kunjakkamma
(Kandakkai)



Thambayi
(Kandakkai)



V. Mani
(Eleri)



T.V. Mani
(Eleri)



Kaarichi
(Eleri)



Thambayi
(Eleri)



K. Chirutheyi
(Eleri)



K. Parvathi
(Eleri)



Kunjamma
(Palayi)



K. Lakshmi
(Udinoor)



M. Kunjatha
(Puliyanoor)



P. Yasoda



P.M. Madhavi



N.K. Nandhini



K.T. Janaki



P. Nani



E. Janaki



K. Janaki



P.C. Karthiyayani kuttiyamma



V.V. Mani



C.V. Kalyani



K. Devi



P.P. Madhavi and P.P. Santha



Kaini Devi



M.V Kalyani



K.V. Mani



K. Paru



K. Narayani



K. Narayaniamma



R.K. Janaki



C.P. Sarada



M.K. Paru



V.V. Sarojini



C. Lakshmikutty



A.V. Janaki



A.C. Paatta



A. Kumba



A.V. Mani



Devaki Antharjanam



P. Chiruthamma



K.V. Kumjakkam



Kunjamina



K. Manikkvam



P.T. Parvathi



K.K. Janaki



Neyy pullu



Habitat of *Neyy pullu*



Cheriyamma smarakam



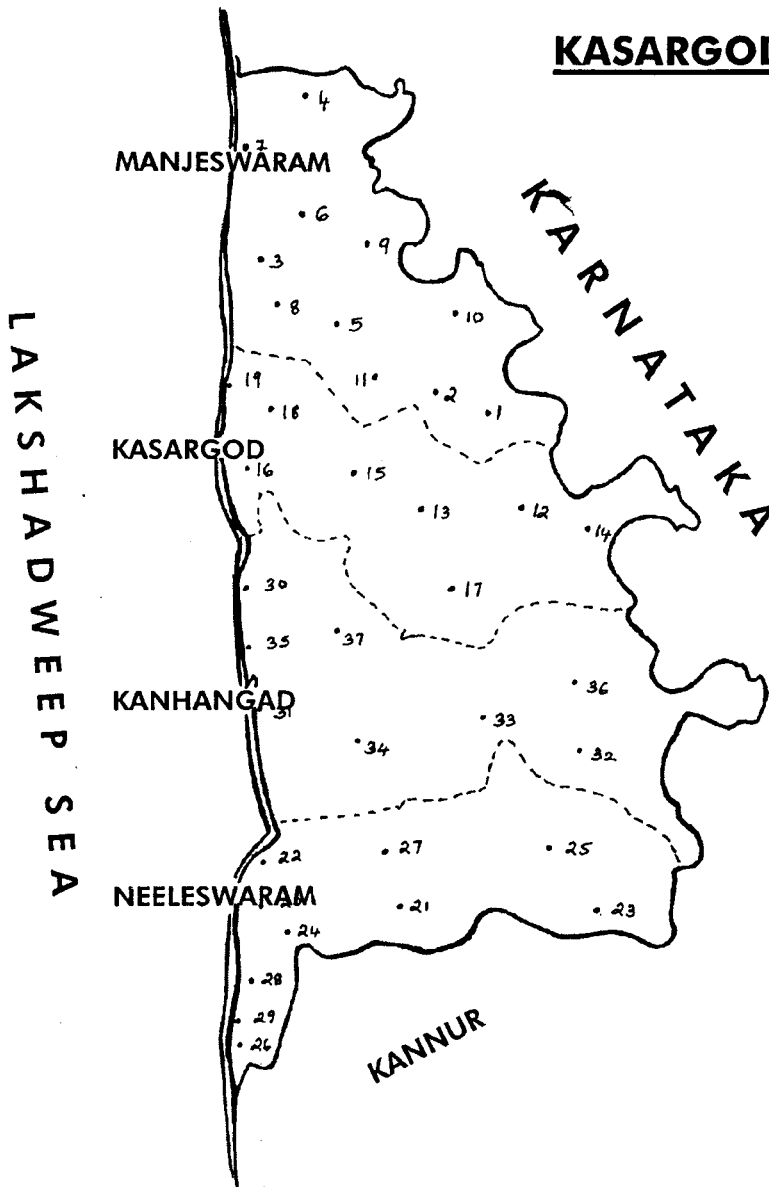
Cheriyamma smaraka vayanasaala



Paddy field: a distant view



Rice harvesting

MAP**KASARGOD DISTRICT**

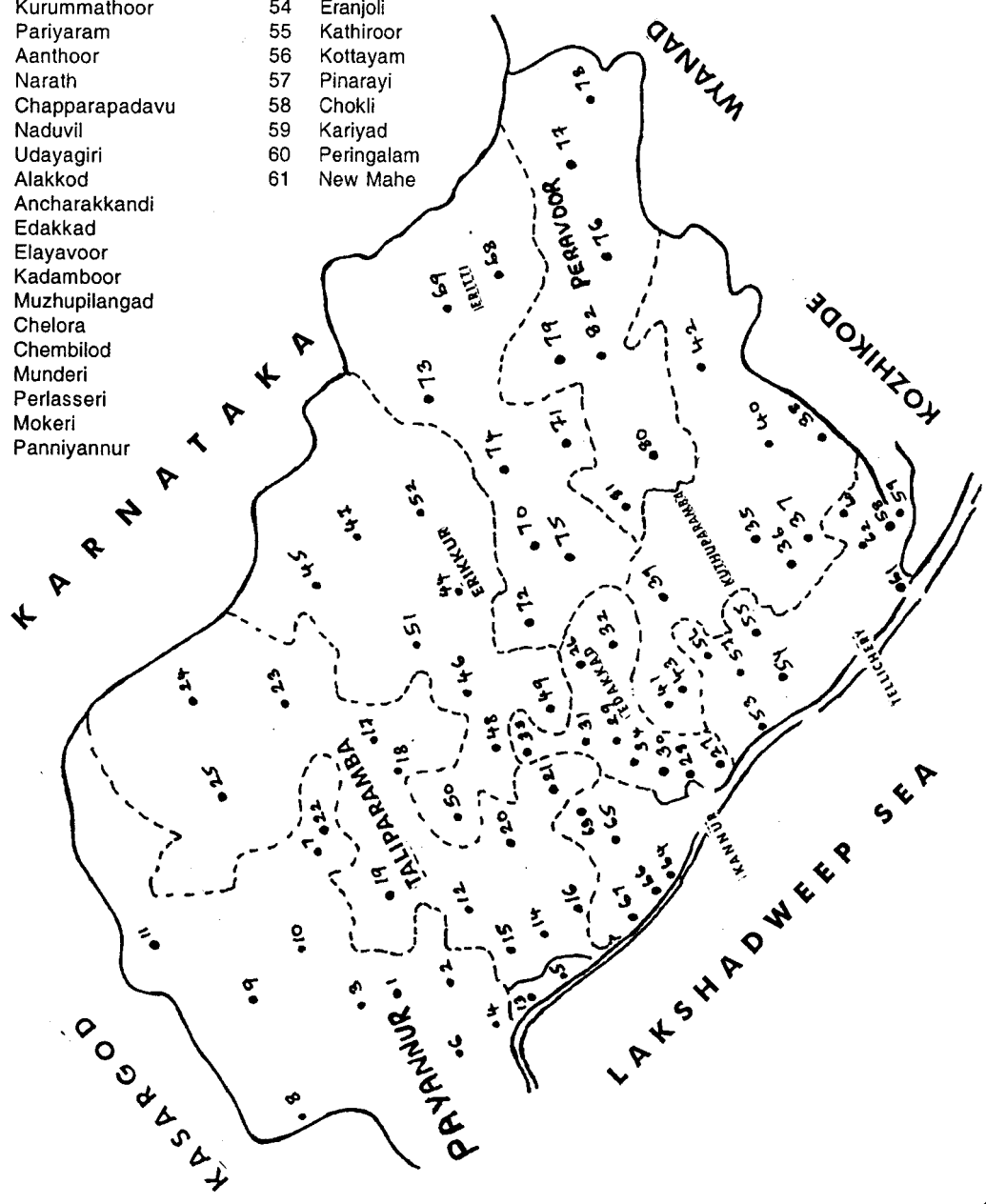
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Beloor | 13. Muliyar | 25. West Eleri |
| 2. Kumpadaje | 14. Delampadi | 26. Trikkarippur |
| 3. Mangalpadi | 15. Chengala | 27. Kinanoor Karinthalam |
| 4. Vorkkadi | 16. Chemmanad | 28. Padanna |
| 5. Puthige | 17. Beddukka | 29. Valiyaparambu |
| 6. Meencha | 18. Mathur | 30. Uduma |
| 7. Manjeswaram | 19. Megralputhur | 31. Ajanoor |
| 8. Kumbala | 20. Cheruvathur | 32. Balal |
| 9. Paivalike | 21. Kayyur-Cheemeni | 33. Kodombelur |
| 10. Enmakaje | 22. Neeleswaram | 34. Madikkai |
| 11. Badiyedukka | 23. East Eleri | 35. Pallikkara |
| 12. Karadeka | 24. Pilikkode | 36. Panatthadi |
| | | 37. Pulloor Periya |

MAP

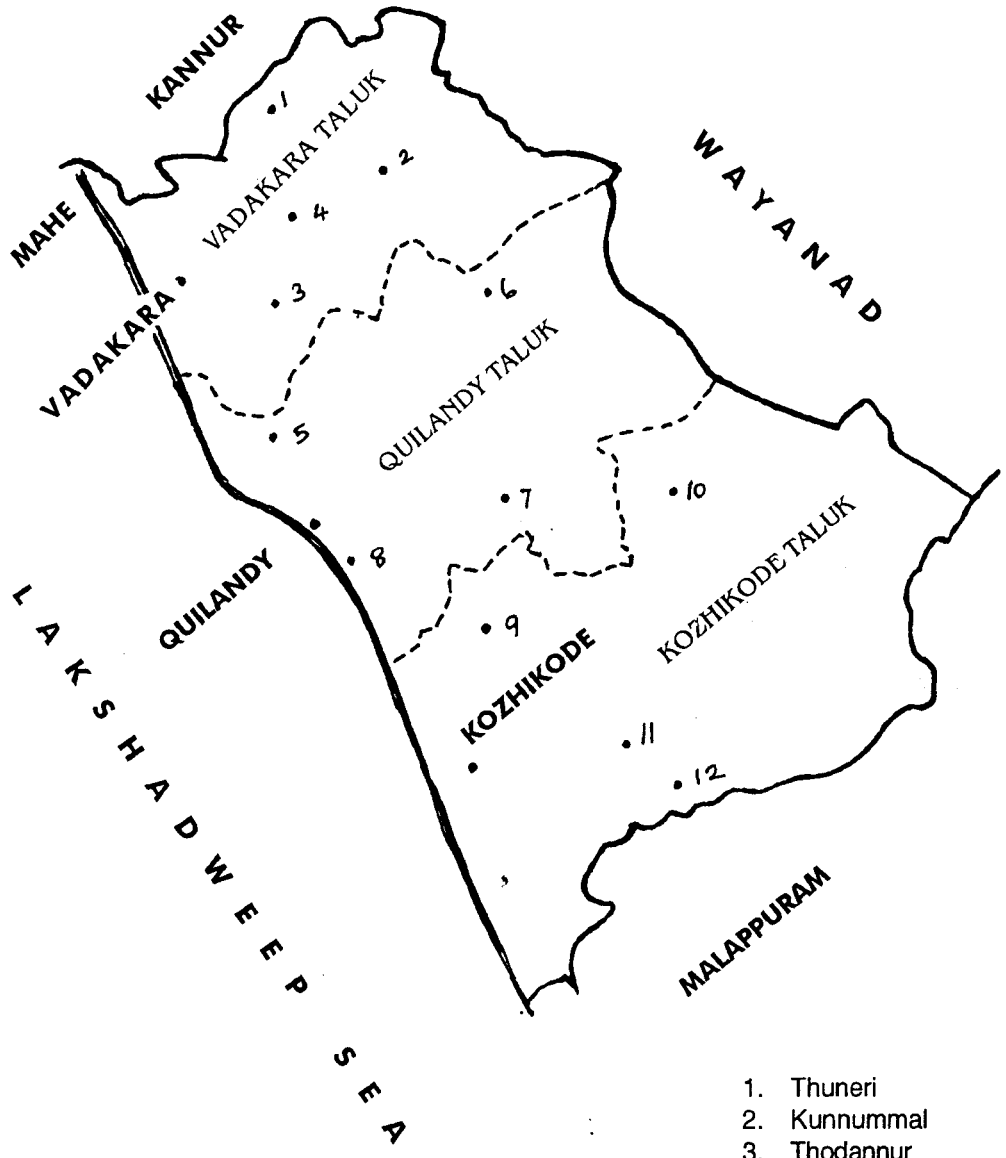
CANNANORE DISTRICT

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Cheruthazham | 37 Panur |
| 2. Ezhom | 38 Triprangot |
| 3. Kunjimangalam | 39 Chittariparamba |
| 4. Madayi | 40 Kunnothu Paramba |
| 5. Mattool | 41 Mangattidam |
| 6. Ramanthali | 42 Patyam |
| 7. Kadannapalli, Panapuzha | 43 Vengad |
| 8. Karivelloor, Peralam | 44 Erikkur |
| 9. Kankol, Aalapadamba | 45 Eeruvessi |
| 10. Eramam Kutoor | 46 Malappattam |
| 11. Peringome Vayakkara | 47 Payyavoor |
| 12. Pattuvam | 48 Kolacheri |
| 13. Cherukunnu | 49 Kottiyatoor |
| 14. Kalyasseri | 50 Mayyil |
| 15. Kannapuram | 51 Srikandapuram |
| 16. Pappinisseri | 52 Padiyur-Kalliyad |
| 17. Chengalay | 53 Dharmadam |
| 18. Kurummathoor | 54 Eranjoli |
| 19. Pariyaram | 55 Kathiroor |
| 20. Aanthoor | 56 Kottayam |
| 21. Narath | 57 Pinarayi |
| 22. Chapparapadavu | 58 Chokli |
| 23. Naduvil | 59 Kariyad |
| 24. Udayagiri | 60 Peringalam |
| 25. Alakkod | 61 New Mahe |
| 26. Ancharakkandi | |
| 27. Edakkad | |
| 28. Elayavoor | |
| 29. Kadamboor | |
| 30. Muzhupilangad | |
| 31. Chelora | |
| 32. Chembilod | |
| 33. Munderi | |
| 34. Perlasseri | |
| 35. Mokeri | |
| 36. Panniyannur | |

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 62 Kodiyeri | 73 Payam |
| 63 Chirakkal | 74 Kizhoor Chavasseri |
| 64 Pallikkunnu | 75 Mattannoor |
| 65 Puzhadi | 76 Kanichhal |
| 66 Valapattanam | 77 Kelakam |
| 67 Azhikod | 78 Kottiyoor |
| 68 Aralar, | 79 Muzhakkunnu |
| 69 Ayyankunnu | 80 Kolayad |
| 70 Kizhaloor | 81 Maloor |
| 71 Tillenkkeri | 82 Peravoor |
| 72 Koodali | |



MAP KOZHIKODE DISTRICT



1. Thuneri
2. Kunnummal
3. Thodannur
4. Nadapuram
5. Melady
6. Perambra
7. Balussery
8. Panthalayani
9. Chelannur
10. Koduvally
11. Kunnamangalam
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Malayalam

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Pinarai-Parappuram Conference, 50th Anniversary.

ORAL TESTIMONIES

Interviews

Name	Place
Aandi, Aayat,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Aandi, Kandiyam,	Machoomala, Cannanore
Ahammad Kutty,	Ulliyeri, Kozhikode
Ambu, K.V.,	Palayi, Kasargod
Ambujakshi, K.O.,	Vaduvankulam, Vessala, Cannanore
Ambukkan,	Ramagiri, Kasargod
Ammalu,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Ammaluamma, C. P.,	Chemmarathoor, Kozhikode
Ammarama, P.,	Madikkai, Kasargod
Ammu, C.,	Madikkai, Kasargod
Anil Kumar, A.V.,	Cannanore
Appakutty Koliyat Valappil,	Parassinikkadavu, Cannanore
Appu Nair,	Eleri, Kasargod
Atchumesthiri,	Eranjoli, Cannanore
Atchuthan,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Atchuthan, A.V.,	Erikkulam, Kasargod
Balakrishnan, K.,	Cannanore
Balakrishnan, K.,	Eleri, Kasargod
Balan, K.P.,	Mokeri, Kozhikode

Bapputti, C.,	Machoormala, Cannanore
Bapputti, K.,	Machoormala, Cannanore
Baskaran,	Pazhassi, Cannanore
Chalil Janaki,	Sivapuram, Cannanore
Chandran,	Puliyanoor, Kasargod
Chandroth Janaki,	Parassinikkadavu, Cannanore
Chappila,	Kutoor, Cannanore
Cheeru Illathu,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Cheeru, Alavakkan,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Cheeru, Mekkunnathu,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Cheeru, Padinjarathu,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Cheeru, Thavarath,	Cheruvannur, Meppayur, Kozhikode
Cheerutti, Vellakki,	Sivapuram, Cannanore
Chemmaruthy,	Padinjarekkara, Cannanore
Chemmaruthy,	Kayoor, Kasargod
Cheriya, C.,	Eleri, Kasargod
Cheriya, N.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
Cheriyamma,	Nandavanam, Kasargod
Cherotta Devi,	Machoormala, Cannanore
Chindan, K.,	Maathil, Cannanore
Chiri, E.,	Eleri, Kasargod
Chiri, P.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
Chiri, P.,	Peringome, Cannanore

Chiri, Pilankoo,	Chandravayal, Cannanore
Chiri, T.V.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
Chiriyamma, T.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
Chirutha, C.,	Tillenkkeri, Cannanore
Chirutha, M.,	Paatyam, Cannanore
Chirutha, T.V.	Kayoor, Kasargod
Chiruthakutty,	Meppayur, Kozhikode
Chiruthamma, P.,	Kalikadavu, Kasargod
Chirutheyi, K.,	Eleri, Kasargod
Chitteyi, T.,	Kayoor, Kasargod
Damodharan, A.C.,	Kavumbayi, Cannanore
Damodharan, P.T.,	Koorkara, Cannanore
Devaki, K.M.,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Devaki, K.P.,	Kandakkai, Cannanore
Devaki, M.V.,	Kandakkai, Cannanore
Devi, T.,	Kallai, Kozhikode
Embichi Pennu,	Kannadipoyil, Kozhikode
Erothe Janu,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Gopalakrishnan, V.M.,	Naniyoor, Cannanore
Gopalan,	Kayoor, Kasargod
Gopalan, K.,	Chazhakkadavu, Kasargod
Gopalan, P.,	Eranjoli, Cannanore
Govindan Nair, Kaniyat,	Peralam, Cannanore

Govindan, Punathil,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Ibrahim, K.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
Janaki,	Mokeri, Kozhikode
Janaki, A.V.,	Kozhummal, Cannanore
Janaki, E.,	Podikkund, Cannanore
Janaki, K.,	Bakkalam, Cannanore
Janaki, K.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
Janaki, K.K.,	Sivapuram, Cannanore
Janaki, K.T.,	Manjodi , Cannanore
Janaki, Karathan,	Sivapuram, Cannanore
Janaki, R.K.,	Pazhassi, Cannanore
Janaki, Upperi,	Ozhakom, Cannanore
Janu,	Machoormala, Cannanore
Janu, Muliyl,	Chirakkal, Cannanore
Janu, Puthokudi Meethal,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
K. K. Kunjanandan Nambiar,	Mayyil, Cannanore
Kaarichi,	Eleri, Kasargod
Kaarichi,	Kanichira, Kasargod
Kallu Naroth,	Sivapuram, Cannanore
Kalyani, C. K.,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Kalyani, Chenanvettil,	Vellachhal, Kasargod
Kalyani, Katoor,	Chandravayal, Cannanore
Kalyani, Kuniyil,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode

Kalyani, M.V.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
Kalyani, T.V.,	Kayoor, Kasargod
Kalyani, Vellare,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Kammaran, V.,	Timiri, Kasargod
Kanisan Devi,	Vellachhal, Kasargod
Kannan Nambiar, P.,	Korom, Cannanore
Kannan Puthanpurayil,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Kannan, K.,	Eleri, Kasargod
Kannan, Kappanakaran,	Padinjarekkara, Cannanore
Kannan, R.,	Narakkode, Kozhikode
Kannan, T.,	Palayi, Kasargod
Kannan, Thaivalappil,	Peralam, Cannanore
Karichi,	Madikkai, Kasargod
Karthiyayani Kuttyamma, P.C.,	Pilikode, Kasargod
Karthiyayani, E.T.,	Cheruvathoor, Kasargod
Karunan, T.,	Chirakkal, Cannanore
Kellambeth Janaki,	Sivapuram, Cannanore
Kesavan Namboodiri, M.,	Puliyanoor, Kasargod
Koran, Kuniyan,	Vallipilavu, Cannanore
Kottan, M.,	Palayi, Kasargod
Kotti, V.,	Madikkai, Kasargod
Krishnan Nair, C.,	Kalikadavu, Kasrgod
Krishnan Nambiar, E.P.,	Koorkara, Cannanore

Krishnan Nambiar, P.,	Prapoyil, Cannanore
Krishnan, C.V.,	Parassinikkadavu, Cannanore
Krishnan, E.V.,	Edacheri, Kozhikode
Krishnan, P.,	Chirakkal, Cannanore
Krishnan, T.V.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
Kumaran, K.P.,	Balussery, Kannadipoyil, Kozhikode
Kumaran, P. K.,	Sivapuram, Cannanore
Kumba, A.,	Pollapoyil Kasargod
Kunjakkam, K.V.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
Kunjambu, C.,	Vellachhal, Kasargod
Kunjambu, K.,	Machoormala, Cannanore
Kunjambu, K.,	Udinoor, Kasargod
Kunjambu, P.,	Kalichampodi, Kasargod
Kunjambu, P.,	Timiri, Kasargod
Kunjambu, Pilakka,	Vellachhal, Kasargod
Kunjamma,	Palayi, Kasargod
Kunjammarama, P.V.,	Madikkai, Kasargod
Kunjani, P.,	Noonji, Kasargod
Kunjapa Nambiar, Thacheri,	Kolacherimukk, Cannanore
Kunjappa Nambiar, T.K.,	Kandakkai, Cannanore
Kunjappa, U.,	Chooral, Cannanore
Kunjappa, U.,	Mayyil, Cannanore
Kunjappan, M.K.,	Kutoor, Cannanore

Kunjatha, Meethale,	Puliyanoor, Kasargod
Kunjikannan, E.V.,	Maathil, Cannanore
Kunjikannan, K.V.,	Payam, Cannanore
Kunjikannan, Kalli,	Sivapuram, Cannanore
Kunjikannan, Muliyl,	Manjodi , Cannanore
Kunjikrishnan, Koliyadan,	Nandavanam, Kasargod
Kunjimatha,	Sivapuram, Cannanore
Kunjirama, P.P.,	Kandakkai, Cannanore
Kunjiraman,	Karinthalam, Kasargod
Kunjiraman, C.,	Tillenkkeri, Cannanore
Kunjiraman, Pavour,	Peralam, Cannanore
Kunjiraman, Podora,	Eleri, Kasargod
Kunjiraman, U.P.,	Mayyil, Cannanore
Kunjiraman. K.P.,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Kuttiparu, Kandoth,	Kandakkai, Cannanore
Lakshmi, K.V.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
Lakshmi, Kizhakool,	Udinoor, Kasargod
Lakshmi, P.,	Kalichampodi, Kasargod
Lakshmi, T.,	Cheetakkavu, Kasargod
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Madhavi Chandroth,	Parassinikkadavu, Cannanore
Madhavi, C.,	Nandavanam, Kasargod
Madhavi, C.,	Machoormala, Cannanore
Madhavi, Kelambeth,	Sivapuram, Cannanore
Madhavi, Nambithoth,	Koothali, Kozhikode
Madhavi, P.P.,	Vellachhal, Kasargod
Madhavi, T.,	Cheetakkavu, Kasargod
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Mani, K.V.	Kayoor, Kasargod
Mani, Kunnumal,	Maathil, Cannanore
Mani, T.V.,	Eleri, Kasargod
Mani, V.,	Eleri, Kasargod
Mani, V.V.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
Mani,,A.V.,	Korom, Cannanore
Manikkam,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Manikkam, K.,	Kayoor, Kasargod
Manikkam, P.,	Kannankai, Kasargod
Manikkam, Thottathil,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Matha,	Panikkotti, Kozhikode
Matha,	Paatyam, Cannanore

Matha, Mandodi,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Mathu,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Mathu, Kattil Parambathu,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Mathu, Kottiyil Meethal,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Mathu, Kovummal,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Mathu, Thekkele,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Meenakshi,	Kandakkai, Cannanore
Meenakshi, Pilankoo,	Chandravayal, Cannanore
Mukundan,	Karinbanapalam, Kozhikode
Nandini, N.K.,	Puthuppadi, Kozhikode
Nani, Kolollathil,	Karinbanapalam, Kozhikode
Nani, P.,	Morazha, Cannanore
Narayanan Nambiar, E.K.,	Kavumbayi, Cannanore
Narayanan Nambiar, K.V.,	Kandakkai, Cannanore
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Narayanan Nambiar, V.V.,	Aravanchal, Cannanore
Narayanan, Mattur,	Ozhakom, Cannanore
Narayani,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Narayani, K. O.,	Kandakkai, Cannanore
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Narayani, Kalliat,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Narayani, M.,	Panikkotti, Badagara, Kozhikode
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Narayani, P.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
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Narayani, T.V.,	Puthiyappa, Kozhikode
Narayaniamma, K.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
Paatta,	Palayi, Kasargod
Paatta, A.C.,	Kayoor, Kasargod
Parameshwaran, T. M.,	Maathil, Cannanore
Paru, K.,	Kayoor, Kasargod
Paru, M.K.,	Kutoor, Cannanore
Parvathi, A.V.,	Payam, Cannanore
Parvathi, K.,	Eleri, Kasargod
Parvathi, Kolavalappil,	Udinoor, Kasargod
Parvathi, P.T.,	Koorkara, Cannanore
Pokki,	Puthiyappa, Kozhikode
Radha, V.M.,	Naniyoor, Cannanore
Raghavan, K.K.,	Pazhassi, Cannanore
Raghavan, P.V.,	Manjodi , Cannanore
Raghavan, T.,	Pazhassi, Cannanore
Rajeendran, V.K.,	Onchiyam, Kozhikode
Raman Nambiar P.,	Koorkara, Cannanore
Raman, Payyaratta,	Cheruthazham, Cannanore
Ramarkutty, C.V.,	Anchampeedika, Cannanore
Rayarapan, K.P.R.,	Kalliasseri, Cannanore

Sankaran, T.V.,	Pollapoyil, Kasargod
Santha, P.P.,	Vellachhal, Kasargod
Saradha C. P.,	Nelliyad, Cannanore
Saradha,	Chirakkal, Cannanore
Sarojini, V.V.,	Karivelloor, Cannanore
Sathyabhama, Rayaroth,	Narakkode, Kozhikode
Savithri, M.,	Koorkara, Cannanore
Shankara Nambeesan, A.,	Mathamangalam, Cannanore
Sridevi, K.P.	Kandakkai, Cannanore
Sridevi, U.P.,	Mayyil, Cannanore
Sridevikutty Amma,	Timiri, Kasargod
Srideviyamma,	Mayyil, Cannanore
Subrahmania Shenoy,	Thekkibazar, Cannanore
Sukumaran, K.,	Nandavanam, Kasargod
Thambayi,	Eleri, Kasargod
Undachi,	Palayi, Kasargod
Undachi, P.T.,	Noonji, Kasargod
Unnikrishnan Nambiar,	Aravanchal, Cannanore
Valiyakunjambu, Athilat,	Kandakkai, Cannanore
Valiyambu,	Vallipilavu, Cannanore
Venugopal, K.C.,	Kandakkai, Cannanore
Yesodha, Chandroth,	Parassinikkadavu, Cannanore
Yesodha, Payyanadan,	Kalliasseri, Cannanore

GLOSSARY

<i>modan, punam</i>	: name applied to paddy crops
<i>viruppu</i>	: first crop
<i>mundagon</i>	: second
<i>punja</i>	: third crop
<i>pattam</i>	: rent
<i>kudi</i>	: used to denote a particular settlement pattern
<i>kudima/kudiyayma</i>	: settlement rights
<i>janmi</i>	: land owner
<i>janmam</i>	: hereditary proprietorship in land
<i>kanam</i>	: land tenure based on mortgage or lease
<i>verumpattam</i>	: tenant-at-will
<i>nattipattu</i>	: song sung in the fields
<i>kanji</i>	: rice gruel
<i>kalappura</i>	: store house
<i>kochi</i>	: forest
<i>swantham pani</i>	: own labour
<i>karshaka sangham</i>	: farmers organization
<i>jatha</i>	: procession
<i>pattini jatha</i>	: hungers procession
<i>vittittavan vilakoyyum</i>	: those who sowed will reap the crop
<i>nelledukkal samaram</i>	: capturing paddy forcibly
<i>vilakoittu samaram</i>	: harvesting struggle
<i>pullupari samaram</i>	: grass cutting struggle
<i>mana</i>	: house of a nambudiri
<i>thol</i>	: bark of trees
<i>tholviraku samaram</i>	: conducting strike by cutting the trees forcibly from <i>janmis</i> forest
<i>kalamkettu samaram</i>	: conducting strike by carrying the destroyed pots and vessels
<i>pidiyari</i>	: a fistful of rice
<i>balasangam</i>	: children's organization

<i>marumakkathayam</i>	: system of inheritance through mother
<i>mela</i>	: fair
<i>teru</i>	: street
<i>nattunadappu/maryadai</i>	: local customs
<i>taravad</i>	: residential unit of landowning class

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

The term Edangali is often used instead of macleod seer, being the ancient name of the Malabar measure.

According to Madras measure;

8 ollucks (alakku)	= 1 paddee (padi) or measure
8 measures	= 1 mercal (marakkal)
5 mercals	= 1 parrah (parai)
3200 measures or 400 mercals	= 1 Garce (garasai)

1 According to heaped measure;

2 Ayakoo	= 1 Oikoo
2 Oikoos	= 1 Oori
2 Oori	= 1 Nai or measure = 32 Tolas of rice heaped
4 Nai	= 1 macleod seer = 33 1 bs
10 macleod seers	= 1 parrah or maund = 33 lbs

The parrah varies from 6 ½ to 12 ½ seers. The Ernad Parrah is about 32 1bs, and the term is sometimes confounded with the maund weight.

In Palaghat 12 parrahs	= 80 macleod seers
In ponnany 6 ¼ macleod seers	= 1 Vadapen
In cochin 15 macleod seers	= 1 parrah
In some places 6 Nais	= 1 Tooni; in other 8 Nais



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