

**PRINT CULTURE AND MARRYING FOR  
LOVE: AN EMOTIONAL HISTORY OF  
COLONIAL MALABAR**

Thesis  
submitted to the University of Calicut  
for the award of the degree,  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY**

**SALEENA K.K.**



**RESEARCH AND POST GRADUATE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
MALABAR CHRISTIAN COLLEGE  
KOZHIKODE**

**2024**

## DECLARATION

I, Saleena K.K., do hereby declare that this thesis entitled '**Print Culture And Marrying For Love: An Emotional History of Colonial Malabar**' is a bona fide record of research work done by me under the supervision of Dr. Laina.P, Associate Professor, Department of History, Providence Women's College, Calicut, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History. I also declare that this thesis or part thereof has not been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma.



**SALEENA K.K.**

Research Scholar

Research and Postgraduate Department of History

Malabar Christian College

Kozhikode

Kozhikode

Date: 27.03.2024

**Dr. LAINA P.**  
Associate Professor  
Department of History  
Providence Women's College  
Kozhikode

## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this thesis entitled '**Print Culture And Marrying For Love: An Emotional History of Colonial Malabar**' submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History of the University of Calicut is a bona fide research carried out by Saleena K.K. under my supervision and that no part of this thesis has been presented before, for the award of any degree, diploma or other similar title.

Both the examiners have not recommended any modifications or suggestions and therefore the original thesis is resubmitted as such. The soft copy attached is the same as that of the resubmitted copy.

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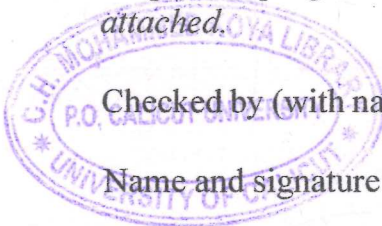
**Dr. LAINA P**  
Associate Professor  
Department of History  
Providence Women's College  
Kozhikode- 673 009



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**SALEENA K K**

# **Print Culture and Marrying for Love: An Emotional History of Colonial Malabar**

**Saleena. K.K,**  
Research Scholar

**Dr. Laina. P**  
Research Supervisor

## **ABSTRACT**

Marriage is one of the most ubiquitous institutions of our society, governed by certain societal rules and regulations laid out by religious beliefs. The system of marriage that prevailed in Malabar during the nineteenth century was intricately connected to and inseparable from the caste system. Therefore, marriage, religion, and family have been interlinked with each other. Traditionally, arranged marriage was considered as the acceptable norm, where a person's choice of mates, especially a woman's, was strictly controlled.

The radical changes in the socio economic sphere of Malabar accompanying colonial rule provided favourable circumstances for the emergence of the middle class. This middle class restructured the trajectory of Malabar in many complex turns and played a creative role in accelerating the growth of modernity. Parallel to the emergence of the middle class, the nineteenth century Malabar society witnessed the inception of print and print culture. Print enabled the widespread dissemination of ideas and concepts, and introduced a new world of debate and discussion. The proliferation of novels, magazines and newspapers exemplifies a trend towards the wider dispersal of reading culture. The number of libraries and reading rooms established in different parts of Malabar indicates the massive spread of reading culture. Consequently, a literary public sphere was formed in its own distinctive way incorporating a wide range of people. Women, who were newly exposed to literacy and the ensuing 'new identity', also formed a part of this public sphere with certain restrictions.

Imbued by colonial culture the middle class tried for a re-modelling of existing social conditions somewhat imitating the colonial model. Their cultural and ideological exchange with colonial modernity led to the emergence of novel notions of individuality and redefined norms and values concerning social life. Print was the prominent medium chosen by social revolutionaries for propagating new aspirations for marriage and conjugality. Print culture popularised the concept of 'companionate marriage' based on mutual love and affection.

Traditionally men and women marrying for love was seen as a diversion from the natural state of affairs. However, modernization channelised circumstances for opposite genders to interact with each other without restriction and created a



conducive atmosphere for love marriages. The social diffusion of love was facilitated by the development of print culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which allowed the wide dissemination of the concept of love as a commonly recognised form of emotion.

In the twentieth century, with increased mobility of population, more opportunities for men and women to mingle before marriage in work places, political spaces, and social activities, raised the possibilities of love feelings prior to marriage. Thus a new notion of 'marrying for love' germinated in the late nineteenth century and gradually developed in the twentieth century and took deep roots in the twenty first century. The middle class has displayed increasing concern about marriage and selection of an ideal partner.

Love became not only ubiquitous but also increasingly 'popular' in twentieth-century literature, perhaps for the first time. During this period there was a significant cultural shift that provided romantic love an unprecedented social validation. The literature explored the evolving, modern identities through love, and romantic love became vital for the construction of modern identity both for men and women.

But still the middle class reformism of the nineteenth century clung in a dilemma between tradition and modernity. Colonial modernity urged men to construct new definitions of their own identity in the family and society. Though the concepts and ideals of modernity were accepted and inculcated by them, they also strove to firmly hold on to their indigenous traditions and rituals and made a 'selective acceptance'. Thus love seems more like a choice sanctioned by the society, provided love should stand within the borders of religion and socio economic status; where the line between arranged and love marriages are blurring. This shift in attitude can be seen even in twentieth century literary expressions which indicates a shift in the 'emotionology' in Malabar when the society moved from the late nineteenth to twentieth century.

In Malabar along with the development of the concept of marrying for love the status of women got refashioned, limiting women's authority to the private realm in relation to gendered perceptions. The 'desired domesticity' ideal popularised through print culture confined women to patriarchal authority and re-moulded the image of women as the intimate companion of her husband as 'helpmates'. But the recognition of wife as a companion reflected a new value in the Malabar society.

**Key words:** Emotion, Love, Marriage, Middle Class, Print Culture

**അച്ചടി സംസ്കാരവും പ്രണയ വിവാഹവും: കൊളോണിയൽ  
മലബാറിന്റെ വൈകാരിക ചരിത്രം**

സലീന. കെ.കെ  
ഗവേഷക

ഡോ. ലൈന. പി  
ഗവേഷണ മാർഗ്ഗദർശി

**പ്രബന്ധ സംഗ്രഹം**

മത വിശ്വാസങ്ങളാൽ സ്വാധീനിക്കപ്പെടുകയും സാമൂഹിക നിയന്ത്രണങ്ങളാൽ നിർമ്മിച്ചെടുക്കുകയും ചെയ്ത ഒരു സ്ഥാപനവൽക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ട രൂപമായാണ് വിവാഹം നിലനിന്ന് പോകുന്നത്. പത്തൊൻപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ മലബാറിൽ വിവാഹമെന്ന സ്ഥാപനത്തിന് ജാതി വ്യവസ്ഥയുമായി ആഴത്തിലുള്ള ബന്ധമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. വിവാഹം-മതം-കുടുംബം എന്ന ശ്രേണി പരസ്പര ബന്ധിതമായിട്ടാണ് പ്രവർത്തിച്ചത്. നിശ്ചയിച്ചുറപ്പിച്ച വിവാഹ സമ്പ്രദായമായിരുന്നു അത്, പങ്കാളികളെ തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കുന്നതിൽ പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് സ്ത്രീകൾക്ക് വളരെയധികം നിയന്ത്രണങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു.

കൊളോണിയൽ ഭരണകാലത്ത് മലബാറിലെ സാമൂഹിക-സാമ്പത്തിക മണ്ഡലത്തിലെ സുപ്രധാന പരിവർത്തനങ്ങൾ മധ്യവർഗത്തിന്റെ ഉയർച്ചയ്ക്ക് അനുകൂലമായ സാഹചര്യങ്ങൾ സൃഷ്ടിച്ചു. പുതുതായി ഉയർന്നുവന്ന മധ്യവർഗം മലബാറിന്റെ വികസനത്തെ ഗണ്യമായി മാറ്റിമറിച്ചു, ആധുനികതയുടെ പുരോഗതിയെ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിച്ച സങ്കീർണ്ണമായ പരസ്പരപ്രവർത്തനമായിരുന്നു അത്. അതോടൊപ്പം, പത്തൊൻപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ മലബാർ അച്ചടിയുടെ സംസ്കാരത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് ഉൾക്കൊണ്ടതായിരുന്നു. അച്ചടിയുടെ വരവ് ആശയങ്ങളുടെ പ്രചരണത്തിന് സൗകര്യമൊരുക്കുകയും സംവാദത്തിന്റെയും വ്യവഹാരത്തിന്റെയും ഒരു പുതിയ മേഖലയ്ക്ക് വഴിയൊരുക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. നോവൽ, മാസിക, പത്രങ്ങൾ മറ്റു പ്രസിദ്ധീകരണങ്ങൾ തുടങ്ങിയവയുടെ വർദ്ധനവ് കൂടുതൽ വ്യാപകമായ വായനാ സംസ്കാരത്തിലേക്ക് മലബാറിനെ പരിവർത്തിപ്പിച്ചു. മലബാറിലുടനീളം നിരവധി ലൈബ്രറികളും വായനശാലകളും വ്യാപിച്ചത് അച്ചടിസംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെയൂടെ വിപുലമായ വ്യാപനത്തെ സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നതായിരുന്നു. തൽഫലമായി, വൈവിധ്യമാർന്ന വ്യക്തികളെ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുന്ന സവിശേഷമായ ഒരു പൊതുമണ്ഡലം ഉയർന്നുവന്നു. സാക്ഷരതയിലൂടെ മറ്റൊരു 'സ്വത്വ പ്രതിനിധാനത്തിലേക്ക്' പ്രവേശനം നേടാൻ തുടങ്ങിയ സ്ത്രീകൾ പരിമിതികളോടെയെങ്കിലും ഈ പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തിൽ പ്രവേശിച്ചു.

കൊളോണിയൽ സംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ സ്വാധീനമുപയോഗിച്ച് മധ്യവർഗ്ഗസമൂഹം നിലവിലുള്ള സാമൂഹിക സാഹചര്യങ്ങളെ പുനർനിർമ്മിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുകയും കൊളോണിയൽ മാതൃകകളെ അനുകരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. കൊളോണിയൽ ആധുനികതയുടെ ഇടപെടലിന്റെ ഫലമായി 'വ്യക്തി' എന്ന നിലയ്ക്കുള്ള പുതിയ ആശയങ്ങളുടെ വ്യാപനം സുഗമമാക്കുകയും സാമൂഹികമായി നിലനിന്ന് പോന്നിരുന്ന പരമ്പരാഗത കീഴ്വഴക്കങ്ങളിലും മൂല്യങ്ങളിലും പരിവർത്തനം സംഭവിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. സാമുദായ ഉല്പതിഷ്ഠകൾ വിവാഹത്തെയും പങ്കാളിത്തമനോഭാവത്തെയും കുറിച്ചുള്ള അഭിലാഷങ്ങളെ പ്രചരിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള ഒരു മാധ്യമമായി അച്ചടിയെ ഉപയോഗിച്ചു. പരസ്പര സ്നേഹത്തിനും വൈകാരിക ബന്ധത്തിനും ഊന്നൽ നൽകുന്ന 'സഹവർത്തിത്വ വിവാഹം' എന്ന ആശയം ജനപ്രിയമാക്കുന്നതിൽ അച്ചടി സംസ്കാരം നിർണായക പങ്ക് വഹിച്ചു.

പ്രണയവിവാഹം എന്ന ആശയം അതുവരെ സ്ഥാപിത പൊതുബോധത്തിൽനിന്നുള്ള വ്യതിയാനമായി കണക്കാക്കപ്പെട്ടിരുന്നു. ആധുനികവൽക്കരണത്തിന്റെ വരവ് സ്ത്രീ-പുരുഷ

ഇടപെടലുകളെ പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തിൽ നിയന്ത്രിതമായ തോതിൽ സാധ്യമാക്കുകയും അതുവഴി പ്രണയ വിവാഹങ്ങൾക്ക് അനുയോജ്യമായ അന്തരീക്ഷം വളർന്നുവരികയും ചെയ്തു. പത്തൊൻപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ അവസാനത്തിലും ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ തുടക്കത്തിലും അച്ചടി സംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ സ്വാധീനത്താൽ പ്രണയത്തെ നിയമാനുസൃത വൈകാരികനുഭവമായി സ്വീകരിക്കുന്നതോടെ പ്രണയത്തിന്റെ ആശയലോകങ്ങൾക്ക് സ്വീകാര്യത ലഭിച്ചു.

വിവാഹമെന്ന സ്ഥാപനത്തെ നിലനിർത്തുന്നതിലും പങ്കാളിയെ തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കാനുള്ള മാനദണ്ഡങ്ങളെ കാനോനീകരിക്കുന്നതിലും ഏറ്റവും കൂടുതൽ മുൻകരുതലുകൾ പ്രകടിപ്പിച്ചത് മധ്യവർഗ്ഗ ജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളായിരുന്നു. ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലുണ്ടായ ജനസംഖ്യാപരമായ വർദ്ധനവും ജോലിസ്ഥലങ്ങളിലെ ക്രിയാശേഷിയും രാഷ്ട്രീയ വേദികളിലും സാമൂഹിക പരിപാടികളിലും പുരുഷന്മാർക്കും സ്ത്രീകൾക്കും ഇടപഴകാനുള്ള കൂടുതൽ അവസരങ്ങൾ ലഭിച്ചതും വിവാഹപൂർവ്വേതര പ്രണയനുഭവങ്ങൾ ഉയർന്നുവരാനുള്ള സാധ്യതയെ വർദ്ധിപ്പിച്ചു. തൽഫലമായി, പത്തൊൻപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ അവസാനത്തിൽ രൂപം കൊള്ളാൻ തുടങ്ങിയ 'പ്രണയവിവാഹം' എന്ന ആശയം ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലുടനീളം പ്രവർത്തിക്കുകയും ഇരുപത്തിയൊന്നാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിൽ ഉറച്ചുനിൽക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു.

ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ സാഹിത്യം 'ജനപ്രിയ'മായി നിൽക്കുന്നതോടൊപ്പം പ്രണയത്തെ സർവ്വവ്യാപിയായി നിലനിർത്തുകയ്ക്കി ചെയ്തു. കാല്പനികതയ്ക്ക് സാമൂഹിക മൂല്യം ലഭിക്കുന്ന തരത്തിൽ ഒരു സുപ്രധാനമായ സാംസ്കാരിക മാറ്റത്തിനുകൂടി അനുമനമായ ഒരു കാലഘട്ടമായിരുന്നു അത്. പ്രണയവിഷ്ണുരത്തിലൂടെ ഒരു വ്യക്തിയെ തുറന്നു കാണിക്കുന്നതോടൊപ്പം ആധുനിക സ്ത്രീയുടെയും പുരുഷന്റെയും നിർമ്മിതിയിൽ ഒരു ജീവൽ ഘടകമെന്ന രീതിയിലും കൂടി സാഹിത്യം പ്രവർത്തിച്ചു.

പത്തൊൻപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ മധ്യവർഗ്ഗം പാരമ്പര്യവും ആധുനികതയുമായി നിരന്തരം സംവാദത്തിൽ ഏർപ്പെട്ടു. കൊളോണിയൽ ആധുനികതയുടെ സ്വാധീനം കുടുംബപരവും സാമൂഹികവുമായ സന്ദർഭങ്ങളെ അവരവരുടെ വൈയക്തികതകളെ പുനർനിർവ്വചിക്കാൻ നിർബന്ധിതരാക്കി. മധ്യവർഗ്ഗം ആധുനികതയുടെ തത്വങ്ങളും ആദർശങ്ങളും സ്വീകരിക്കുകയും ആന്തരികവൽക്കരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. ഒരേസമയം തദ്ദേശീയ ആചാരങ്ങളും സംരക്ഷിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നതോടൊപ്പം കൊളോണിയൽ മൂല്യങ്ങളിൽ ചിലത് തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്ത് സ്വീകാര്യമാക്കി. മതപരവും സാമൂഹികവും സാമ്പത്തികവുമായ മാനദണ്ഡങ്ങൾ പാലിക്കുന്നതിനൊപ്പം സ്നേഹം ഒരു സാമൂഹികമായ തിരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പ് കൂടിയാണെന്ന കാഴ്ചപ്പാടുണ്ടാക്കി. ഇത് നിശ്ചയിച്ചുറപ്പിച്ച വിവാഹങ്ങളുടെയും പ്രണയ വിവാഹങ്ങളുടെയും അതിർത്തികളെ ദുർബ്ബലപ്പെടുത്തി. ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ സാഹിത്യ ആവിഷ്കാരങ്ങളിലെ വൈകാരികമണ്ഡലം മാറുന്നതോടൊപ്പം ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ മലബാറിന്റെ വൈകാരിക ഭ്രമണ്ഡലത്തിലും അതിന്റെ പ്രതിഫലനങ്ങൾ സംഭവിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

മലബാറിൽ പ്രണയവിവാഹം എന്ന ആശയത്തിന്റെ വികാസത്തോടൊപ്പം സ്ത്രീകളുടെ പദവിയും പുനർനിർമ്മിക്കപ്പെട്ടു. ലിംഗഭേദങ്ങളുടെ അധികാര ശ്രേണിയിൽ സ്ത്രീകളുടെ അധികാരം സ്വകാര്യമണ്ഡലങ്ങളിൽ പരിമിതപ്പെട്ടു. അച്ചടിസംസ്കാരത്തിലൂടെ ജനകീയമാക്കിയ 'ആഗ്രഹനിലകളുടെ ഗാർഹികത' എന്ന അഭിലാഷം സ്ത്രീകളെ പുരുഷലാവണ്യങ്ങളിൽ കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ചു നിർത്തുകയും 'പങ്കാളി'കളെന്ന നിലയിൽ ഭർത്താവിന്റെ ഉറ്റ തോഴിയായി സ്ത്രീകളുടെ പ്രതിച്ഛായയെ വാർത്തെടുക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. മലബാറിന്റെ മാറിയ മൂല്യത്തിനകത്ത് ഭാര്യ എന്ന സാമൂഹ്യ പദവിയെ 'കൂട്ട്' എന്ന അർത്ഥത്തിൽ ഇന്ന് മനസ്സിലാക്കി തുടങ്ങിയിട്ടുണ്ട്.

താക്കോൽ വാക്കുകൾ: വികാരം, പ്രണയം , വിവാഹം, മധ്യവർഗ്ഗം, അച്ചടിസംസ്കാരം

# CONTENTS

	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1 – 31</b>
<b>CHAPTERS</b>	
<b>I. MALABAR IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY: THE EMERGENCE OF A MIDDLE CLASS</b>	<b>32 – 98</b>
<b>II. THE GROWTH OF PRINT CULTURE AND A READING PUBLIC</b>	<b>99 – 163</b>
<b>III. THE WORLD OF EMOTIONS: TRADITION, CUSTOMS AND DISCOURSES ON MARRIAGES AND CONJUGAL LOVE</b>	<b>164 – 245</b>
<b>IV. CHANGING NOTIONS OF FAMILY, MARRIAGE AND LOVE</b>	<b>246 – 329</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>330 – 346</b>
<b>GLOSSARY</b>	<b>347 – 354</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>355 – 387</b>
<b>MAP</b>	<b>388</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>389 – 394</b>

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

BEM	:	Basel Evangelical Mission
CMS	:	Church Missionary Society
CPI	:	Communist Party of India
IRISH	:	Institute for Research in Social Sciences and Humanities
KPCC	:	Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee
LMS	:	London Missionary Society
MNNPR	:	Madras Native Newspaper Reports
NSS	:	Nair Service Society
RAK	:	Regional Archives Kozhikode
RMMC	:	Report of Malabar Marriage Commission
SNDP	:	Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam
TNA	:	Tamil Nadu Archives

## INTRODUCTION

“O lord of my life, have I not espoused thee with my heart? My heart has not loved anyone else other than Madhavan, nor can it love anyone else”

Thus spoke Indulekha, the eponymous heroine of the novel by Chandu Menon published in the late nineteenth century. At that time conjugal love was seldom expressed especially by women and so Indulekha was considered a ‘modern’ woman. We have come a long way from the time of Indulekha. In contemporary society ‘love marriages’ have become ‘acceptable’. This was not so a century ago. But even when love marriages were rare, notions of love got expressed in print media. The present work began with a basic curiosity of how ‘traditional’ notions began to change and got ‘modernised’ and how the society conceived the emotion of love in the wake of colonial modernity. This is largely an unexplored area of study in the Kerala context.

The rise of romantic love has to be understood in relation to several sets of influences which affected society from the nineteenth century onwards. Emotions like love are embedded in social and cultural environments and significantly influence power relations. This period witnessed pervasive transformation in intimate relations in society across the world. This renegotiation of intimacies produced different dimensions of emotional experience which contributed to serious discourses on different types of emotions. Consequently, scholars started exploring the history of emotions. The key premise of the history of emotions is that emotion varies across time and place and so has a history that can be explored by scholars.<sup>1</sup> Since its definition varies across cultures, conveying the exact

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<sup>1</sup> Katie Barclay, ‘State of the Field: The History of Emotions’, *History - The Journal of the History Association*, vol.106, no.371, 2021, pp. 456-466

meaning of the term emotion through words is difficult. “Emotion is the term used to comprehend all that is understood by feelings, pleasures, pains, passions, sentiments and affections”.<sup>2</sup> Barbara H. Rosenwein has stated that some scholars consider emotions as inherent and natural whereas others consider them to be social construction. Many philosophers and historians have defined emotions differently like Aristotle, Plato, Descartes etc. Aristotle defined emotions as “all those affections which cause men to change their opinion in regard to their judgements and are accompanied by pleasure and pain such as anger, pity, fear and all similar emotions and their contraries”.<sup>3</sup>

Historians have always talked about emotions, but most of such talks have been unfocused.<sup>4</sup> The Annales were the first to take feelings into account. The scholar most credited for first launching emotional history was Lucien Febvre. He stated that the attempt to write the history of emotions would be a challenging endeavour. He observed “ Any attempt to reconstitute the emotional life of a given period is a task that is at the one and the same time extremely attractive and frightfully difficult.”<sup>5</sup> Beginning in 1940 the Annales historians like Marc Bloch, Fernand Braudel, Philip Aries and Roger Chartier have attempted to explore the historical aspects of private life, daily activities and the mentalities of earlier generations.

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<sup>2</sup> Susan J Matt, ‘Recovering the Invisible: Methods for the Historical Study of the Emotions’, in Susan J. Matt and Peter N. Stearns (ed.), *Doing Emotions in History*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 2014, p.42

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, (Trans.) by John Henry Freese, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1959, p.173

<sup>4</sup> For instance ‘The Roman historian Tacitus, while discussing the condition of Rome at Nero’s death, said that the senators were ‘joyous’, the commoners ‘roused to hope’ and the lowest classes ‘mournful’. He did not intend thereby a serious discussion of emotion. It was just an unfocused historical emotional talk’. Quoted in Barbara.H Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in Early Middle Ages*, Cornell University Press, London, 2007, p.1

<sup>5</sup> Lucien Febvre, ‘Sensibility and History: How to Reconstitute the Emotional Life of the Past’, in Peter Burke (ed.), *A New Kind of History: From the Writings of Febvre*, (Trans.) by K.Folka, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London,1973, p.9

During the 1960s American scholars started addressing some of the Annales schools' concerns in an attempt to write history, focusing on the everyday life of men and women. They endeavoured to write the history of the family, the body, food, hygiene and sexuality. In the 1980s a few scholars widened this research agenda and began to explore the emotions. The work of Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns produced remarkable contributions to the history of emotions, and their work *An Emotional History of the United States* introduced one of the most productive methodological approaches to emotional history.

Each culture reflects its own internal norms and beliefs about emotional rules and expression. Though emotions are personal, they are deeply grounded in embedded events and environments. Studying emotions enables us to understand how emotions can be stirred up, mobilized, and repressed. It also gives us an insight into how emotions are bound by social and cultural contexts. Historical research has taken an 'emotional turn' in recent times, driven by the understanding that time and culture play inevitable roles in shaping emotions and feelings. History has not been created solely by the lived lives of people, but the emotions in the lives of these people have also played a decisive role in shaping and moulding history.

It is almost impossible to analyse the evolution of the family and conjugality without taking emotional elements into account. Rather than focusing merely on the external behaviour of individuals, the emotional history analyses the range of emotions felt by individuals such as love, jealousy, fear, anger, joy etc. that prompted such behaviours. Emotions have broader political and social significance and can shape public realities. As Peter. N. Stearns and Jan Lewis pointed out in their work *An Emotional History of the United States* 'every social



group in every era has had a culture of emotions that defined feelings, assigned them value and prescribed proper modes of expression'.<sup>6</sup>

Peter N. Stearns and Carol Zisowitz Stearns proposed a clear distinction between the individual experiences of emotion and emotional norms in their writings and they coined the term 'Emotionology' to describe the emotional norms formed and regulated in historical societies.<sup>7</sup> William Reddy used the terms 'Emotional Regimes' to conceptualize how the powerful in historical societies have regulated and influenced the way the individuals' experience and express emotions.<sup>8</sup> Barbara H. Rosenwein has demonstrated, the emotional experiences of historical actors' are influenced not only by emotional regimes but also by the plurality of communities they belong to which share common stake, interest, values and goals. She had developed her idea of 'Emotional Communities'.<sup>9</sup> She argues that there exists a biological and universal human aptitude for experiencing and expressing what we define as emotions. However, what those emotions are, their terminology, evaluation, perception and expression are all influenced by emotional communities.<sup>10</sup>

Looking at history from the standpoint of emotions, new narratives emerge different from the conventional histories. Explorations are required to comprehend

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<sup>6</sup> Peter. N. Stearns and Jan Lewis, *An Emotional History of the United States*, New York University Press, New York, 1998, p.1

<sup>7</sup> Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards', *American Historical Review*, vol.90, no.4, 1985, p. 813

<sup>8</sup> William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feelings: A Framework for the History of Emotions*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2001, pp. 122- 130

<sup>9</sup> Barbara H Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions 600 - 1700*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2016, p.2. According to her 'Emotional communities are groups usually but not always social groups, that have their own particular values, modes of feeling and ways to express those feelings. She says that emotional communities are not always emotional. They simply share important norms concerning the emotions that have value and deplore and the modes of expressing them. Thus the members of an emotional community not necessarily express love or affection towards one another if that community values hostile, aggressive or ambivalent interpersonal relations'. *Ibid.*, p.3

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

the specific ways in which feelings were experienced, symbolised, and silenced or suppressed.

## **MARRYING FOR LOVE**

Over the last few decades, historians, anthropologists, and sociologists, have come to recognize that culture has a major role in shaping feelings. Though some might put forward the argument that emotions remain constant across space and time, that argument definitely is not convincing. Society largely mediates the expression, repression and interpretation of feelings by assigning them names and attributing values. Different cultures and societies have assigned different names and meanings to the emotion of love.

There are a plethora of definitions for the term love. These definitions make it clear that love is a complex subject, and its terminology is so vague as to make precise analysis difficult, if not impossible.<sup>11</sup> The term romantic is added to allow one to refer to that emotion that accompanies attempts to initiate an enduring sexual partnership and/or the emotion that accompanies and motivates such an enduring partnership.<sup>12</sup> The dictionary of love mentions different types of love.<sup>13</sup> Love is a universal emotion experienced by a majority of people, across different historical periods, and within diverse cultural contexts. Although love is a deeply personal and intimate experience, love is also influenced by social and cultural

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<sup>11</sup> Ian Frederick Moulton, *Love in Print in the Sixteenth Century: The Popularisation of Romance*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2014, p.5

<sup>12</sup> William M. Reddy, 'The Rule of Love: The History of Western Romantic Love in Comparative Perspective', in Luisa Passerini, Liliana Ellena, and Alexander C.T. Geppert (ed.), *New Dangerous Liaisons: Discourses on Europe and Love in the Twentieth Century*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2010, p.35

<sup>13</sup> For instance agape - for unconditional, spiritual and selfless love; courtly love - for romantic, idealised, ennobling love; erotic - full of sexual desire and passionate love; free love - not married or legally bound to another; Mania - low self esteem, needy, jealous and possessive love; philia - for friendly, affable, loyal and self serving love; platonic love - restrained, idealised and non reciprocal love; unrequited love - deeply desired non reciprocal love; romantic love - emotional and sexual special love between two people. John Stark, Will Hopkins and Mary K.Baumann, *The Dictionary of Love*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 2008, p.164

factors. Consequently, the expression and experience of love vary significantly due to the substantial impact of culture on people's conception of love, feelings, thoughts, and behaviours within romantic relationships.

Romance is a discourse that first emerged in Europe in the late middle ages, where it dealt with love outside of and in opposition to marriage, which was understood as a system of economic and political alliance.<sup>14</sup> The ideal 'marrying for love' was evident in the Western world by the seventeenth century, gained momentum in the eighteenth, and became deep rooted in the nineteenth century. 'Love as passion' gained ascendancy in Europe during the upheavals of industrialisation, when dramatic social change produced the need for a new means of communication which would facilitate the establishment of couple relationships.<sup>15</sup> During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, romantic love became an accepted norm for marriage in Western culture. Consequently the discourse on romantic love manifested itself mainly in fictional narratives. According to Anthony Giddens, this emerging ideal of romantic love was popularised through literature that provided a new narrative form for depicting love relationships.<sup>16</sup> In the Western countries love has received comparatively less explicit attention, particularly at a time when scholarly work on 'desire', 'gender', and 'sexuality' has gained widespread academic acceptance. Even when love is a focal point of research, scholars often choose to emphasise their concern with sexuality or desire.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Martha Howell, 'The Properties of Marriage in Late Medieval Europe: Commercial Wealth and the Creation of Modern Marriage', in Isabel Davis, Miriam Muller and Sarah Rees Jones (ed.), *Love, Marriage, and Family Ties in the Later Middle Ages*, Brepols Publishers, Belgium, 2003, pp.17- 61, Also see Ann Swidler, *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters*, The University of Chicago Press, London, 2001

<sup>15</sup> Wendy Langford, *Revolutions of the Heart: Gender, Power and the Delusions of Love*, Routledge, London, 1999, p.2

<sup>16</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Intimacy in Modern Societies*, Blackwell Publishers, UK, 1992

<sup>17</sup> G.J. Barker Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992, Jane Fishburne Collier, *From Duty to Desire: Remaking Families in a Spanish Village*, Princeton University

The term 'love' (*Pranayam/ Premam/Anuragam*) and 'marrying for love' are frequently used in this research. *Pranayam* (love) is a distinctive aspect of man-woman relationship. In English, the word 'love' is used to denote both the concepts of *sneham* and *pranayam*. In Malayalam language *sneham* can be love in friendship, maternal love, love towards cousins, neighbours etc. On the other hand, the words *pranayam* and/or *anuragam/ premam* denote that peculiar feeling between a man and a woman, who are romantically attracted towards each other. Throughout this study, the word 'love' is used to denote that particular emotion between men and women, a feeling of strong attraction and emotional attachment and not the general feeling of *sneham*. The term 'marrying for love' is used commonly when the choice of partner is made by the couple out of love and not by their parents or guardians. In this research too the term is used to indicate the same meaning.

The evolution of love from being an emotion to becoming an expectation for marriage was a gradual process, sometimes imperceptible, involving several distinct stages. For thousands of years, marriage served numerous economic, political, and social functions, often overshadowing the individual needs and wishes of its members.<sup>18</sup> In almost all societies marriage is an institutionalised social relationship of crucial importance. This is inextricably intertwined with other aspects of our society, its culture, and religion. It is a socially approved and acknowledged relationship. In most cultures, marriage has been traditionally perceived more as a social alliance between families or as a contract of property rather than a personal commitment or as an emotional bond. In India too, marriage is generally seen as an economic and social alliance between two families, generally rooted in caste, more than being a relationship between two individuals. The main purpose of marriage was often to establish economic and social ties

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Press, Princeton, 1997, David Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1994

<sup>18</sup> Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage A History: How Love Conquered Marriage*, Penguin Books, New York, 2006 (First published 2005), p. 306

between the families of the spouses. Whether in the joint family or in the emerging nuclear family, marriage was arranged by the elders in the family and these marriages were always within the boundaries of caste and community.<sup>19</sup> These were often marriages of convenience for the families concerned. Therefore, the young men and women were expected to subordinate their individual desires to the demands and needs of the family. Thus marriage was seen as essentially a social and economic relationship and romantic love was largely absent in such marriages. Love has been considered as a desirable outcome of marriage but not as a legitimate reason for getting married. The existence of marital bonds did not guarantee feelings of love in these marriages. Meghna Bohidar has pointed out in her study the difficulty of romantic love in India, as caste endogamous and family-arranged marriages are upheld as tradition.<sup>20</sup>

The material changes in colonial Malabar such as the changes in land relations, new educational system, emergence of print technology etc. were concomitant with a wide spectrum of changes, encompassing critical shifts in economic, social, political and cultural relations. Towards the latter half of the nineteenth century, as in other regions of India, this resulted in the formation of a middle class imbued with Western ideas. They followed a critical attitude towards the traditional institutions, beliefs and social economic relations. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Malabar, the print made a profound impact in restructuring the socio-cultural sensibilities of the middle class which in turn redefined expectation for marriage. Prior to the nineteenth century, notions of marriage were largely based on religious and economic considerations and the idea of passionate love-based marriage stood in stark contrast to this tradition. However, with the emergence of salaried employment and the rise of the middle

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<sup>19</sup> Minna Saavala, *Middle Class Morality: Everyday Struggle over Belonging and Prestige in India*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2012, p.45

<sup>20</sup> Meghna Bohidar, 'Performances of "reel" and "real" Lives: Negotiating Public Romance in Urban India', in Ann Brooks (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Romantic Love*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, New York, 2022, p.239

class, social status began to be redefined, which inspired men to choose a life partner for themselves, and has transformed emotional content in conjugality.

Such changes inspired more than any legal reform, a greater loosening of parental authority over marital choice. Romantic expectations for marriage increased in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, playing some role in courtship practices and mate selection. The middle class using modern vernaculars constructed the new forms of public discourse on 'marrying for love' and established new criteria of social respectability. The dramatic transformation of norms began in the late nineteenth century with the widespread popularity of novels, magazines and plays that emphasised the advantages of true love in marriage over parental choice. The ideal of marrying for love was widely embraced in autobiographies, novels, poems and essays of the then contemporary period. This love, stemming from private and personal realms, received public attention and was used as a distinctive element of modernity through the print media.

## **PRINT CULTURE**

The nineteenth century occupies a distinct phase in the history of Kerala since this period witnessed the inception of print and print culture. Print was a radical agent of 'progress' and social transformation. The development of printing during the colonial period initiated the setting up of a new network of communication and played a central role in disseminating the modern cultural values to the then society. The growth of printing facilitated the development of a new cultural taste, consequently to a new 'reading public'. The written word emerged as a significant and influential cultural factor during the course of the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> According to Roger Chartier, printed matter penetrated the

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<sup>21</sup> K.N.Panikkar, *Colonialism Culture and Resistance*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2015 ( First published 2007), p.155

reader's private world, mobilizing their sentiments, fixing their memories, and guiding their habits.<sup>22</sup> This is very explicit in the nineteenth century Malabar.

The words 'print' and 'print culture' represent distinct concepts and are not interchangeable ones. Jason McElligott and Eve Patten argue that 'the term print culture is widely used in a very vague and ill-defined form, often taken to mean the presence of books in a society. But this definition is not adequate; print culture is not simply defined by the presence of books in a society, but in a widely diffused social knowledge of, and familiarity with, books and with the culture of buying, borrowing, lending, reading and handling these physical items'.<sup>23</sup> So it is not the number of books in circulation that is the key in print culture, but the ways in which those books are used and experienced, and the ways in which they impact upon the pre-existing norms of society that is important.<sup>24</sup> So the readers are at the centre of the 'print culture', and printers, publishers, authors and others involved in the production and distribution of printed works exist on the periphery.

From the late nineteenth century onwards there emerged a vibrant print culture in Malabar which is facilitated by the rapid growth of printing presses, publishing houses, newspapers, magazines, books and even libraries. During the second half of the nineteenth century, books and other printed materials were available to both the urban and rural public. This resulted in the emergence of a literary public sphere in Malabar.

For Habermas, the press is the public sphere's preeminent institution.<sup>25</sup> Print culture is vital for the formation of a public sphere because it enables rational

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<sup>22</sup> Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1987, p.233

<sup>23</sup> Jason McElligott and Eve Patten (ed.), *The Perils of Print Culture : Book Print and Publishing History in Theory and Practice*, New York, 2014, pp.3 -5

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, (Trans.) by Thomas Burger, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1991, p.181

discourse among intelligent citizens. According to J. Devika, the public sphere emerged in Kerala in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, where 'public interest' became the primary concern, and issues came to be debated on its terms.<sup>26</sup> However, this does not indicate the presence of a full-fledged civil society of individuals.

The nineteenth century Malabar witnessed the emergence of a spectrum of community based reform movements. The middle class initiated reform movements in Malabar, specifically the Nair, Namboothiri and Thiyya reform agenda were directed towards refashioning marriage and family and the amelioration of the status of women. These communities made use of the burgeoning print culture and started their own publications to advocate the causes and concerns of their respective communities.

The print culture offered new communicative space for women which added to the existing discourses of reform. With the development of education and print culture, reading became an integral part of middle class leisure. This provided women an easier access to books than earlier. Some women became a significant part in the literary world as readers and writers. The women centred publications brought into public discourse issues and concerns of women. Through these articles they projected the importance of emotional content in conjugality. Women's print culture produced a new paradigm of conjugal emotion that contested the prevailing patriarchal norms of family life.<sup>27</sup> Simultaneous with the development of new commitments to romantic love and conjugal emotion, there emerged serious discussions on the duty of women and print culture made a clear demarcation between public and domestic spaces restructuring the identity of women.

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<sup>26</sup> J.Devika, *En-Gendering Individuals: The Language of Reforming in Twentieth Century Keralam*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2007, p.6

<sup>27</sup> Mytheli Sreenivas, *Wives, Widows and Concubines: The Conjugal Family Ideal in Colonial India*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2009, intro., p.17



## **FOCUS OF THE STUDY**

The present study attempts to trace out the development of the concept of 'marrying for love' during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the dissemination of the concept through the newly emergent print media. By focusing on the process of marriage negotiations and the changes within that process, this research foregrounds the impact of colonial modernity and associated social forces, including the rise of the modern middle class, the burgeoning of a new print culture, and new social reform movements upon the institution of marriage. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century people became increasingly influenced by the radical notion that love should be the primary basis for marriage and young people should have the freedom to select their marriage partners on the basis of love. This represented a revolutionary step in the development of a novel approach to marriage. The newly emergent discourses and social changes from the late nineteenth century made concrete the idea of 'marrying for love' as a developmental trajectory. So, the study explores why romantic love gained new valuation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

A close examination of romantic love and marrying for love reveals the microprocesses of social transformation as it is occurring. So whether 'marrying for love' initiated the deconstruction of existing social and religious norms by choosing one's own spouse, ignoring the obligation to marry a person of parent's choice is analysed. Thus the study investigates the gap between emotional hopes and emotional realities that created discontent among the middle class in the twentieth century. Moreover the study takes into consideration the cultural-historical context in the formation and experience of the emotion of love - whether the nineteenth century social and cultural transformations made love such a powerful ideal that surpassed all other rationales for marriage. The study explores the specific ways in which emotions were experienced and represented, and how feelings might have been silenced or repressed. The impact of marriage discourses

on the emotional intimacy among couples and status of women also becomes a part of the discussion.

The amelioration of the status of women necessitated the negation of traditional customs and practices which resulted in a reconstructive contestation between the colonial government and the middle class. From the late nineteenth century the middle class focused their attention on refashioning women which created the image of a 'new woman'. The indigenous stimulus and impulses, that made this 'new woman' simultaneously traditional and modern are to be analysed to understand the reform agenda of the middle class.

## **AREA AND PERIOD OF STUDY**

The territorial extent of this study is confined to Malabar, which formed one of the three political divisions of the present Kerala state in the colonial period. During the nineteenth century, Travancore and Cochin were both Princely states under British protection and Malabar, which was a district of the Madras Presidency, was directly under British rule. In the pre British period the term Malabar was used to denote the whole of Kerala in the foreign trade circles. In the British period it referred to the territory bound in the north by the South Canara District of the Madras Presidency, in the south by the former Cochin State, in the east by the Western Ghats and in the west by Arabian Sea.<sup>28</sup> Al Biruni seems to have been the first to call the country Malabar which is an Arabic corruption from Mala (Vernacular) mountain and Vara (Sanskrit) slope.<sup>29</sup> Other forms of the word are ; *Melibar, Manibar, Molibar, Malibar, Minibar, Minabar, Melibaria*.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> For details see William Logan, *Malabar*, vol.1, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1995 (First published 1887)

<sup>29</sup> William Robertson, in his '*Historical Disquisition Concerning Ancient India*', derives it from the word Mall, the name of a port (mentioned by Cosmas Indicopleustes), and says that the word means country of pepper. Quoted in V.Nagam Aiyya, *The Travancore State Manual*, vol. I, Travancore Government Press, Thiruvananthapuram, 1906, p.2. For details see William Robertson D.D, *An Historical Disquisition Concerning Ancient India*, Rare Reprints, Delhi, 1981(First published 1818)

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in V.Nagam Aiyya, *op.cit.*, p.2

Malabar came under British rule with the treaty of Srirangapatnam in 1792. The district consisted of taluks like Calicut, Chirakkal, Kochi (Parts), Eranad, Kottakkal, Kurubranad, Palakkad, Ponnani, Valluvanad and Wayanad.

Like in other parts of the Indian subcontinent, the three regions Malabar, Kochi and Thiruvithamkoor experienced significant changes under colonialism. As these three existed as distinct political entities, the social, cultural and economic lives of the people of these places were also distinct. Though this is a study focussed on Malabar, it cannot be limited to Malabar alone, as it is an analysis of the proliferation of print culture and the emotion of romantic love. Therefore to some extent the study had to look at the developments outside Malabar.

The period of study has been restricted to the mid nineteenth to mid twentieth century, as this is a period of colonial knowledge production. The second half of the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century was vital for the formation of a middle class which in turn accelerated the creation of the public sphere in Malabar. At a later date we hope to enlarge my field of enquiry to the whole of Kerala.

The social renaissance that took place in Kerala during this period produced fundamental changes in the society, the most important being the inception and spread of printing. This period witnessed bulk printing, and the availability of reading materials, steadily developed the interest in books, that created wider reading public. Moreover, this period is characterised by its preoccupation with social reform.

In addition, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century marriage practices underwent some specific changes and reforms that not only resulted in the emergence of the nuclear family, but also sparked discourses on the concept of 'marrying for love'. The discourses on romantic love and marriage became a prominent feature of the printed world during this period. Print influenced popular perceptions and initiated discussions on the changing notions of marriage in the

literary and historical narratives. Lives and emotions of women began to be picturised in intense ways during this period.

## **SOURCES**

Works of history are largely dictated by their sources. The present study is largely based on primary and secondary sources, especially literary sources. The emergence of print culture and the changing notions of marriage come under the purview of this study. As this study mainly focuses on the popularisation of the idea of 'marrying for love' through print, emphasis has been given to literary sources. But this study has also drawn inputs from other diverse sources such as archival records, administrative reports, Government documents, legislative proceedings, marriage registers, early travelogues of Durate Barbosa, Francis Buchanan, and Alexander Hamilton, etc. In addition, the census reports, educational reports were also utilised to make the study effective. The library minutes of *Thozhilali* Library Kannur, Vadamakara Public Library, Paral Public Library, Desaposhini Library Kozhikode, Sen Gupta Library etc. provide insight to the development of a reading culture and thereby a literary public sphere in Malabar. Thalassery Court records, Indian Law Reports, Madras Law Journal and other publications containing High Court decisions were referred to in course of the analysis. Reports of the Malabar Marriage Commission, Namboothiri Acts, *Marumakkathayam* Acts also form a major source of the study. The Civil Marriage Act of 1872, The Special Marriage Act of 1954 provide insight to the legal support for love marriages.

Biographies and autobiographies were fruitful sources of information and have been used extensively. The autobiographies of the period including *Jeevitha Samaram* by C. Kesavan, *Kazhinjakalam* by K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kanneerum Kinavum* by V.T. Bhattathiripad, *Ethirppu* by P.Kesavdava, *Smaranakal Mathram* by C.H.Kunhappa, *Ente Jeevithakatha* by A.K.Gopalan, *E.M.S Atmakatha* by E.M.S. Namboothiripad, *Atmakatha- Thakazhi* by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, *Vyazhavatta Smaranakal* by B. Kalyani Amma, *Dhanyayayi Njan* by Gomathi

Amma, *Evan Ente Priya C.J* by Rosie Thomas, *Sahasrapoornima* by C.K. Revathi Amma, *Aatmakathaykoramugham* by Lalithambika Antarjanam, *Kalappakarchakal* by Devaki Nilayangod, *Arangu Kanatha Nadan* by Thikkodian, *Ente Jeevitha Smaranakal* by Mannath Padmanabhan, *Agniveedhikal* by N.C.Sekhar and *Viplava Smaranakal* by Puthupally Raghavan, and the biographies like *C.Kesavan* by K.Prakasam, *Moorkkoth Kumaran* by Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *Abhivadaye* by Madambu Kunjukuttan, *Sahodaran K.Ayyappan* by M.K. Sanu, *K.P.Kesava Menon* by V.Parukkutty Amma, *C.V. Raman Pillai* by P.K. Parameswaran Nair etc. are useful sources to understand the socio-cultural and familial condition of that period and to trace the colonial impact on the middle class culture leading to a redefining of conjugality.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century Malayalam novels such as *Pullelikunju* by Archdeacon Koshi, *Kundalatha* by Appu Nedungadi, *Indulekha* and *Sarada* by O. Chandu Menon, *Meenakshi* by Cheruvalath Chathu Nair, *Indumathee Swayamvaram* by Padinjare Kovilakath Ammaman Raja, *Saraswatheevijayam* by Potheri Kunhambu, *Lakshmeekesavam* by Komattil Padumenon, *Sukumari* by Joseph Muliyl, *Parangodeeparinayam* by Kizhakkeppatt Ramankutty Menon, M.T. Vasudevan Nair's *Nalukettu*, Uroob's *Sundarikalum Sundaranmarum*, Moorkkoth Kumaran's *Vasumathi* etc. help to trace the proliferation of print culture and through it the concept of 'marrying for love'. The stories of V.T. Bhattathiripad, Lalithambika Antarjanam, Muthiringod Bhavatrathan Namboothiripad etc. reveal how love could infiltrate and penetrate even into the closed innards of the Namboothiri *illams*. The popularity and influence of these works clearly demonstrate the practical ways in which print culture encouraged the spread of discourses of love to non elite groups such as women and servants. The Yogakshemam dramas of the early decades of the twentieth century like V. T. Bhattathiripad's *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk*, M.R. Bhattathiripad's *Marakkudakkullile Mahanaragam*, M. P. Bhattathiripad's *Rithumathi*, are useful sources for the study.

The early Malayalam magazines and newspapers were also consulted for analysing the print culture in Kerala particularly Malabar. The magazines published by community organisations - Nair Service Society (NSS), Yogakshema Sabha, Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) such as *Nair, Nair Samudaya Parishkari, Nair Samudaya Parishkarini Unninamboothiri, Yogakshemam, Vivekodayam, Mitavadi* etc. provide primary information about the reform agenda and programmes of each of these communities. Similarly, the study culled out information from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, women's magazines in Malayalam. Women's magazines of the period like *Sarada, Mahila, Lakshmeebai, Mahila Mandiram, Vanithakusumam*, etc. point to the changing concept of emotional intimacy between partners. These magazines also help to understand the reform discourses of that period. In addition, several matters related to women like education, women's freedom, sexuality, duties of women (*streedharmam*) are also discussed in these magazines.

Online resources were also utilized for the study, websites like JSTOR, Academia, Science Hub, Research Gate, Library Genesis and Shodganga were used for collecting information. This is in addition to oral sources collected by interviewing old people to see how people took to reading, what was its impact and how ideas were shaped by such reading.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

A large number of works were published focusing on the caste based society of Malabar. The travel accounts of Durate Barbosa, Francis Buchanan, the Malabar Manual, Gazetteers etc. provide detailed description of the socio economic condition of the people of Malabar and the polyandrous nature of marital traditions different communities followed. Edgar Thurston's ethnographic study *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* and Frederick Fawcett's *Nayars of Malabar* details different caste groups of Malabar and inter caste relationships. The works of K.P. Padmanabha Menon, M.G.S.Narayanan, K.N.Ganesh, Kesavan Veluthat, M.R.Raghava Varrier etc. which provide insight on several traditional notions of

the then contemporary society are other historical works that have been useful in this study. The works of T.C.Varghese, and K.N. Panikkar are utilised to understand the complex land relations that had prevailed in Malabar. Their works provide details on how the changes in the land relations paved the way for the transition from joint family to nuclear one. C. Vasantha Kumari in her work focused on the historical role played by judiciary in the complete recasting of an extremely custom oriented, highly conservative Malabar society into one well suited to the modern standards of life. G.Arunima's work *There Comes Papa* provides insight to how the colonial legal discourses empowered the *karanavan* of Nair *tarawad*. These studies set the necessary historical background for this research project.

There have been many important historical and psychological studies on emotions in Europe and America. Jan Plamper's work *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*, Megan Boler's work *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education* and Ute Frevert's *Emotions in History: Lost and Found* demonstrated that the notions about emotions, their locations, their importance, their association with gender, civility and society have been in constant flux since the eighteenth century.<sup>31</sup> Peter N. Stearns and Jan Lewis's *An Emotional History of the United States*, Susan J.Matt and Peter N. Stearn's *Doing Emotions in History*, Rob Boddice's *A History of Feelings*, indicated new directions and highlighted possibilities in the historical analysis of emotions.<sup>32</sup>

There are many historical, sociological, and cultural works on love, on contemporary dating, marriage, passion and intimacy. Each of these books represents a particular approach to the cultural, social, and intellectual issues

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<sup>31</sup> Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*, (Trans.) by Keith Tribe, Oxford University Press, UK, 2015, Megan Boler, *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education*, Routledge, London, 1999, Ute Frevert, *Emotions in History, Lost and Found*, Central European University Press, New York, 2011

<sup>32</sup> Rob Boddice, *A History of Feelings*, Reaktion Books, London, 2019

surrounding love in the early modern period. A full length historical study of emotion does not exist in Kerala till date.

Outside India emotional history is a much researched area. This study has been immensely enriched and inspired by many works done in different parts of India and outside. Denis de Rougemont's *Love in the Western World*, *Love as Passion* by the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann, and *The Transformation of Intimacy* by the British sociologist Anthony Giddens, argue for significant historical transformations in the experience of love. William Goode's article 'The Theoretical Importance of Love' emphasises the importance of love in the family structure. Wendy Langford's *Revolutions of the Heart: Gender, Power and the Delusions of Love* and Claire Langhamer's *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of An Emotional Revolution* discusses romantic love and desire and the problems involved in it.<sup>33</sup> William M. Reddy's *The Making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, South Asia, and Japan, 900–1200* attempts to explore the historical origin of the potentially productive opposition of love and desire, so common in Western ways of feeling.<sup>34</sup> Victor Karandashev's *Romantic Love in Cultural Contexts* is perhaps the most comprehensive and serious exposition of the modern notion of love. *Becoming Modern Women: Love and Female Identity in Pre War Japanese Literature and Culture* places love in both social and historical context.<sup>35</sup> *Love in South Asia: A Cultural History* by Francesca Orsini attempts to map the history of love in South Asia on the basis of plurality of idioms such as

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<sup>33</sup> Wendy Langford, *op.cit.*, Claire Langhamer, *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of An Emotional Revolution*, Oxford University Press, UK, 2013

<sup>34</sup> William M. Reddy, *The Making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, South Asia, and Japan, 900–1200*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2012. He argues that when the beloved returns one's love, and when neither of the two lovers' well-being is threatened by sexual embrace, then love and desire may both be fulfilled without harm. The opposition between love and desire is thus a productive one.

<sup>35</sup> Michiko Suzuki, *Becoming Modern Women: Love and Female Identity in Pre War Japanese Literature and Culture*, Stanford University Press, California, 2010



*sringara*, *viraha*, *ishq*, *prem* and love, and images and stories of and about love. The work explains love as a culturally and historically determined emotion.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the great explosion of work being produced by historians on feelings, emotions and sentiments, emotional history has not been well explored in India as there are only very few studies. One of the earliest studies related to emotion is *Exploring Emotional History: Gender, Mentality and Literature in the Indian awakening* by Rajat Kanta Ray. This work explores emotions, particularly the private domains of love and how the Indian society's gender structure affected the experience of love in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Bengali society. For writing this work he mainly depended on the literary sources, which in his opinion reveal both the subconscious and conscious minds of the people and shed light on their expressed and submerged emotions.<sup>37</sup>

Aparna Bandopadhyay's work *Desire and Defiance: A Study of Bengali Women in Love* is an examination of the conflicting cultural notions about romantic love and the work presents a new picture of women in late colonial Bengal. It discusses the history of women's love, particularly transgressive heterosexual love and the colonial debates between reformers and conservatives over the best ways to control female sexuality. She explores upper caste Hindu women's experiences of love prior to marriage, extramarital love and the love affairs of widows.<sup>38</sup> In this work she argues that women were not silent, impassive victims of customs, but individuals who asserted their choices in love and suffered the consequences.

Prem Chowdhry has attempted to write a social history of transgressive intimacies and contentious marriages in the context of Haryana. In this work she

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<sup>36</sup> Francesca Orsini (ed.), *Love in South Asia: A Cultural History*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2007, p.2

<sup>37</sup> Rajat Kanta Ray, *Exploring Emotional History: Gender, Mentality and Literature in the Indian Awakening*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p.7

<sup>38</sup> Aparna Bandopadhyay, *Desire and Defiance: A Study of Bengali Women in Love, 1850-1930*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2016, pp.2-14

discussed how the traditional social structure tried to prevent inter caste love marriages. In addition, she focused on a number of customarily accepted marriage practices and argued that arranged marriages also became contentious during the colonial and post colonial period.<sup>39</sup> Parveen Mody's study based on Delhi also significantly contributed to this research. She elaborates different forms of love marriages practised in Delhi like runaway marriages, love come arranged marriages, and the civil marriages. She also explained the legal protection for such marriages like the special marriage act of 1872 and 1954. This work illustrates the attitude of the traditionalist towards love marriages and how the special marriage act of 1872 was compromised by the pressure of those who opposed such marriages.

Judith E. Walsh in her work *Domesticity in Colonial India: What Women Learned When Men Gave Them Advice* make the argument that the nineteenth century concept of romantic love disrupted many indigenous Hindu marriage practices and family life. The Western influenced and English educated men were enthusiastic about a new domestic relationship which contained the desire for friendship, intimacy and romantic love within marriage relationships.<sup>40</sup> Meredith Borthwick through her study illustrated how the traditional domestic roles were modified in Bengal to enable women to engage in public activity, without a radical redefinition of female roles. The *bhadramahila* represented the new Bengali woman of the later nineteenth century. She argues that Women were avid consumers of modern fiction, which gave currency to the romantic notion of marriage for love, whereas the chances of fulfilling these romantic yearnings were almost nonexistent at that time.<sup>41</sup> Studying the conjugal family ideal in colonial India Mytheli Sreenivas argued that, women's print culture developed a novel

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<sup>39</sup> Prem Chowdhry, *Contentious Marriages, Eloping Couples: Gender, Caste and Patriarchy in Northern India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007

<sup>40</sup> Judith E. Walsh, *Domesticity in Colonial India: What Women Learned When Men Gave Them Advice*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2004, p.111

<sup>41</sup> Meredith Borthwick, *The Changing Role of Women in Bengal 1849 – 1905*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1984, p.358

paradigm of conjugal emotion that challenged existing patriarchal norms of family life.<sup>42</sup> She argued that classical Tamil literature was concerned with heterosexual romantic love and lovers. In the Tamil magazines love and affection<sup>43</sup> was inextricably linked both to marriage and to a drive for women's freedom.

J.Devika in her work argued that, in most of the early modern Malayalam literature love is closely associated with animated womanhood. The heroines of early modern novels which have romantic love as the abiding theme testify to this. It is through displaying a tremendous capacity for love, often against severe odds, that they accept themselves as individuals.<sup>44</sup> Thus these texts created a new private sphere around the expression of love and affection.

An analysis of the works on print culture and the middle class is of great importance in this research as the works discuss how the middle class popularised the new ideal of romantic and conjugal love through print. The invention of the technology of printing is vital in the history of the modern era. Large number of works deal with the origin and growth of printing. Elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Press as an Agent of Social Change* is regarded as a major milestone in the study of print culture. Eisenstein demonstrated that the printing press was a remarkably powerful force for social change in the early modern period. The works of Leslie Howsome, Ananda Wood, Jason McElligott and Eve Patten, etc. also explains how print acted as an agent of change in the then contemporary society.<sup>45</sup> B.S.Kesavan's *History of Printing and Publishing in India: A Story of Cultural Reawakening* is a seminal work on the development of print technology in

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<sup>42</sup> Mytheli Sreenivas, *op.cit.*, p.17

<sup>43</sup> The Tamil word *anpu* usually translated as 'affection' in English carries a wide range of connotations. Mytheli Sreenivas argues that the women's magazine in Tamilnadu represent *anpu* as the basis of the bond between husband and wife. The presence and absence of this emotion has important social implications. *Ibid.*, p.117

<sup>44</sup> J.Devika, *op.cit.*, p.70

<sup>45</sup> Leslie Howsome, *Old Books and New Histories: An Orientation to Studies in Book and Print Culture*, University of Toronto Press, London, 2006, Ananda Wood - *Knowledge Before Printing and After: The Indian Tradition in Changing Kerala*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1985, Jason McElligott and Eve Patten, *op.cit.*

different parts of India.<sup>46</sup> *The Province of the Book* by A.R.Venkatachalapathy is an outstanding work on the development of print culture in Tamilnadu.<sup>47</sup> K.M.Govi's work in Malayalam *Adimudranam Bharathathilum Malayalathilum* portrays the history of the origin of printing in Kerala.<sup>48</sup> Similarly the works of Puthuppally Raghavan, Babu Cheriyan, N. Sam etc. provides a detailed view of the origin and development of printing technology and print culture in Kerala.<sup>49</sup> G. Priyadarsanan's *Kerala Pathrapravarthanam Suvarna Adyayangal* gives a detailed picture of early print culture in Malayalam. *Politics, Women and Well Being: How Kerala Became a Model and Media and Modernity* by Robin Jeffrey vividly explains the development of print culture and the emergence of the middle class in Kerala.

There are many studies on the development of the middle class in India and most of these works consider the middle class as an offshoot of colonial education. B.B. Misra's *The Indian Middle Classes: Their Growth in Modern Times* is considered as one of the earliest studies on Indian middle class. *Fractured modernity: The Making of Middle Class in Colonial North India* and *The Middle Class in Colonial India* by Sanjay Joshi presents the middle class as the protagonist of modernity. These works explain how colonial modernity refashioned the attitude of the newly emergent middle class towards family and how they became the producers and products of modernity. These people with minimal economic and limited social power, managed to become hegemonic and emerged as cultural entrepreneurs. Similarly the works of Imtiaz Ahmad, B.N. Ganguli, Aynal Hoque,

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<sup>46</sup> B.S.Kesavan, *History of Printing and Publishing in India: A Story of Cultural Reawakening*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, vol.II,1988

<sup>47</sup> A.R.Venkatachalapathy, *The Province of the Book: Scholars Scribes and Scribblers in Colonial Tamil Nadu*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2015

<sup>48</sup> K.M.Govi, *Adimudranam Bharathathilum Malayalathilum* (Mal.), D.C. Offset Printers, Kottayam,1998

<sup>49</sup> Puthuppally Raghavan, *Kerala Patrapravarthana Charithram* (Mal.), D.C. Books, Kottayam, 2001(First published 1985), G. Priyadarsanan, *Kerala Pathra Pravarthanam Suvarna Adyayangal*(Mal.), Current Books, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, Babu Cheriyan, *Benjamin Bailyum Malayala Sahithyavum* (Mal.), D.C. Press, Kottayam, 2008

Tithi Bhattacharya have traced the development of the middle class in different parts of India.<sup>50</sup> *The Middle Class in Colonial Malabar: A Social History* by Sreejith K. is a comprehensive work on the middle class in colonial Malabar. He argues that the administrative changes during the colonial period provided the backdrop to the emergence of the new middle class.

Many PhD theses have been submitted analysing the development of print technology and marital reforms in Malabar. As they are all unpublished, an elaborate evaluation is not attempted here. Samuel Sabu in his study analysed how print contributed to construct 'community identities' in the colonial period. He argued that the Namboothiri and Ezhava leadership were most active in print and emerged to positions of leadership or gave much importance to printing in their activities. In the case of Nairs the leaders were more with organisational abilities rather than writings or printing which was done by others.<sup>51</sup> Mayadevi in her study on the Namboothiri and Nair communities of Malabar argued that the women's question addressed by the social reform movement of the twentieth century was intended towards the formation of a 'new womanhood' induced by colonial modernity. Moreover, the Middle class men's concern for women's reform was the outward expression of their anxiety at the new forces of westernization to which women were exposed.<sup>52</sup> Susan Thomas analysed how the colonial rule empowered the *anataravans* (literally nephews) of matrilineal joint families which

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<sup>50</sup> Imtiaz Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld (ed.), *Middle Class Values in India and Western Europe*, Routledge, New York, 2018, B.N. Ganguli, 'Conceptualising the Indian Middle Class', in K.S Krishnaswami, M.N Srinivas et.al.(ed.), *Society and Change*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1977, Aynal Hoque, *Rise of Middle Class in British India*, Globus Press, New Delhi, 2016, Tithi Bhattacharya, *The Sentinels of Culture: Class, & Education, and the Colonial Intellectual in Bengal 1848-85*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005

<sup>51</sup> Samuel Sabu, 'Printed Community, Printing Community: Community Formation In and Through the Print Media', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, 2017

<sup>52</sup> Mayadevi M., 'Notions of Womanhood: Family, Marriage and Morality Among Nairs and Namboothiris in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Malabar', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Calicut, 2017

culminated in the disintegration of *marumakkathayam* system. She argued that the *marumakkathayam* system owed its disintegration to the rise of a monetary economy, market and the non-local deployment of labour under colonial rule.<sup>53</sup> Swarna Kumari in her research pointed out that the Western education had been a harbinger of change and tradition in colonial Malabar. The emerging literature under its impact reflected both social reality and budding aspirations of the two prominent communities - the Namboothiris and Nairs.<sup>54</sup>

A number of studies made in different parts of the world have examined the dynamics of love, courtship and wedlock in everyday life in the early modern and modern periods, demonstrating the complexities involved in forming and maintaining relationships, both inside and outside marriage. But no study from a historical and emotional standpoint has been made in Malabar and even in the Kerala context. In Kerala the concept of 'marrying for love' and the dissemination of this idea through print media has seldom received systematic academic attention it deserved. Most of the previous studies on marriage have explored the traditional marriage practices confined to the particular castes or ethno-religious communities and the changes brought in by the reformers in such marriages but still the concept of marrying for love has been left relatively untouched. The present study is focused on the middle classes as they are the most exposed to, and enthusiastic about the ideals of marrying for love. Young people inspired by modern ideology aspire to companionate marriage and marrying for love. Print culture played a dominant role in imparting this aspiration among the middle class. Moreover, despite the great explosion of work being produced by historians on feelings, emotions and sentiments, such a history has not been well explored in Kerala.

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<sup>53</sup> Susan Thomas, 'Property Relations and Family Forms in Kerala', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Mahatma Gandhi University, 2004

<sup>54</sup> Swarna Kumari E.K. 'Social Changes in Malabar with Special Reference to Two Traditional Communities 1881-1933', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Calicut, 2001

The study is relevant and unique in the sense that despite its enormous importance in social and cultural history, the growth of mass reading public in Kerala and its impact on the middle class including women has never been systematically analysed and documented. So the study also attempts to enquire about the development of 'print culture' and 'reading public' in Kerala and how print culture has been used by the middle class for propagating new ideals of marriage and women. Exploring the question of how the medium of print was used to disseminate the notion and emotion of 'love' opens up the possibility of a fresh re-reading of the socio-cultural history of Malabar in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In order to study the 'New Woman' who entered the mainstream public sphere of Kerala, it is imperative to subject the perspectives of the middle-class of Malabar to an analysis.

## **METHODOLOGY AND HYPOTHESIS**

For analyzing the development of print culture and the resultant transformation of the concept of marrying for love in Malabar, a descriptive, interpretive and analytical approach is adopted. All the sources were accepted and interpreted only after critical examination and corroboration with other sources. Statistical data has been used wherever required. As a part of the research an extensive field trip was conducted to tap oral evidence and to augment the data available in printed form. The theoretical frameworks of 'Emotionology' provided by eminent scholars like by Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, 'New Woman' by Partha Chatterjee are used in the prosecution of the research.

The term 'Emotionology', denotes an approach that has pioneered looking at history from the standpoint of emotions. Through this concept Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns focus on 'emotional standards' as favoured by social groups in their respective settings or conjunctures. They define 'emotionology' as: 'attitudes or standards that a society, or a definable group within a society,

maintains toward basic emotions and their appropriate expression'.<sup>55</sup> The term 'emotionology' implies that individual feelings are negotiated based on the ideas and attitudes towards various emotions that exist at a given point, based on the existence of largely unwritten rules that define instances of appropriate and inappropriate feelings and also govern the way in which feelings should be expressed. This formulation opened up new fields in the study of social history based on the awareness that rules and norms for emotions are 'socially' and 'culturally' defined and can change over time. Enquiry into love, jealousy, anger, and fear should begin with the 'emotionological' context which is more accessible than emotional experience. The dominant emotionology of a society may set norms for men and women or for age groups. These norms, though important in their effect on perception of proper behaviour, do not necessarily describe emotional experience.

Partha Chatterjee argued that the middle class reform discourses of the nineteenth century produced the concept of a 'New Woman'. The colonial middle class was simultaneously placed in a position of subordination in one relation and in a position of dominance in another. For them political and economic domination by a British colonial elite was a fact.<sup>56</sup> Chatterjee argues that the middle class was created in a relation of subordination to the British colonial elite. At the same time the middle class had the urge to exercise their power and authority. So they exercised their dominant power within the private sphere of home.<sup>57</sup> This in effect led to an emphasis on the 'spiritual' (ie feminine) virtues of women and a caution on them getting 'westernised'. It followed, as a simple criterion for judging the

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<sup>55</sup> Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, *op.cit.*, p. 813

<sup>56</sup> Partha Chatterjee, 'A Religion of Urban Domesticity: Sri Ramakrishna and the Calcutta Middle Class', in Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey (ed.), *Subaltern Studies VII, Writings on South Asian History and Society*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2015 (First published 1992), p. 41

<sup>57</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *Nation and Its Fragments*, in *The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999, p.127



desirability of reform, that the essential distinction between the social roles of men and women in terms must at all times be maintained.<sup>58</sup>

These concepts are applicable in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Malabar. Considerable change in ‘emotionology’ in Malabar can be seen, when the society moved from the nineteenth to twentieth century and when romantic love began to influence courtship and marital expectations. Similarly, emotions became increasingly central to notions of modernity, to ideas of domesticity, conjugality and femininity.<sup>59</sup> Middle class discourses in print culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Malabar manifested the characteristics of the ‘new woman’ as projected by Partha Chatterjee.

The present study is based on a working hypothesis that, the need for changes in the contemporary or traditional marriage practices arise when emotional content of conjugal life becomes more important which is expressed in print culture. Print culture not only provided a communicative space but also enabled the middle class, especially women, to express their emotions. Print media spread new ideas on family, women, marriage and love as distinct from traditional ones and conjugality and the status of women got redefined in the process. The print culture could make love ‘respectable’ and so socially ‘acceptable’. These are the points of enquiry.

## **THE FRAMEWORK OF THE THESIS**

The research project is arranged into an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter, ‘Malabar in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century: The Emergence of a Middle class’ discusses the traditional social milieu of Malabar and how the colonial state and its policies accelerated social

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<sup>58</sup> Partha Chatterjee, ‘Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonized Women: The Contest in India’, *American Ethnologist*, vol.16, no.4, 1989, pp.622–633

<sup>59</sup> Mytheli Sreenivas, ‘Emotion, Identity, and the Female Subject: Tamil Women’s Magazines in Colonial India 1890–1940’, *Journal of Women’s History*, vol.14, no.4, 2003, pp.59 - 82

transformations and the resultant formation of a middle class in Malabar. As a part of this the intricacies of caste structure, the tenurial system and educational reforms in Malabar are elaborated. The background for the origin of the new social category called the middle class, a heterogeneous, stratified community is subjected to detailed evaluation. How colonial modernity created a new identity among the middle class and redefined their perceptions towards traditional social structure is also reviewed here. The influx of colonial modernity into the middle class lifestyle and culture is also becoming a part of the analysis. This chapter also deals with how far the middle class acted as the arbiters of socio-cultural changes in the then society and how they became the producers and products of modernity.

The second chapter entitled ‘The Growth of Print Culture and a Reading Public’ is a reflection of the role of the colonial state in creating a print culture in Malabar and how the new technology has been utilized by the middle class. Different stages of the development of print culture are also analysed. The chapter looks at the development of novels as a new literary genre in the late nineteenth century. The reading practices, modes of reading and the consequent development of a reading culture is also studied here. The emergence of libraries in different parts of Malabar and the formation of reading rooms and reading clubs also forms a part of the analysis. The chapter further moves on to examine print culture and the resultant creation of a literary public sphere in Malabar. The proliferation of women's magazines and the emergence of a new community of ‘reading women’ as well explored.

The third chapter titled ‘The World of Emotions: Tradition, Customs and Discourses on Marriages and Conjugal Love’ is an account of the middle class discourses on marriage and conjugal love. The traditional marriage practices among different communities in Malabar are discussed here. An attempt is made to see how the concept of family and marriage changed in Malabar through Western influence and how it redefined interpersonal relationships. The reform attempts made by social reformers, who stood against traditions and argued for the

revamping of the existing system are also examined. Moreover, the efforts of community organisations such as Nair Service Society, Yogakshema Sabha and Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam in this direction, also forms a part of the analysis. Similarly, the middle class attempts to popularise the new ideals of marriage and conjugality through print media as well explored here. The chapter contains middle class initiation for women's education and social reforms and the complexity of their social and cultural positioning. The chapter evaluates the middle class attempts for restructuring 'womanhood' and elaborates the trajectories of middle class contestation which redefined women status to 'helpmates'.

The discourses on the concept of 'marrying for love' is analysed in the fourth chapter 'Changing Notions of Family, Marriage and Love'. How the aspiration of marriage changes from traditional to romantic love followed by companionate marriage is reviewed here. The chapter tries to probe the popularisation of this concept through print media such as novels, short stories and magazines. In addition, the way printed literature acted for the internalisation of the idea of romantic love by the people, and how contemporary society reacted to it are subjected to detailed analysis. How love letters are being used for expressing emotional intimacy is elaborated in this chapter. Moreover, the legal protection for the individual's autonomous choices in marriage is also discussed here. How the middle class conceptualised 'marrying for love' and how far it is reflective of reality is also examined. Furthermore, the trajectories of middle class negotiation between tradition and modernity also become a part of the analysis.

This is followed by a brief conclusion which sums up the study.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The proposed study is carried out as per the requirements of a PhD thesis and is accomplished within the framework prescribed for PhD. Emotions are intractable to analytical discussion. Though writing about love is feasible and

natural from a literary perspective, to write about love analytically with historical reliability and precision, while not impossible, is indeed a difficult task to undertake. While emotions are almost always conveyed through words, expressions and actions, love is often private and personal. Reconstructing the emotional life of a period when such a feeling is rife with difficulties is incredibly challenging. It is often the tendency even among those who have loved and married to keep their love a secret and a private affair. So only love-relationships as portrayed in literature were mainly available for this study.

Another limitation of this study is that, it is confined to the three middle class social groups of Malabar - the Namboothiris, Nairs and Thiyyas. The Muslim and Christian middle classes have not been considered. This is because of differences of a social, economic, cultural and religious kind which we believe deserves a separate study. Hence the research does not claim to provide a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which the whole middle classes in Malabar negotiated colonial modernity and changing notions of marriage.

CHAPTER I

**MALABAR IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND  
EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY:  
THE EMERGENCE OF A MIDDLE CLASS**

The nineteenth century Kerala, comprised of the princely states of Thiruvithamkoor, Kochi and the British-ruled district of Malabar, witnessed tremendous transformations in the socio, economic, political and cultural sphere. The colonial rule with its policies and 'reforms' accelerated this transformation. Malabar occupies a unique position in the history of Kerala. The name Malabar, spelt variously as 'Mulaibar', 'Malibar', 'Manibar' in medieval travellers' accounts, appears to be the combination of two words, a Tamil Malayalam word 'Malai' meaning hill and a semitic word 'bar' meaning land.<sup>1</sup> So, it was not a political or administrative term but merely a geographical appellation.<sup>2</sup>

After the Srirangapattanam Treaty in 1792 Malabar region became a part of the Madras Presidency. Thereafter Malabar witnessed direct colonial intervention and there by social transformations in great magnitude. Malabar was brought under colonialism and the colonial powers exerted control over various aspects of Malabar's economy and society.<sup>3</sup> Colonialism altered the caste-based Malabar society in the nineteenth century. When the British introduced the census in India in 1871, they gave a religious dimension to it by categorising the people as Hindus and Muslims.<sup>4</sup> Still in the 1881 census, the people of Malabar were divided into three categories, the Hindus, the Muhammadans and Christians. In

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<sup>1</sup> C.A.Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, vol. I and II, Kerala State Gazetteer, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997 (First published 1908), p.2

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Bipan Chandra, *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India*, New Delhi, 1979, p. 26

<sup>4</sup> *Census of 1871*, vol.5, Regional Archives Kozhikode (Here after RAK)

addition, they were also divided into different caste groups. For instance, the Muhammadans were categorised as Arabs, Lubbais, Mughals, Pathans, Saids, Sheiks, and others as not stated.<sup>5</sup> In the census the word ‘Hindu’ was used to refer to people who were different in customs, beliefs and identity. The Brahmins, Nairs, Gowda, Maravan, Parayan, Vaniyan, Vellalan etc are all included in the single category of Hindu. The British defined and classified castes on a single pan-India list, where each caste had to be ‘discrete, homogeneous and enumerable’. All types of social hierarchies and identities that existed at the time were subsumed uniformly under the term ‘caste.’<sup>6</sup> It was a structure of human alienation and a form of social exclusion.

### **SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN MALABAR: CASTE SYSTEM**

Caste, as a principle of social stratification in India, is both an institution and an ideology within which are embedded notions of power and hierarchy. Caste is undoubtedly an all-India phenomenon in the sense that there are everywhere hereditary, endogamous groups which form a hierarchy, and that each of these groups has a traditional association with one or two occupations.<sup>7</sup> Institutionally, ‘caste’ provides a framework for arranging and organising social groups in terms of their status and positions in the social and economic system. As an ideology, caste is a system of values and ideas that legitimise and reinforce the existing structures of social inequality.<sup>8</sup> Relations between castes are invariably expressed in terms of pollution and purity.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> K. L. Sharma, *Caste, Social Inequality and Mobility in Rural India: Reconceptualizing the Indian Village*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2019, p. 87

<sup>7</sup> M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969, p.3

<sup>8</sup> Supurna Banerjee and Nandini Ghosh (ed.), *Caste and Gender in Contemporary India: Power, Privilege and Politics*, Routledge, London, 2019, p.3

<sup>9</sup> M.N Srinivas, *op.cit.*, p.3

The traditional Malabar society was based on a caste system that was distinct from its North Indian counterparts and the society was structured incorporating unique indigenous characteristics. The caste system divided the society into opposing groups, and played a great role in hindering social integration, more than any other system of social stratification. With the migration of Brahmins to South India, a very complex system of varna-classification and social stratification took form in Malabar. It was in the Sangam era that the migration of Brahmins to Kerala began and they, in due course, settled in thirty-two villages stretching from Kasargod in the North of Kerala to Travancore in the South. Every Namboothiri *illam* in Kerala claims and traces its lineage to one of these thirty-two villages.<sup>10</sup>

The Brahmins occupied the topmost rung in the caste hierarchy. The Kerala Brahmins were known as Namboothiris. The Namboothiris link their origins back to the Parasurama legend. They were the custodians of the *Dharmasastras*, and the sole keepers of scriptural knowledge. Ranking highest in caste hierarchy and ritual status, and regarded as repositories of Vedic knowledge and of Sanskrit, their authority was supreme in all religious matters. The European scholars of the colonial period generally explained the Brahmanical domination citing the spiritual nature of Hindu society and the importance of Brahmins in the ritual practices based on Vedic knowledge.<sup>11</sup> Traditionally, it was the Brahmins who interpreted and formulated the social, moral, and ritual codes and laws of the society. The rules of social conduct and caste relations ensured superior and privileged position for the Namboothiris and the subjection and acquiescence of

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<sup>10</sup> For details see Kesavan Veluthat, *Brahmin Settlements in Kerala: Historical Studies*, Cosmo Books, Thrissur, 2013 (First published 1978)

<sup>11</sup> Sunandan K.N., 'From Acharam to Knowledge: Claims of Caste Dominance in Twentieth-Century Malabar', *History and Sociology of South Asia*, Sage Publications, vol.9, no.2, 2015, pp.174 - 192

the lower orders to a value system which helped to perpetuate their privileges.<sup>12</sup> In the nineteenth century before an order of knowledge was established, it was in the name of *acharam* that Namboothiris of Kerala claimed their higher status over the other communities.<sup>13</sup> The orthodox view of the Namboothiri is thus stated in an official document of Travancore, “His person is holy, his directions are commands, his movements are a procession, his meal is nectar, he is the holiest of human beings, he is the representative of god on earth”.<sup>14</sup>

More than being the leaders of the Hindu faith, the Namboothiris were also wealthy landlords who had numerous lower castes working for them. Most of the lands of Malabar were owned by the Namboothiri Brahmins. According to the *Keralolpathi*, all the lands belonged and were for the Brahmins, who inherited it from Parasurama.<sup>15</sup> The primary reason for the domination of the Brahmins over other castes and classes was this ownership of land. The houses of such Namboothiri landlords were known as *illams* and *manas*. The *illam* was known by the regional clan name, and the *mana* was known by the regional family name.<sup>16</sup> Among the Namboothiris, the eldest male member of the family is the *karanavan*, and he enjoyed complete control over all the property. The youngest members of the family were entitled to nothing but maintenance. The Namboothiris followed the *Makkathayam* (Patrilineal succession) system of inheritance, wherein the inheritance fell to the son/s. In order to prevent the division of the family property

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<sup>12</sup> K.N. Panikkar, ‘Land Control, Ideology and Reform: A Study of the Changes in Family Organisation and Marriage System in Kerala’, *Indian Historical Review*, vol. 4, no.1, 1977, pp.31- 45

<sup>13</sup> Sunandan K.N., *op.cit.*, pp.174–192. On the one hand *acharam* was the performance of ritual action and on the other hand it was the customary law that ordered the action of caste communities. For details see William Logan, *Malabar*, vol.1, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1995 (First published 1887), p.110

<sup>14</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Government Press, Madras, vol.V, 1909, p.160

<sup>15</sup> Raghava Varrier and Rajan Gurukkal, *Keralacharithram* (Mal.), Vallathol Vidyapeedam, Sukapuram, 1999, p.12

<sup>16</sup> K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Innalekal* (Mal.), Department of Cultural Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997, p.194



and assets, only the eldest son of a Namboothiri family was permitted legal marriage and only they were allowed to marry *antarjanam* (Namboothiri women). Junior members of the *illam* were allowed to have *sambandham* with the women of royal households, *ambalavasies* and Nair *tarawads*

The royal matrilineages of various kingdoms that are asserted to be members of the Kshatriya varna come below the Namboothiris. A few of the princely families of Malabar claim to be pure Kshatriyas like the Raja's of Beypore, Parappanad, Kottayam, Kurumbaranadu and Chirakkal.<sup>17</sup> But the Namboothiris never accepted their claim of Kshatriya status. Samantha, who forms a notable group among the royal families in Malabar was not real Kshatriyas but they were born to a Kshatriya male in a Sudra woman. The Zamorin's families possess this Samantha identity. A large number of subdivisions included in Samantha like Nambiyar, Unnitiri, Adiyodi all belong to North Malabar and Nedungadi, Vallodi, Eradi and Thirumulpad all belong to South Malabar.<sup>18</sup> All these groups occupy a position in between Namboothiri and Nair. Both Kshatriya and Samantha follow *marumakkathayam*, and their women, as a rule, have *sambandham* only with Brahmanas and Kshatriyas.

It was the Nairs (alternatively spelled as Nayars) who entered next in the social fray of Malabar. According to the Census Report 1891, they numbered 377,828 in Malabar.<sup>19</sup> The term 'Nayar' is said to have been derived from the Sanskrit word 'Nayaka', which means 'leader'.<sup>20</sup> There are numerous subdivisions within the Nair caste, and the differences in the tradition and rituals of each category mostly vary only in nomenclature, as a rule. However, there exist minor differences which are unorganized in their nature, such as Nairs belonging to a particular sub-division refusing to eat food prepared at the house of another

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<sup>17</sup> C.A.Innes, *op.cit.*, pp.113-114

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.114

<sup>19</sup> F. Fawcett, *Nayars of Malabar*, Government Press, Madras, vol. III, 1915, p.186

<sup>20</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op.cit.*, p. 291

sub-division, nor do they eat together, at the same place. Menons, Menoki Nairs, Moopil Nairs etc. are examples of the Nair sub-categories.<sup>21</sup> The regional differences among the Nair castes is also a noticeable phenomenon. Though the Nambiar - landlords of North Malabar, the Kurup - soldiers and landlords of Kadathanattu, the Menons of South Malabar, the Kaimals and Panikkars of central Kerala, and the Pillais of South Kerala all belong to the same Nair caste, their origins were different and varied.<sup>22</sup>

The Nairs formed the traditional militia of Malabar. They followed the *Marumakkathayam* (matrilineal succession) family structure. The children born out of the *sambandham* alliance of the Nairs with the Namboothiris had no rights to their father's property or assets. Moreover, the father had no right or responsibility towards the children, who were brought up in their mother's *tarawad*. The Namboothiri Brahmins considered the Nairs as mere Shudras. However, William Logan remarks that in the traditional Malabar society, Nairs were considered as Kshatriyas.<sup>23</sup>

Another important caste that was placed just below the Nairs in terms of hierarchy was the Thiyyas. Though Thiyya was considered as a polluting caste, it formed the upper layer of the lower castes. They were known as the Ezhavas in the region of Thiruvithamkoor, as Chekavas or Chovans in Kochi, and as Thiyyas in Malabar.<sup>24</sup> The Thiyyas were an important class in Malabar, especially in Northern Malabar. There are varied opinions as to the origins of the Thiyyas. According to Hermann Gundert, the Ezhavas and the Thiyyas are the same, and they were people who had settled in the region of *Ezhath*. According to William Logan, the name Thiyya might have been used to refer to those who had come

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<sup>21</sup> P. Bhaskaranunni, *Pathonpatham Noottandile Keralam* (Mal.), Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 2012, pp.322-323

<sup>22</sup> K.N. Ganesh, *op.cit.*, p.191

<sup>23</sup> William Logan, *op.cit.*, pp.134-136

<sup>24</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Government Press, Madras, vol.VII, 1909, pp.36-38

from the island regions (Dweep).<sup>25</sup> He also points out that the name Ezhava is another term used to refer to the island of Ceylon.

Thiyyas, though socially inferior, enjoyed numerical superiority and economic independence in many areas of Malabar, especially North Malabar. Matters of social concern were decided by the regional council of the Thiyyas, known as the *Thara*. Their hereditary occupation was coconut plucking and toddy tapping. There have also been Ezhava families who were experts in traditional medicine, astrology, as well as scholars of Sanskrit.<sup>26</sup> The Thiyyas followed a matrilineal system that was very similar to that of the Nairs. Both the men and women of the Thiyya caste of Northern Malabar looked and behaved like the Nairs, and meticulously practiced the same kind of cleanliness and hygiene.<sup>27</sup> Even in matters of marriage, traditions and rituals, the practices of the Thiyyas did not differ much from that of the Nairs.<sup>28</sup>

In the caste hierarchy there were different castes such as the Pulayas, Parayas, Cherumas, Nayadis and others. They served the upper castes across the length and breadth of Malabar. Their proximity with these castes were considered to cause pollution to the higher castes, so they were allotted special places to dwell in. Different castes had to call their houses by different names; Parayas called theirs *cheri*, Cherumas called theirs *chala* and the artisan castes, *pura*.<sup>29</sup> They faced continual ill treatment and harassment, and were beaten up by their masters. These

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<sup>25</sup> William Logan, *op.cit.*, p.143

<sup>26</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *Moorkkoth Kumaran: Jeevacharithram* (Mal.), Sahithya Pravarthaka Cooperative Society, Kottayam, 1975, pp.27-29

<sup>27</sup> William Logan, *op.cit.*, p.144

<sup>28</sup> P.Bhaskaranunni, *op.cit.*, pp.357-358. Also see William Logan, *op.cit.*, p.144, L.A.Krishna Iyer, *Social History of Kerala, vol.II - The Dravidians*, Book Centre Publications, Madras, 1970, pp.67-68

<sup>29</sup> Dilip M. Menon, *Caste, Nationalism and Communism in South India: Malabar 1900 - 1948*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 1994, p.19. Tenants were not allowed to tile their roofs and had to be content with thatched ones. In parts of Chirakkal, every lower caste labourer's hut had to have a chair for the local landlord when he visited, an event as rare as would, otherwise, have been the presence of a chair in a hut.

castes were usually used as bonded slaves for agriculture. They were denied entry to the temples, and were not permitted to enter even the temples of the Thiyyas.<sup>30</sup> They were prohibited from the public spaces and from near the places where the higher castes dwelt. William Logan notes that, due to the proximity of such castes, even the whole townships and marketplaces were considered as unclean and polluted. Most of the manual labour in the fields was managed by these depressed castes, who were tied to the plots of land and who remained with the land till its *janmam* or *kanam* rights were transferred.<sup>31</sup> The novel *Saraswatheevijayam* by Potheri Kunhambu evidently depicted the social conditions in Malabar created by caste discriminations and how the depressed classes especially Pulayas and Parayas struggled to survive.<sup>32</sup>

Along with the system of caste, the concept of purity and impurity were also nurtured in such a manner as to sustain the rights and privileges of the various rungs in the social hierarchy. It was the Brahmins who adopted the tribal system of purity and impurity into the social mechanism as a tool for societal control.<sup>33</sup> The concept of pollution was observed in Malabar too, as a means of maintaining the exclusiveness of each caste. As a part of this, untouchability and unseeability was practiced in Malabar. William Logan stated that there were two kinds of pollution: 1) by people whose very approach within a certain defined distance caused atmospheric pollution to those of the higher castes, and 2) by people who polluted on actual contact with the higher castes. The Nayadis, the Pulayas, the

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<sup>30</sup> For instance, in the Thalassery Jagannatha temple consecrated by Sree Narayana Guru in 1908, the lower castes were not allowed to enter the premises but their offerings were accepted. Sree Narayana Guru objected to this at a meeting at the Thalassery temple and requested the Ezhava leaders to admit Pulayas and other lower castes. Finally, it was only in March 1923 admission was allowed to all classes of people to this Temple. See *Kerala Kaumudi*, 4<sup>th</sup> March 1993

<sup>31</sup> Eric. J. Miller, 'Castes and Territory in Malabar', *American Anthropologist*, vol.56, no.3, 1954, pp.410 - 420

<sup>32</sup> Potheri Kunhambu, *Saraswatheevijayam* (Mal.), in George Irumbayam (ed.), *Nalu Novalukal*, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 1983

<sup>33</sup> K.N. Ganesh, *op.cit.*, p.189

Kanisans etc. were in the first category, whereas the Muhammedans, the Christians, and foreign Hindus belonged to the second category.<sup>34</sup>

The distance to be maintained by each caste while approaching another varied from region to region. The structural distance between various castes is defined in terms of pollution and purity. A higher caste is always “pure” in relation to a lower caste, and in order to retain its higher status it should abstain from certain forms of contact with the lower.<sup>35</sup> The Namboothiris determined the distance to be kept to prevent pollution by the various castes and classes according to their status. Thus, the Kshatriyas had to maintain a distance of 12 feet from the Namboothiris; the Nairs, 24 feet; the Kammalans, 36 feet; the Ezhavas, 48 feet; the Parayas, 60 feet, and so on for each category.<sup>36</sup> In *Malabar Manual*, William Logan mentions that the Nayadis had to maintain a distance of 72 feet; the Pulayas, 64 feet; the Kanisans, 36 feet; the Mukkuvans, 24 feet.<sup>37</sup> Not only for the Namboothiris, the lower castes had to maintain a fixed distance from other higher castes as well. Thus, the Ezhavas had to keep a distance of 12 feet from the Nairs, and the Pulayas, 96 feet.<sup>38</sup> “It is a rule seldom broken that every Nayar goes to the temple twice a day. The mere approach anywhere near his vicinity of a Cheruman, a Pulayan or any inferior being, even a Thiyyan, as he walks to his house from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks newly set on his forehead with sandalwood paste, is pollution, and he must turn and bath again”.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> William Logan, *op.cit.*, p.118

<sup>35</sup> M.N Srinivas, *op.cit.*, p.120. A breach of rules renders the higher caste member impure, and purity can only be restored by the performance of a purification rite and, frequently, also by undergoing such punishment as the caste council decides upon.

<sup>36</sup> K.N. Ganesh, *op.cit.*, p.189

<sup>37</sup> The Nayadis occupied the lowest position in the scale of pollution as 72 feet distance was prescribed for them.

<sup>38</sup> Hobart Caunter, *The Oriental Annual or Scenes in India*, Charles Tilt, London, 1838, p. 159, quoted in Mayadevi M., ‘Notions of Womanhood: Family, Marriage and Morality Among Nairs and Namboothiris in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Malabar’, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Calicut, 2017, p.43

<sup>39</sup> F.Fawcett, *op.cit.*, p. 254

Thus, in Malabar, there had been a remarkable degree of separation between the *savarna* and the *avarna* castes. Defilement practices consisting of untouchability, unapproachability, and even unseeability, were apparently influenced by the notion of hierarchy, though in actual practice, they were mediated by brute power wielded by the *savarna* castes.<sup>40</sup> The *savarna-avarna* divide, mediated by socio economic and political inequalities, hardened and dehumanised their relationships to one another. The subservience of lower caste was manifest in all realms of social intercourse.

However, this does not mean that the concept of unapproachability was implemented to the letter. Beyond pollution, a sort of harmony, adjustability and interdependence between such communities can be seen in Malabar both at the tenorial level and in everyday life. In rural societies, people from different walks of life can be seen dwelling together. The Uralis, the Pulayans, the Kanakans, all could dwell near the houses of the Namboothiris and the Nairs. In the fields of production and distribution, they even came into contact with each other.<sup>41</sup> Even when caste pollution existed, the higher castes occasionally had to rely on the lower castes to remove the former's pollution. The prevalence of the *maattu* system in Kerala is an indicator of such dependance.

The *maattu* refers to the clothes washed by the people of the *Vannan/Mannan* caste. Though there were washerwomen in each caste, the *maattu* specifically refers to the clothes washed by *Vannans* of the Thiyyas.<sup>42</sup> In order to end the *pula* (defilement) caused during births and deaths, a cloth washed by a *Vannan* should be worn. After menstruation also purification by *maattu* was required for women. One's pollution is not considered to have ceased unless the *maattu* has been worn. Only the *Vannans* had the right to hand over the *maattu* to

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<sup>40</sup> D.Damodaran Namboothiri, 'Caste and Social Change in Colonial Kerala', in P.J. Cheriyan (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, Kerala State Gazetteer, vol.II, Part II, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 433

<sup>41</sup> K.N.Ganesh, *op.cit.*, p.190

<sup>42</sup> P. Bhaskaranunni, *op.cit.*, p.301

the Thiyyas, and the castes above them. As the *Vannans* were under the authority of the Thiyyas, the Namboothiris and other higher castes had to depend upon the Thiyyas at times. The Thiyya elders had the authority to forbid the *Vannans* from giving *maattu*, what is known as *Maattu Vilakku*.<sup>43</sup> or *Vannathi Maattu Mudakkal*. If an elder of the Thiyya *thara* forbade the *Vannans* from handing over the *maattu* to anyone, they were bound to obey the order.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, while interactions were maintained between these castes at the practical level, there were attempts at isolation at the ideological level, and consequently, rituals and traditions were also formed to highlight their separation. The *savarna* Hindus imposed restrictions upon the *avarna* castes, not only in their houses and temples, but also in the streets and roads, and other public places. The *avarnas* were denied the basic necessities of day-to-day life, both widening and deepening their social inequality. They were denied even the rights to build or dwell in houses, wear upper garments, or adorn jewellery.

## **TRADITIONAL AGRARIAN RELATIONS**

During the nineteenth century the British government tried to redefine the land tenure system in Malabar which shattered the traditional Malabar society. The most decisive change that the British brought in, was in the existing system of land control and agrarian relations. The land revenue system introduced in Malabar was basically different and more complicated from the pattern in other parts of the Madras Presidency. In the ideal system envisaged by Munro, the classes of labourer, farmers and landlords were combined in the 'ryot' with whom the settlement was made. In Malabar they were distinct and separate. A large number of intermediaries existed between the *janmi* (Landlord) and the actual cultivators.

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<sup>43</sup> Such bans were an intense form of punishment to those who commit serious crimes against the caste-rituals.

<sup>44</sup> The *thara* is the regional council of the Thiyyas. Matters of social and communal importance were decided in such councils. Each *thara* was made up of four *tarawad*. For more details see Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *op.cit.*, pp.11-12

Moreover, the customary law in Malabar known as *Maryada, Margam, Acharam* regulates every face of the individual life, the family conditions, inheritance and succession, agriculture relations especially the system of land holding.<sup>45</sup>

The intricacies of the caste structure of Malabar created a hierarchy of rights over land. This was reflected in both the patterns of land use and ownership. The agrarian structure in Malabar evolved by the British colonial rule was primarily based on these principles which provided for the state's appropriation of the largest share of the agricultural produce. The tenurial structure of Malabar reflected the complexity of relations in cultivation. The basic tenurial categories in Malabar were *Janmam, Kanam, Kuzhikanam* and *Verumpattom*. *Janmam* means hereditary right or birthright (the term literally means birth), the right that the landlord comes to occupy by descent from his predecessor who held the land.<sup>46</sup> The holder of *janmam* was referred to as *janmi*. The *Namboothiris* of Malabar with their spiritual influence and using the legitimization of Parasurama legend dominated a major portion of the *janmam* rights.<sup>47</sup> Major Walker says that, the *janmakaran* possess the entire right to the soil and no earthly authority can with justice deprive him of it.<sup>48</sup> Warden also states that, the *janmam* right of Malabar vest in the holder an absolute property in the soil. But these *janmis* did not undertake direct cultivation instead subleased their land to *kanakkar* and *verumpattakkar*.

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<sup>45</sup> T.K. Ravindran, 'Traditional Land Tenures of Malabar', in M.G. S. Narayanan (ed.), *Malabar*, Malabar Mahotsav Souvenir, Kozhikode, 1993, p.187

<sup>46</sup> In this sense his right over land is autonomous. The *janmi* loses this right only if he transfers or sells his land, and the new owner has to pay rent or dues because he does not come to own the land as a birthright. For details see K.N.Ganesh, 'Ownership and Control of Land in Medieval Kerala: Janmam- Kanam Relations During the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol.28,no.3, 1991, pp. 299-321.

<sup>47</sup> The legend was that Parasurama reclaimed the land of Kerala out of sea and bestowed it upon the Namboothiri Brahmins with absolute property rights. They did not cultivate the land themselves but lived on rent collected from their tenants to whom the land was leased under a variety of tenurial arrangements.

<sup>48</sup> C.A.Innes, *op.cit.*, p.307



The *kanam* tenure comes next to the *janmam*. The Nairs were mostly the holders of the *kanam* rights and some of the Nairs also held land as *janmam* property and claimed absolute right over it. *Kanam* originated as a feudal tenure with rights of perpetual occupancy.<sup>49</sup> A substantial section of the *kanakar* did not undertake cultivation, but subleased the land on *verumpattom* or for crop sharing. The extent of land under such leases was quite extensive. Of the 7994 tenants examined by Logan in 1881, 2149 had their lease from intermediaries. These intermediaries were thus simultaneously, a rent receiving rent paying class who appropriated a lion's share of the rent from the cultivators.<sup>50</sup>

*Kuzhikanam* is a right referred to a special assessment that extended to lands newly brought under cultivation, or trees newly planted.<sup>51</sup> The holder of this right, *kuzhikanakkaran* could enjoy the whole of its produce only for a certain period, usually twelve years and he was exempted from taxation for this period. Next comes *verumpattom*, the holder being the actual cultivator of the land. The *verumpattakkar* held land on a simple lease either directly from the *janmi* or the *kanakkaran*. In either case he was a tenant-at-will without any occupancy right. Generally, he held land on a yearly basis.<sup>52</sup> The *verumpattakkar* mainly consisted of lower caste Nairs, Thiyyas and Muslims. With the advancement of colonial rule, the traditional land tenures in Malabar have completely shattered and it paved the way for the emergence of a middle class from among the landowning classes which will be discussed as a separate section in this chapter.

## **EDUCATION IN MALABAR**

Malabar had its own indigenous tradition of education in the pre-colonial period. Traditionally, education in Malabar was centred on the study of classical

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<sup>49</sup> T.C Varghese, *Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences: Land Tenures in Kerala 1850 - 1960*, Allied Publishers Private Limited, Calcutta, 1970, p.40

<sup>50</sup> K.N. Panikkar, 'Land and Labour in Malabar', in M.G.S. Narayanan, *op.cit.*, p.196

<sup>51</sup> K.N.Ganesh, 'Agrarian Society in Kerala 1500-1800', in P.J.Chcrian, *op.cit.*, p.144

<sup>52</sup> K.N.Panikkar, 'Agrarian Legislation and Social Classes: A Case Study of Malabar', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 13, no. 21, 1978, pp.880-888

languages, literatures and scriptures. For the upper castes, like Namboothiris and Nairs, there were institutions called *Ezhuthu Kalari* or *Ezhuthu Palli* in which teachers called *Ezhuthassan* or *Ezhuthachan* gave instructions. Muslim children went to *Othupallis* or *Madrasas*. The students would use sand spread on the floor of the school shed to write and cadjan leaves for recording lessons.<sup>53</sup> Rote-learning was the predominant learning method in these institutions although rudiments of reading and writing were also taught. These traditional schools lacked general curriculum, common text books and rules regarding punctuality. The curriculum included *Kavyam*, *Alankaram*, *Tharkam*, *Jyothisham*, *Vaidyam*, Martial Arts, Hindu Religious Scriptures and Arithmetic.<sup>54</sup>

It was the Protestant missionaries who first introduced popular education in Malabar. Their primary motivation in this was, of course, religious conversion. So, they were more successful in attracting the backward castes than the *savarnas* to their educational institution. But the increasing European presence in Malabar and the need for the assistance of the local people in administration altered the situation considerably. The early decades of the British occupation did not make any substantial changes in the traditional educational system in Malabar. It was only in the nineteenth century that the British initiated Western education and accelerated social mobility among different castes.

In their early attempts to create an India in the British image, they concentrated in Thiruvithamkoor and Kochi where the endeavour seemed to be easy for them as there existed numerous bodies of Christians.<sup>55</sup> As a part of this Protestant missionaries were invited from England to establish English schools in different parts of Thiruvithamkoor with a view to convert the native people to

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<sup>53</sup> C.A.Innes, *op.cit.*, p.303

<sup>54</sup> Bl.no.4902, Inward Letters to the Miscellaneous Departments from August 1831 to October 1833, RAK, p.22, quoted in Usha.C.K., 'English Education, Intelligentsia and Social Change in Colonial Malabar 1817-1947', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Kannur University, 2017, p.42

<sup>55</sup> P.R. Gopinathan Nair, 'Education and Socio-Economic Change in Kerala 1793-1947', *Social Scientist*, vol. 4, no. 8, 1976, pp. 28-43

Christianity. In Southern Thiruvithamkoor the initiation for Western education was taken up by the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the credit goes to Church Missionary Society (CMS) in central and North Thiruvithamkoor and Kochi. Though the growth of the Western system of education was much more delayed in Malabar compared to Thiruvithamkoor and Kochi, Malabar held a highly advanced status in the field of education during the colonial period. As opportunities for the educated opened up in the colonial service, the *savarna* elite also were motivated to get education from British institutions.

The Basel Evangelical Mission<sup>56</sup> under Gundert's leadership made pioneering attempts to spread Western education in Malabar. Basel Mission's efforts in promoting literacy had the basic objective that every convert should be able to read the Bible. On setting up a base in Thalassery, the Basel Mission realized the need to set up primary schools. The British who thought of education only in terms of producing officials for its colonial administration could not be expected to support the venture. CMS missionaries started the first free school in Thalassery in 1817 which later became Basel Evangelical Mission Parsee School. From the CMS missionaries it was taken over by the Baptist missionaries. Finding it difficult to run, they handed it over to the Basel Mission under Dr. Gundert on 6 May 1839, thus it attained the name Basel German Evangelical Mission School.<sup>57</sup> Between 1839 and 1914 the Basel Mission set up 42 Elementary Schools in Malabar. During 1845-46 the BEM ran four primary schools in Kozhikode city. Another one was set up at Kallai in the city in 1848.<sup>58</sup> In 1886 three more schools

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<sup>56</sup> Here after BEM

<sup>57</sup> Scaria Zacharia, *Malayalavum Herman Gundertum* (Mal.), Herman Gundert Chair, Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University, vol.I, 2016, pp.185-186. When the school met with an acute financial crisis, a rich Parsee businessman of the area named K. Darashaw donated an amount of Rupees 1500 to the Mission in 1858, hence the term 'Parsee' was added to it. The term 'German' was removed from its name during the First World War. For details see Moorkkoth Ramunny, 'German Influence on the Literature, Society, Culture and Education', in K.S, Mathew (ed.), *Maritime Malabar and Europeans:1500-1962*, IRISH (Thalassery) and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, 2003, pp. 461- 468

<sup>58</sup> C.A.Innes, *op.cit.*, p.296

were set up: at Chalappuram in the city, at Puthiyangadi which was then outside the city limits to the North, and at Vatakara, 20 kilometres away from Thalassery. The school at Chalappuram was exclusively for girls. Two years later in 1888, another school was set up at Karakkad. The Mission started its first middle school at Thalassery in 1863 with 31 pupils.<sup>59</sup> Another Middle School came up at Kathirur near Thalassery on the demand made by the Thiyya community of the area. It began functioning with 20 Thiyya boys in its rolls.<sup>60</sup>

The BEM played a significant role in the spread of education among the backward castes of Malabar. Free education to the poor was the motto of the BEM in Malabar. Moorkkoth Kumaran refers to it in his autobiography: “my gratitude to the Basel Mission school at Thalassery is unlimited. I studied in the school without paying any fees till my matriculation. There were many others like me, I know”.<sup>61</sup> As the students of this school came up in life securing government jobs, the Thiyya community realized the value of English education. More members of the community were inspired to follow in the footsteps of the educated. Joseph Muliyl’s novel *Sukumari* published in 1897 gives a good account of the work of Basel Evangelical Mission in Malabar and the curriculum of Basel Mission schools. We learn from the novel that in standard V, Scripture, Malayalam literature, English literature, Calligraphy, Mathematics, Geography, History, Physical Wellness, sewing and singing were taught.<sup>62</sup> Besides these, there was a session each on Tuesdays and Fridays on parenting and home science for married women.

At the beginning of the twentieth century there were four institutions of higher learning in Malabar: Zamorin’s College at Kozhikode(1877)<sup>63</sup>, Victoria

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<sup>59</sup> Usha C.K., *op.cit.*, p.61

<sup>60</sup> Scaria Zacharia, *op.cit.*, p.186.

<sup>61</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *op.cit.*, p.37

<sup>62</sup> Joseph Muliyl, *Sukumari* (Mal.), in George Irumbayam, *op.cit.*, pp.311-312

<sup>63</sup> The college was set up by the Zamorin Raja of Calicut to provide education to the family members under the name *Kerala Vidyasala* in 1877.

College at Palakkad(1888)<sup>64</sup>, Brennen College at Thalasseri(1891)<sup>65</sup> and Malabar Christian College at Kozhikode (1909).<sup>66</sup> Among these Victoria College was a first grade college and the others were second grade colleges with secondary schools attached to them.

The caste system was the biggest hurdle in the way of public education in Malabar. It is amusing to note that the Namboothiris, who were at the top of the caste hierarchy, were the last community to go in for public education. The fear of being polluted and losing their caste kept them away for a long time. The children from the upper caste families were allowed to enter home after school, only after taking a bath because they would have been polluted by mixing with fellow-students of the lower castes.<sup>67</sup> But by the beginning of the twentieth century many young Namboothiri boys, realizing the need for a modern education and heeding the call of reformists like Kurur Unni Namboothiripad, enrolled themselves in public schools. The *karanavans*, the heads of *savarna* families, had only contempt and resentment for the *mleccha* education and refused to fund them. At a time when deference to elders was a compulsion, it was extremely difficult for the young boys to seek modern education. When the land tenure system in Malabar was changed by the colonial administration it became necessary for the Namboothiris also to acquire modern education. 'Pure Brahmanism is not in need of modern education. However, when Brahmanism turned in to *janmi* system,

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<sup>64</sup> The college was started as a Rate School (a school managed with an 'educational rate' or tax levied by the local self government under the British Colonial administration) in 1866. It was upgraded to a High School in 1884 and into a college in 1888.

<sup>65</sup> The school set up by Edward Brennen, a master attendant at Thalassery port on an investment of Rs.12,000 in 1862 was upgraded into Brennen College in 1891.

<sup>66</sup> Malabar Christian College has an interesting history. Founded by the Basel Mission it was originally named Basel Mission German College. The 'German' in the name was later removed. When the Madras Christian College took over its administration the name was changed to 'Malabar Christian College'.

<sup>67</sup> P. Kesavadev, *Ethirppu* (Mal.), Prabath Books, Thiruvananthapuram,1999 (First published 1959), p.12

modern education became inevitable'.<sup>68</sup> The most attractive college degree in those days was B.A, B.L. Even without the halo of a barrister, it was considered a matter of prestige to have an advocate in the family. This was directly related to the laws of tenancy that came into being with the rise of a land-owning class in Malabar.

Boys from the Nair, Thiyya and Muslim communities, attracted by the prospect of employment in the colonial administration, eagerly embraced modern education. They realized the need for acquiring modern education for social and financial mobility and aspired for it. The overwhelming majority graduates, undergraduates and matriculates in the Malabar district at the end of the nineteenth century came from the upper caste Hindus.<sup>69</sup>

But the lower caste did not have the resources or social sanction for modern education. The most depressed castes like the Pulayas or Parayas had no right to receive education of any kind, nor could they cultivate an awareness of the contemporary socio-economic and political developments.<sup>70</sup> Potheri Kunhambu, in the preface to his novel *Saraswatheevijayam* remarks: "It was on reading in an English daily in Madras about the fate of Parayas, an untouchable caste, and the need to uplift them through education, that I was reminded of the pitiable state of the Pulayas of Malabar, who are worse off than them, and decided to write this novel. I am naming it *Saraswatheevijayam* to emphasize the importance of education".<sup>71</sup> There is an episode in the novel where a young boy questions Kuberan Namboothiri on his reward to Raman Kutty Nambiar for assaulting a

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<sup>68</sup> Velayudan Panikkassery, *Ayyankali Muthal V T Vare* (Mal.), Current Books, Kottayam, 2007, p.90

<sup>69</sup> Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the number of officials drawing a salary of more than 10, 20 and 50 rupees a month were 1063, 245 and 90 respectively, the majority of whom were Nairs. K.N Panikkar, 'Land Control, Ideology and Reform....' *op.cit.*, p.38

<sup>70</sup> C.S.Ramachandran Nair, *Social and Cultural History of Colonial Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p.4

<sup>71</sup> Potheri Kunhambu, *op.cit.*, p.52. Saraswathy is the goddess of knowledge as per traditional Hindu belief.

Pulaya boy for singing in public. Kuberan Namboothiri replied, “Cherumas are not allowed to learn reading or writing. If they learn reading and writing and start singing, there won’t be any rain in this land”.<sup>72</sup>

K.P. Kesava Menon, in his autobiography *Kazhinjakalam*, notes that the backward castes were denied admission to Zamorin’s College in the early days.<sup>73</sup> The Thiyyas were denied admission till as late as 1918. A few went to Madras for a university education and Thiyyas constituted slightly more than a tenth of the migrants from Malabar between 1906-20.<sup>74</sup> In Thiruvithamkoor too, the Ezhavas were not admitted in government schools. C. Kesavan notes that Ezhavas were denied admission in Maharaja’s college hostel at Ernakulam.<sup>75</sup>

## WOMEN’S EDUCATION

Women were far less literate than men in Malabar. Society as a whole became prejudiced against female education. Traditional attitudes on the role of women in the family stood in the way of women getting a modern education. The essentially patriarchal perspective was that education would liberate women and make them neglect household chores.<sup>76</sup> R.G.Bhandarkar, in one of his speeches in 1891, remarked that, ‘we don’t propose to make our women learned and teach them to neglect their household duties and take to books. We intend to make them more fit to discharge those duties and to open a window in the prison-house of a social system through which they may look into the modern world’.<sup>77</sup> The

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p.58

<sup>73</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinjakalam* (Mal.), Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Ltd., 2012 (First published 1957), p.25. He studied at this college for eight years up to matriculation. Also see ‘Zamorin’s College and Thiyyas’, *Mitavadi*, book. 4, issue. 6, 1916

<sup>74</sup> Dilip M. Menon, *op.cit.*, p. 64

<sup>75</sup> R. Prakasam, *C. Kesavan: Jeevacharithram*, (Mal.), Department of Cultural Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990, pp.32-33

<sup>76</sup> Meera Kosambi, *Crossing the Threshold, Feminist Essays in Social History*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2007, p.156

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p.151

authorities both in England and in India were of the opinion that any attempt to introduce female education, when there was no demand for it, might be regarded by the people as an interference with their social customs.<sup>78</sup> Official apathy and social and religious preconceptions kept women away from modern education for a long time.

In the early days of the colonial administration women's education was utterly neglected. It was in 1854 that the Wood's Education Despatch expressed serious concern about women's education. Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control of East India Company sent a despatch to Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General in which he put forth his suggestions for developing public education. Wood advocated the regional language as the medium of instruction at the primary level, both the regional language and English at the secondary level, and English for higher education. He recommended the introduction of at least one government school in each district. One of the most important recommendations of Wood is the promotion of female education at all levels.<sup>79</sup> Wood's Despatch led to the colonial government even funding private individuals and organizations for running schools.<sup>80</sup> But the ultimate interest of the colonial administration was the creation of a 'colonial salariate' to aid its administration.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> J.A.Richey, (ed), *Selections from Educational Records - Part II, 1840-59*, Superintendent of Government Printing, New Delhi, 1925, p.32

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* Prior to the receipt of the Despatch of 1854 from the Court of Directors, female education was not recognised as a branch of the State system of education in India. The education of girls was left entirely to the fostering care of individuals and private societies. This is evident from the fact that in none of the general dispatches relating to educational matters submitted to or received from the Court of Directors during the first half of the century, there is reference to the education of Indian girls and women.

<sup>80</sup> Clive Whitehead, 'The Christian Missions and the Origins of the Indian Education Commission 1882-83', *Education Research and Perspectives*, vol.31, no.2, 2004, pp. 120-136

<sup>81</sup> During the nineteenth century an articulate class or social group had come into existence as a result of colonial transformation. This class which had received modern education that equipped them for employment in the state apparatus was called by Hamsa Alavi as the 'colonial salariat'. Hamsa Alavi and John Hams, *Sociology of Developing Societies*



On account of the restrictions imposed upon women's education by the prevalent caste system, and a patriarchal mindset, investment in women's education appeared wasteful to the colonial administration. However, it goes to the credit of the colonial administration that after the initial lethargy, schools for girls were also set up in various parts of the country and attempts were made to encourage female education. T. Ammukutty states that 'parents from upper caste families did not send their daughters to schools, for they considered it beneath their dignity to speak to children from the lower castes or to study with them in the same school. As the expected enrollment did not materialize many government schools for girls had to be shut down'.<sup>82</sup> Apart from this, parents hesitated to send girls to mixed schools or schools which employed male teachers. To offset this prejudice, caste-Hindu widows and married couples began to be employed in schools as teachers, which resulted in increased enrolment of girls. To accelerate this progressive movement the government undertook measures like raising the monthly salary of teachers, which was fixed at two rupees.<sup>83</sup> Along with the restrictions of the caste system fears of conversion to Christianity also made many parents wary of sending their daughters to missionary schools.

In Malabar, the credit for spreading modern education among women should go principally to the missionaries. The missionaries were interested in female education and schools for girls because they argued, women needed to be brought into the fold to make conversion permanent.<sup>84</sup> By the mid-nineteenth century, unmarried women missionaries began to arrive in India and work among women and children. They could gain access to homes as teachers and read stories

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*South Asia*, McMillan, London, 1989, p.225, quoted in D.Damodaran Namboothiri, *op.cit.*, p.441

<sup>82</sup> T.Ammukutty, 'Sthreevidyabhyasam', *Sarada*, book.1, issue.3,1905, p.10

<sup>83</sup> Educational Policy of the Government of India Resolution, Department of Education, Government of India, Delhi, 1913 quoted in Praseetha N.C., 'Women's Education in Malabar: 1885-1947', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Kerala University, 2014, p.122

<sup>84</sup> Geraldine Forbes, *The New Cambridge History of India-Women in India*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2006, p.37

to women and girls and teach them such skills like sewing. When it was found that this *Zenana Project* (education at home) did not produce the desired results the missionaries started schools for girls.

There was a slow but steady increase in the number of girls attending schools in Malabar. Regarding the status of education in Malabar, Innes observed that ‘one in every five *Malayali* men can read and write and six in every hundred women’.<sup>85</sup> In female education, both elementary and secondary education, Malabar had a significant lead. The percentage of literacy among women increased, from 8 in 1881 to 64 in 1931.<sup>86</sup> Many educational institutions were set up in Malabar exclusively for girls. First B.E.M School in Malabar was established by Julie Gundert in 1839 at Thalasseri. The School for infants set up by Margaret Fritz at Kozhikode in 1842 was later converted into a girls’ school. In 1847 there were 27 girls in its rolls. The Malabar district board has started 3 middle schools for girls at Palakkad, Vadakara and Ottapalam. There were 566 elementary schools for girls in Malabar , more than half of which were private aided schools. The Government Girls Secondary School at Kannur, has the maximum number of students and is followed by the Sacred Heart’s Girl School at Thalassery and BEM School at Kozhikode.<sup>87</sup> In Malabar District the number of girls attending schools was consistently higher in Calicut, second being Thalassery, when compared to other districts.<sup>88</sup>

Appu Nedungadi started the “Non-Christian School for Promotion of Education” in 1906 to promote female education. He then went on to start another school for girls of all castes and creeds.<sup>89</sup> This school originally known as Calicut

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<sup>85</sup> C.A.Innes, *op.cit.*, p.295

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p.299

<sup>88</sup> Proceedings of the Director of Public Instruction, Annual Report on Female Education in the Western Circle for 1891-1892, RAK, p.4

<sup>89</sup> Ulloor S.Parameswara Iyer, *Kerala Sahitya Charitram* (Mal.), University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990, p. 278

Girls High School currently functions as Achuthan Girls Higher Secondary School. There is another school called Calicut Girls Higher Secondary School at Kuttichira in Kozhikode. The Athmavidyasamgham started a school at Thiruvangad in Thalassery named Saraswathi Vidyapeedam for educating girls, especially in Sanskrit. But still it is evident from the following table that the growth of education of women was at a slow pace even in the early twentieth century.

### **Literacy level in the Malabar district in 1911**

Category	Number of Literates		Literates per Thousand Population		Number of Literates in English	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Hindus	217680	44795	222	44	14160	656
Muslims	52439	2340	110	5	770	7
Christians	11180	5994	417	229	3513	1935

Source: C.A. Innes: *Madras District Gazetteers*, Malabar, p. 6.

The spread of education among women of different communities in Kerala proceeded at an uneven pace. Women from the upper castes, especially Namboothiris did not find it easy to acquire an education, especially Western education. Lalithambika Antarjanam and Devaki Nilayangod have described the situation at that time. Devaki Nilayangod remarks, 'Girls were not taught writing. It was only necessary for them to be able to read the Ramayana'.<sup>90</sup> The first instance of the education of a Namboothiri girl on modern lines was when Karimanthur Parameswaran Namboothiripad in North Malabar sent his daughter in 1911 to an elementary school.<sup>91</sup> The Namboothiris were encumbered by custom and it was extremely difficult for them to break shackles of tradition. But by the end of the nineteenth century Nair girls began to get education, either at home

<sup>90</sup> Devaki Nilayangod, *Kalappakarchakal* (Mal.), Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 2008, p.29

<sup>91</sup> S.Manjuladevi, *Women's Movements in Kerala: Challenges and Prospects*, Betsy Institute of Non violence and Women Studies, Madurai, 2002, p.100

through tuitions or as regular students at schools. By the beginning of the twentieth century many Nair women were even able to go to Madras for their higher education. Chandu Menon documents these changes in female education in his novel *Indulekha*.

But among Thiyyas, who were considered the 'upper caste' among lower castes, there were many women who had received good education, especially in North Malabar. Karayi Damayanthi, her daughter C.K. Revathi Amma, V.P. Kalyani Teacher and Saraswathi Teacher were among them. The first woman to qualify as a doctor from Malabar was a Thiyya, Ayyathan Janaki. She was soon followed by another Thiyya woman Moorkkoth Madhavi.<sup>92</sup> But the lower caste women (the Pulayas and Parayas) did not receive education of any kind.

With the rise of a middle class in Malabar there was a change in the attitude towards female education. Despite the traditionalist opposition, the rising middle class imbibed with Western ideology supported it. But when women began to move out from their domestic duties and responsibilities, blind imitation of Western culture was seen as responsible for this state of affairs. Then the debates and contestations shifted to the desirable nature of female education to bring them back to the domestic realm which will be discussed in detail in the third chapter.

### **THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION: RISE OF A MIDDLE CLASS**

The most conspicuous outcome of colonial modernity in the nineteenth century was the development of the middle class. The origin of a new social category called the middle class has a long history. The middle class is actually a contested term and there is no single criterion for defining the middle class. By the mid nineteenth century when Marx's definition of social class began to make its impact on the existing methods of social analysis, the concepts of bourgeoisie, working class and the petty bourgeoisie came to specify definite social groups in definite modes of production. The term middle class then came to be viewed as

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<sup>92</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *op.cit.*, p. 35

basically consisting of various 'social groups which occupy an intermediate position between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie'.<sup>93</sup> By middle class, Marx had meant the small independent producers and independent professional men and it was a transient group with a minimal role in the revolutionary process.

The term middle class has been an elusive and yet popular category. The evolution of the middle classes did not take the same course in all the cultures. Different Scholars over the years have provided contrasting arguments about who made up the social category called the middle class. There has never been a single circumscribed social group, or one set of economic indicators that can be defined as the middle class. However, even those who disagree about its composition, accept the idea that the category refers to people who belong to the upper strata of society without being at the very top.<sup>94</sup> The term middle class was commonly used by the 1840s. Before that, more particularly in the late eighteenth century the term 'men of a middle condition', 'middle rank' and 'middle classes' very generally used to describe the groups of people between persons of rank and the common people.<sup>95</sup> The term middle class was used to describe those people below the aristocracy but above the workers.<sup>96</sup> To belong to a middle class, there must be a class or classes above it as well as below it, so that it stands in the middle. Thus, differentiating themselves from a decaying aristocracy above them and the lower classes below them became crucial in the self-fashioning of the new middle class.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Manorama Sharma, *Social and Economic Change in Assam: Middle Class Hegemony*, Ajanta Publications, New Delhi, 1990, p.15

<sup>94</sup> Sanjay Joshi (ed.), *The Middle Class in Colonial India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2010, intro., p.xvii

<sup>95</sup> Manorama Sharma, *op.cit.*, pp.14-15

<sup>96</sup> Sreejith K., *The Middle Class in Colonial Malabar: A Social History*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2021, p.9

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10

The Oxford English Dictionary dates the term ‘middle class’ to 1812.<sup>98</sup> Before that time contemporary observers were more likely to see society as being composed of two different groups, the gentleman and the non-gentleman with various ranks and orders within each of these two main groups. Before the industrial revolution society had its middle orders which lay between the nobility and the common people, but it was the rapidly changing society of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which demanded a new terminology to replace the old.<sup>99</sup> The term middle classes in the historical context of modern Europe suggests the emergence of an economic hierarchy detached from inherited wealth and status and based on achievements in business, education, and the professions.<sup>100</sup> The term was first used by Thomas Gisborne to refer to the propertied and largely entrepreneurial class located between landowners on the one hand and the urban industrial workers and agricultural labourers on the other.<sup>101</sup> In England and North America, the term middle class is rarely used when the role of businessman, professional or civil servant is discussed, instead they are regarded as elite and sometimes as upper class. At the same time in Western Europe (Germany & France) this category formed the core group of the middle classes.<sup>102</sup>

Andre Beteille defined the middle class in terms of its principal demographic, economic and social characteristics. According to Andre Beteille ‘there exists an old middle class and new middle class group. The old middle class constituted self-employed persons in manufacture and trade and the core of the

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<sup>98</sup> Linda Young, *Middle-Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century America, Australia and Britain*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003, p.40

<sup>99</sup> John Raynor, *The Middle Class*, Longman, London, 1969, p.3

<sup>100</sup> Francine R. Frankel, ‘Middle Classes and Castes in India’s Politics: Prospects for Political Accommodation’, in Atul Kohli (ed.), *India’s Democracy an Analysis of Changing State-Society Relations*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1988, p.225

<sup>101</sup> Imtiaz Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld (ed.), *Middle Class Values in India and Western Europe*, Routledge, New York, 2018, p.3

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2

new middle class consisted of men (and women) who worked in offices or similar locations in non-manual occupations that required some degree of formal education'.<sup>103</sup> The new middle class of salaried employees grew continuously throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the West, and for a time its growth appeared in marked contrast with the decline of the old middle class of self-employed persons in manufacture and trade.<sup>104</sup>

Colonialism introduced Indian society to modernity, which significantly altered the course of its history in multifaceted ways. The emergence of the middle class during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries played a pivotal role in reshaping this trajectory. The historical context of the development of middle classes in India differs significantly from that of the West and here the grouping of the middle class too is problematic. The importance of the middle class is also of a different nature here from that in advanced capitalist societies. The British established their rule over a much larger territory of India compared to any prior ruler in the history of the region. They reorganised the political and administrative structures of the colonial empire and introduced modern modes of communication. The task of administering a developing empire necessitated an increasing number of trained human resources. Thus, one of the prominent outcomes of colonial modernity in the nineteenth century was the development of a middle class.

The period was unique in the sense that new opportunities emerged that weakened traditional social barriers and enabled individuals of relatively humble origin to attain wealth and influence. Thus, in India 'the emergence of the middle class constituted a bigger break with the traditional social order than the West as their demands of life were very different'.<sup>105</sup> Pramod Kumar Mohanty argues that 'it created a new material base and the cultural conditions of a cognitive world that

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<sup>103</sup> Andre Beteille, 'The Social Character of the Indian Middle Class', in Imtiaz Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld, *op.cit.*, pp.76-77

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p.77

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p.78

urged the middle class to engage in acts of self-discovery and self-definition. In this context education was seen as a harbinger of new ideas that led to the rise of new professional and commercial classes with a lifestyle, and an intellectual and cultural orientation that was Western'.<sup>106</sup>

In India, the rise of the middle class can be traced to the introduction of a Western-style secular education system, the growth of the industrial economy, and the implementation of a new administrative system by the British colonial rulers during the nineteenth century.<sup>107</sup> A.R. Desai also observes 'the middle class as a product of the new system of education introduced by the British. It comprised lawyers, doctors, technicians, professors, journalists, state servants, students and others'.<sup>108</sup> Francine R. Frankel observes that 'the Indian middle class was artificially created under British rule, primarily by the educational policy introduced for meeting the administrative requirements of the Raj'.<sup>109</sup> The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the development of an educated middle class in India, which has grown steadily over the years. According to Aynal Hoque, 'the first instance for the rise of the middle class can be traced in Calcutta followed by the Presidency capitals of Bombay and Madras'.<sup>110</sup>

One of the early studies on the Indian middle class is B.B. Misra's *The Indian Middle Classes: Their Growth in Modern Times*. He considered the Indian middle class as an offshoot of British rule in India. He defined the middle class as

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<sup>106</sup> Pramod Kumar Mohanty, 'Mapping the Public Space: Discourses on Hegemonies, Identities and Cultural Politics at Colonial Cuttack- 1803-1947', *Indian Historical Review*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2014, pp.235 -270

<sup>107</sup> According to David Arnold, it has become fashionable to describe indigenous participation in colonial bureaucracy as a species of 'collaboration'. David Arnold, 'Bureaucratic Recruitment and Subordination in Colonial India: The Madras Constabulary, 1859- 1947', in Ranajit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV, Writings on South Asian History and Society*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2015 (First published 1985), p.2

<sup>108</sup> A. R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Popular Prakashan Private Limited, Mumbai, 2000, (First published 1948), p.185

<sup>109</sup> Francine R. Frankel, *op.cit.*, p.225

<sup>110</sup> Aynal Hoque, *Rise of Middle Class in British India*, Globus Press, New Delhi, 2016, p.2



‘the group of individuals who grew up as a result of changes in British social policy, the establishment of a new industry and economic system, and the growth of new professions. According to him the middle class in India did not naturally evolve as a consequence of an industrial revolution that weakened the traditional social hierarchy’.<sup>111</sup> He argues that the circumstances led to the emergence of the middle class in the west and India were extremely different. In the Western context, especially in England, the middle classes emerged primarily as a result of economic and technological advancement. But in India they emerged due to the changes that occurred in the course of British rule largely as a result of changes in British land policies, changes in the system of law and public administration followed by the introduction of Western education and technology and they mainly consisted of learned professionals.<sup>112</sup> He views the middle-class ‘as a product of colonial education and the administrative framework established by the British colonial government in India’.<sup>113</sup> This includes the members of the educated professions such as government servants, lawyers, teachers, doctors, commercial bourgeoisie, landed aristocracy etc. He says that ‘the Indian middle class did not grow from within but were implanted in the country by the British’.<sup>114</sup> A middle class society, thus became identified with a stratified social order embodying a new set of values, which its members or groups imparted upon the larger societies they lived in.

According to Sanjay Joshi, ‘the middle class in colonial India was formed by more than just similarities in education, occupation, or vocation. It was the emergence of new cultural politics that enabled them to articulate a new set of beliefs, values, and modes of politics that distinguished them from other social

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<sup>111</sup> B.B. Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes: Their Growth in Modern Times*, Oxford University Press, London, 1961, See chapters 1 and 2

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.4-15

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, See Chapters 1 and 2

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11

groups both below and above them'.<sup>115</sup> He further argues that the middle class in colonial India was not a social group that could be classified as occupying a middle position in terms of standard social and economic indicators of income consumption or status. To him 'the middle class ascendancy was a product of a relatively long historical process and was predicated on the creation of new forms of politics, the restructuring of norms of social conduct and the construction of new values guiding domestic as well as public life'.<sup>116</sup> As in other parts of the world in India too the middle class played a pivotal role in shaping the concept of modernity. Thus, he represents this middle class as the producers and products of modernity.<sup>117</sup>

Imtiaz Ahmad observes that, 'the middle class formed a separate category somewhere in between the aristocracy on the one hand and the lower working class on the other'.<sup>118</sup> He further states that "the middle class constituted a composite intermediate layer consisting of a wide range of occupational interests but bound together by a common style of living and behaviour pattern. A middle-class society thus became identified with a stratified social order representing a new standard of values which its members imposed upon the entire societies in which they lived. As he observes it is not a homogenous group, still they share a unifying bond which can probably be found in their value system, their search for individual rights, for a culture of their own etc".<sup>119</sup> B.N. Ganguli offers a slightly different conception. He opines that, 'the term middle class is an unclear concept and represents an amorphous and fluid group. The term is used to denote big landlords and rentiers,

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<sup>115</sup> Sanjay Joshi, *op.cit.*, intro., p. xviii

<sup>116</sup> Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p.1

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2

<sup>118</sup> Imtiaz Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld, *op.cit.*, p.1

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.1-2

big capitalist, higher officials and the richer professional classes - a miscellaneous assortment'.<sup>120</sup>

According to D.P Mukerji, 'the landlords and literati emerged as the new middle class during the Raj, and they were alienated from the language and culture of the Indian people. Mukerji mentions this as 'the emergence of a spurious middle class'. He had mentioned about a stratification within the middle class, where the upper level of the Indian middle class was dominated by the educated upper caste land owners, while the lower middle class comprised individuals with higher education who worked under the colonial rule'.<sup>121</sup> Ashok Rudra treated the middle class intelligentsia as 'a ruling class, which did not rule directly but assisted in running state apparatus including legislatures, ministerial cabinets, judiciary, bureaucracy and the armed forces that had different class origins. They had mutually antagonistic interests, but still maintained healthy relations'.<sup>122</sup>

Bengal was the first region of India, where the British had a significant impact from their initial period onwards. The colonial remodelling of education, traditions, beliefs, rituals etc. can be first noticed in Bengal. The magnitude of colonial influence is evident in the formation of the *bhadraloks* of Bengal who constituted a prominent middle class group in colonial India. This was a class of people who through their education obtained respectable employment in British colonial service like judiciary, law, police, journalism, teaching, medicine etc. Majority of the members of the *bhadraloks* belonged to upper castes. Rajat Kanta Ray remarks that, in their own perception, they constituted the 'middle class *bhadralok* which stands below the aristocracy but above the lesser folk engaged in

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<sup>120</sup> B.N. Ganguli, 'Conceptualising the Indian Middle Class', in K.S Krishnaswami, M.N. Srinivas et.al (ed.), *Society and Change*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1977, p.24

<sup>121</sup> K.L. Sharma, *op.cit.*, p.222

<sup>122</sup> Ashok Rudra, 'Emergence of Intelligentsia as a Ruling Class in India', *Indian Economic Review*, Vol 4, no.2, 1989, pp.158-160

manual labour.<sup>123</sup> Sumit Sarkar says that, Calcutta was central to the colonial middle class of Bengal, for it constituted the heart of three kinds of institutional networks crucial for the emergence of the nineteenth and twentieth century *bhadralok* as a distinctive formation, that is the new kinds of schools and colleges, the printing press and clerical jobs in government or mercantile offices.<sup>124</sup> While acknowledging the role of colonial education in the creation of the colonial middle-class, scholars such as Partha Chatterjee and Dipesh Chakrabarty have argued that the colonial Indian middle-class had their own versions of modernity that made them different from the European middle class and made them what they were.<sup>125</sup> Tithi Bhattacharya in her study of the middle class in nineteenth century Bengal states that education and culture formed the two most significant elements that made up the world of the Hindu *bhadralok* gentry of the nineteenth century.<sup>126</sup> The emergence of a middle class in Malabar followed a similar path but with regional differences.

### **MIDDLE CLASS IN MALABAR: HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Radical changes accompanied the advent of the British, and created favourable circumstances for the growth of the middle class in Kerala society as elsewhere in India. With the development of colonialism, a new class structure developed wherein this nascent middle class acted as the intermediaries between the British and the common people and they continued to grow in strength and prosperity with the progress of foreign rule. Colonial education made them increasingly conscious of their identity.

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<sup>123</sup> Rajat Kanta Ray, 'Political Change in British India', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol.14, no.4, 1977, pp.493-517

<sup>124</sup> Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997, p.170

<sup>125</sup> Utsa Ray, *Culinary Culture in Colonial India: A Cosmopolitan Platter and the Middle-Class*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2015, p.5

<sup>126</sup> Tithi Bhattacharya, *The Sentinels of Culture: Class, & Education, and the Colonial Intellectual in Bengal 1848-85*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005, p.2

The nineteenth century was a period of transition in Malabar. The traditional order with 'feudal' characteristics gradually faded out and in the wake of these changes new social classes emerged. Colonial rule and the subsequent development in education became instrumental to the emergence of a group of professionals who later became the backbone of the middle class.<sup>127</sup> The British educational policy was mainly aimed at two objectives, the dissemination of the colonial ideology and the usability for the administrative needs.<sup>128</sup> With the establishment of British rule, a large number of educated individuals was required to fill the administrative apparatus of British rule. Moreover, as trade and industries expanded in India, Britain needed clerks, managers, and agents proficient in English.<sup>129</sup> It was not possible to recruit all the officials from Britain. Therefore, it became necessary to establish education institutions in India and the British government entrusted the key posts to the British and filled the subordinate posts with educated Indians.<sup>130</sup> It can be seen as a byproduct of Macaulay's minutes which advocated the 'substitution of Western culture for the Indian'.<sup>131</sup> In Bengal the members of the middle class functioned as intermediaries between the rulers and the bulk of the ruled, serving as clerks and junior administrators in the expanding colonial bureaucracy, and as brokers, financiers and agents in trade with the East India Company.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> K.K.N.Kurup, *Nationalism and Social Change: The Role of Malayalam Literature*, Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1988, p.39

<sup>128</sup> K.N.Panikkar, 'The Intellectual History of Colonial India: Some Historiographical and Conceptual Questions', in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya and Romila Thapar (ed.), *Situating Indian History*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1986, pp.403-33

<sup>129</sup> A.R. Desai, *op.cit.*, pp.129-130

<sup>130</sup> It can be seen as a byproduct of Macaulay's minutes which emphasise that aim of British education was the creation of a class of Indians who would be Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and intellect.

<sup>131</sup> A.R. Desai, *op.cit.*, p.134

<sup>132</sup> Meredith Borthwick, *The Changing Role of Women in Bengal 1849-1905*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1984, p.3

The proliferation of modern education, and the subsequent developments during the colonial rule led to the growth of the middle class in Malabar with their numbers multiplying in direct proportion to the expansion of educational institutions. The entire mechanism of pre colonial education was restructured by colonialism. Education in the pre British period was restricted to a limited section in the society, that too religious education. The British government made education accessible to anyone irrespective of caste or community who could pay for it. Earlier the lack of education restricted the lower caste to low profile occupations, but with the spread of education more and more members among them began pursuing occupations that were traditionally the monopoly of the upper class. Both men and women began to spend more time for education.

The employment opportunities provided by the British for educated Indians became the key factor for this leap. In 1844 the government declared that in their service, preference would be given to those persons who had acquired English education.<sup>133</sup> Gradually English became a necessary criterion for some of the jobs and by the second half of the nineteenth century court language was transferred from Malayalam to English. For instance, Moorkkoth Kunhappa stated that ‘under the East India company there were many officers belonging to the Thiyya community including Churayi Raman Tahasildar who did not know English. But during the time of his son Churayi Kunhappa English became necessary to argue in the courts’.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, in a job vacancy notice for *gumasta* in the court, it was mentioned that ‘applications from passed candidates and those who possess knowledge of English will only be attended to’.<sup>135</sup>

The four higher education institutions in Malabar, Brennen college, Victoria college, Malabar Christian college and Zamorin’s college, played a crucial role in

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<sup>133</sup> K.K.N.Kurup, *Modern Kerala: Studies in Social and Agrarian Relations*, Mittal Publication, New Delhi, 1988, p.83

<sup>134</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *op.cit.*, p.52

<sup>135</sup> *The Malabar Government Gazette*, 1869, RAK, p.761

the emergence of a middle class in Malabar society. Individuals educated in these local colleges were largely integrated into the colonial administrative structure. These jobs in the colonial government offered a high social status and served as a pathway to attain middle-class status. As the number of educated candidates for civil service examination from Malabar increased, three examination centres were allotted namely Thalassery, Kozhikode and Kochi.<sup>136</sup>

### **‘COLONIAL SALARIAT’ AND EMERGENCE OF MIDDLE CLASS**

The social transformation of Malabar under colonialism contributed to the gradual development of a ‘colonial salariat’. By the second decade of the nineteenth century itself, the colonial government took certain measures to strengthen the bureaucracy and to establish a well coordinated system of judiciary, revenue, and police departments. As a result, a group of middle-class people emerged from among the authorities. Katharina Poggendorf-Kakar says that the Indian middle class was emerging by the end of the nineteenth century due to massive social and political changes and the establishment of a gigantic bureaucratic administrative and legal system by the British.<sup>137</sup> Surinder S. Jodhka and Aseem Prakash also observe that, the Indian middle class evolved during the nineteenth century to produce a class of local babus (literally clerks), who assisted the colonial rulers in governing the expanding territories of the empire.<sup>138</sup> In the case of Malabar too along with the dissemination of knowledge, colonialism created a bureaucratic machinery to maintain the colonial system. The general policy of the British was to appoint individuals from different castes and communities. Malabar in the late nineteenth century witnessed a massive expansion of local government and the colonial government recruited the qualified people in the bureaucracy. Following the growth of a colonial bureaucracy and a

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<sup>136</sup> *Malabar District Gazette*, 1868, RAK, p.54

<sup>137</sup> Katharina Poggendorf-Kakar, ‘Middle-class Formation and the Cultural Construction of Gender in Urban India’, in Imtiaz Ahammed and Helmut Reifeld, *op.cit.*, p.127

<sup>138</sup> Surinder S. Jodhka and Aseem Prakash, *The Indian Middle Class*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2016, p.16

service sector, the middle class in Malabar was constituted by urban professionals and bureaucrats.<sup>139</sup>

After the treaty of Srirangapatanam, a new rule of law with numerous courts was enacted in Malabar through the Civil and Criminal Regulations of 1793. The 1793 Regulations were the first among the series of attempts to revise and regulate the judicial administration in Malabar where people had experienced only custom ridden arbitrary laws and irregular courts.<sup>140</sup> The indigenous participation in the British Indian colonial bureaucracy was necessary to carry out the revenue and judicial administration at the lower level. The inclusion of the indigenous natives in the British bureaucracy was also understood as the ‘means of winning public support for the legal system.’<sup>141</sup> Thus, seven local native courts (Kachery) were established in Malabar namely Kannur, Koyilandy, Tanur, Tirurangadi, Ponnani, Chettuvai, and Palakkad.<sup>142</sup> The selection and nomination of the native judges for these courts were left to the Chief Magistrate of the locality. He had to make his choice ‘from men of the most approved characters of integrity and the fittest and most qualified in all other respects’.<sup>143</sup> In the changed scenario, the growing opportunities for the legal studies in Madras Presidency prompted a large number of youths of Malabar to transplant to the city of Madras to get higher education. The Presidency, Loyola, Pachaiappas, and St. Mary’s colleges thus became the centres of intellectual formation.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Sreejith.K, *op.cit.*, p.15

<sup>140</sup> Santhosh Abraham, ‘The Making of Colonial Law, Discipline and Corruption in British India’, *Journal of Indian Law and society*, vol.2, 2019, p.70

<sup>141</sup> Santhosh Abraham, ‘Colonial Law in Early British Malabar’, *South Asia Research*, vol.31, no.3, 2011, pp.249-264

<sup>142</sup> C.A. Innes, *op.cit.*, p.384

<sup>143</sup> Santhosh Abraham, ‘The Making....’, *op.cit.*, p.71

<sup>144</sup> T.M Satchit (ed.), *Who is Who in Madras*, Pearl Press, Cochin, 1936, quoted in Usha C.K., *op.cit.*, p.152. Also see Susan Lewandowski, *Migration and Ethnicity in Urban India: Kerala Migration in the City of Madras 1870-1970*, Manohar Books, New Delhi, 1980



Along with this, a new form of regularity and order was witnessed in colonial courts, where entire proceedings were ordered to be recorded and documented formally. As a part of this *Malayalis* were recruited as registrars, *vakils*, and peons in the courts. For the appointment of registrars, to keep records of all events in the courts some provisions were given in the regulations: ‘it is the duty of the registrars in each provincial court of Adalat to assist the judge, by making translations of such papers as the judge may require them to be translated, copied and recorded and to do all other official acts which may be prescribed to him by the judge’.<sup>145</sup>

Another significant innovation introduced by the company government in the judicial administration was the appointment of pleaders or *Vakils* and peons in the courts. In the case of *Vakils* a provision was made for the parties to represent the suits through their agents, who could plead for the party as *vakil* if they were unable to attend in person. The 1793 regulations clearly provided for the appointment of pleaders in the Malabar courts.<sup>146</sup>

As many people came into the legal profession, a sense of organization and identity developed among them. Consequently, the bar associations at Koyilandy (1890), Payyoli (1908) Nadapuram (1906) Tirur (1925) Parappanangadi (1905) were established. The Calicut Bar Association was founded in a meeting held at Wilkinson Law Library at Calicut on April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1925.<sup>147</sup> With the establishment of a large number of courts, even the ordinary people acquired legal awareness. The legal awareness had increased to such an

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<sup>145</sup> Santhosh Abraham, ‘Colonial Law....’, *op.cit.*, pp.249-264

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, In the appointment of peons, the regulation proclaimed that all public peons shall constantly wear badges to distinguish them from others. The badges shall be all of one general form and have cut on them in the Malabar language the word ‘the peon of the Diwani or Faujdari Adalat’.

<sup>147</sup> *Malabar District Gazette*, 1925, RAK, pp.591- 92

extent that it enabled one Kumaran Nair to file a case in 1892 and that against *Kerala Pathrika*, the famous newspaper.<sup>148</sup>

For the smooth administration of the revenue affairs Tahasildars were recruited from the natives who had extensive personal acquaintance and more intimate knowledge of the habits and customs of the inhabitants and persons who possess firmness of character.<sup>149</sup> There was an influx of educated natives to Uncovenanted Civil Service (UCS) examinations introduced in the 1850s. There were 28 examination centres in Madras presidency and out of these 3 were located in Malabar region - Kozhikode, Thalassery and British Kochi.<sup>150</sup>

Educational institutions similarly provided job opportunities. Under section 26 of the Madras Educational Act 6 of 1863, the qualified natives were appointed to the post of Commissioners of the rate schools. Most of them who formerly served as Tahsildar or Adhikaris were thus incorporated into educational service. Ramunni Panikkar, the Tahsildar of Chirakkal Taluk, M.Brown Esquire of Anjarakandy, Koroth Raman Nambiar, Adhikari of Munderi and Maniyur Amshoms, Ayileth Nambiar, Adhikari of Eruveri, Kaitheri Edathil Kelappan Nambiar, Adhikari of Kuttiathurr Amsam and Ayileth Chandu Adhikari of Mavilayi Amshom were included in the list along with two Muslims and one Thiyya.<sup>151</sup> Thus, in the changed scenario the early local administrators now put on

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<sup>148</sup> It was reported in the *Kerala Pathrika* in May 1892 that, a complaint had been lodged in the Deputy Magistrate's court in Calicut, by one Kumaran Nair second complainant in the Feroke case, against *Kerala Pathrika* for not inserting in the paper the name of the printer and publisher of the paper. *Kerala Pathrika*, 21st May 1892, MNNPR, TNA quoted in Stella Joseph, 'Print and Public Sphere in Malabar: A Study of Early Newspapers 1847-1930', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Calicut, 2013, p.58

<sup>149</sup> RAK, Extracts from the letter of Grant, the Commissioner to the President and members of the Board of Revenue, Inward and Outward letters of 1821-22, 16 June 1821, pp.17-27. Quoted in Usha C.K., *op.cit.*, p.156

<sup>150</sup> *Malabar District Gazette*, 1868, RAK, p.154

<sup>151</sup> *The Malabar District Gazette*, 1869, RAK, p.522

the new garb of bureaucrats and treated government service as of much higher value than that of the former.

The proliferation of industries led to the establishment of banks and insurance companies. The Bank of Madras established its branch at Calicut in 1864. The Nedungadi Bank was set up in 1899 at Calicut by T.M. Appu Nedungadi.<sup>152</sup> Similarly, Puthiyara Bank in Calicut founded by Maviladath Kumaran, Cannanore Bank established by Potheri Kunhikannan, Tellicherry Bank by Mundangadan Govindan, Calicut Bank founded by C. Krishnan, and Malabar Bank at Cannanore under the directorship of O. Krishnan etc. moulded a new socio-economic culture in the growing urban centres.<sup>153</sup>

Apart from those employed in the administrative jobs of the British government, the emergent middle class also included independent professionals such as doctors, teachers, journalists etc. Added to that the intelligentsia were an important constituent of the middle class, though being an intellectual was not a prerequisite for becoming a member of the middle class. There were great writers and intellectuals from Malabar who formed a major part of the middle class and the emergent public sphere. Sreejith.K observes that, these intellectuals set the cultural agenda for the region in the twentieth century.<sup>154</sup> Being an educated class they functioned in various capacities as legislative council members, litterateurs, eminent bureaucrats, advocates, judges and social reformers. V.T.Bhattathiripad and M. Raman Bhattathiripad, Kurur Unni Namboothiripad, AKTKM Narayanan Namboothiripad and VKM Sreedharan Namboothiripad etc. were a part of educated intellectuals of Malabar who stood for Namboothiri reform. They advocated modern education as a key to social upliftment among the Namboothiri

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<sup>152</sup> V.Parukkutty Amma, *K.P.Kesavamenon* (Mal.), Department of Cultural Publications, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1988, p.58

<sup>153</sup> Usha C.K. *op.cit.*, p.166. C.Krishnan started the 'Calicut Bank' in 1909 at Kozhikode and opened its branches at Mullassery, Thalassery, in 1916 and at Kochi in 1918. He had also established another bank, named Valappad Bank in Ponnani with A.S. Paran, T. Raman and C.Kunhimamu as its directors.

<sup>154</sup> Sreejith K., *op.cit.*, p.15

community. O.Chandu Menon, was one of the prominent representatives of the middle class in Malabar. Through his novels he exposed the social evils and complexities of the caste system. Sir C. Sankaran Nair, P. Ryrn Nambiar, C.Karunakara Menon, T R. Krishnaswami Ayyar, K Madhavan Nair etc. could be included among the prominent intellectuals of Malabar. They tried to promote self-reliance and self respect among the Nair community. These intellectuals provided an organisational frame for their activities through *Nair Samajam*. Under the initiative of K.C Narayanan Nambiar, a monthly, *Nair Samudaya Parishkari* was also started by the progressive minded Nairs.

Thalassery, a small town on the Malabar Coast, has the unique distinction of having produced a number of outstanding literary figures during the latter half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>155</sup> Newspaper editors, novelists, short story writers, essays all produced from this town. Moorkkoth Kumaran being one of the prominent among them. He was a prolific writer, novelist, short story writer and essayist. While working as one of the editors of *Kerala Sanchari* he started publishing his own magazine called *Saraswathy* from Malabar in 1900.<sup>156</sup> He was also associated with *Mitavadi* and wrote many articles. His son Moorkkoth Kunhappa was also a well known writer. Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar who was popularly known as Kesari was yet another prominent intellectual of the period. He was a journalist, essayist and short story writer. He wrote under different names in publications like *Kerala Sanchari*, *Kerala Patrika*, *Saraswathy*, *Mitavadi*, *Bhashaposhini* etc. He urged for social reforms through his writings. Potheri Kunhambu was yet another prolific writer. Through his work *Saraswathheevijayam* he projected the idea that Western education was the only tool for the development of the lower caste. He was also a columnist for many leading newspapers and published articles highlighting the

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<sup>155</sup> The English East India Company started one of its earliest 'factories' in Thalassery. Many Thiyyas served as butlers to the English. Later they opened bakeries. There was also a cricket club in Thalassery in the late nineteenth century.

<sup>156</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *op.cit.*, p.30

social issues of the period. C.Krishnan was another important literary figure from Malabar. For the educational and social development of the depressed classes, he formed a club in Kozhikode called the SNDP Club, which was inaugurated by Rao Bahadur G.T. Varghese, District Collector, on 18 October 1912.<sup>157</sup> Thus the size of this 'educated middle class' continued to grow during the second half of the nineteenth century

## REDEFINING TRADITIONAL LAND TENURES

Land tenures of Malabar underwent several alterations with the inception of colonial rule. When the British began administering the region, they were astonished by its revenue system since there was no state ownership of land. So, they assumed that the existing rights on land must be private ownership. Thackeray stated that, almost the whole of the land in Malabar, cultivated and uncultivated, is private property and held by *janmam* rights which conveys full absolute property in the soil.<sup>158</sup> In Malabar the hereditary property was freely bought and sold long before the Mysorean invasion and it was this buying and selling, particularly the wordings of the deeds in which such transactions were recorded that misled the British administrators.<sup>159</sup> As they wanted to make a social base for their rule, they were anxious to keep the Brahmins satisfied.

The British tried to create a new property class with registered title deeds to establish their rights in the court. Registration was inaugurated in this region in 1799, when a proclamation was issued stating that, all writing in evidence of the transfer of landed property shall be registered either in the provincial or local adalats.<sup>160</sup> Each customary term related to land came to be legally defined by the

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<sup>157</sup> Bijina M., 'Towards Modernity: The Social Space and Progress of the Thiyya Community in Colonial Malabar', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Kannur University, 2022, p.89

<sup>158</sup> Thackeray's report to the Board of Revenue, dated 4<sup>th</sup> August 1807, quoted in C.A. Innes, *op.cit.*, pp.307 - 308

<sup>159</sup> William Logan, *op.cit.*, p.602

<sup>160</sup> Sreejith K., *op.cit.*, p.19

civil courts, so as to guide the judges while dealing with tenurial cases. The *janmi* was granted sole legal proprietorship of land, subject only to the payment of the government revenue.<sup>161</sup> The *kanakkaran* and the *verumpattakkaran* came under the general category of *kudian*.<sup>162</sup> The objective of the colonial administrators was to create manageable and defined land authorities from which they can collect tax, which was the major portion of their revenue. This completely altered the traditional *janmi kudiyan* relations.

*Kanam* tenure also underwent significant changes during this period. The *kanakkaran* leased or mortgaged land from the *Janmi* in lieu of payment of a lump sum (*kanam*) and annual rent. The *kanam* tenure had to be renewed at the expiry of every twelve years on the payment of renewed fees. This interpretation given by the British civil courts enabled the *janmis* with the power of evicting their tenants at the expiry of the lease, or give the land to another tenant on *melcharth* who was prepared to pay a higher rent.<sup>163</sup> Thus, the British administration left the tenants and cultivators entirely at the mercy of landlords. Their primary motive behind this policy was to create a social base for the colonial rule by taking the *janmis* into confidence, whom they believed had considerable local influence and prestige.

During this period the Nairs, in large numbers, emerged as rent paying, rent receiving, intermediary *kanakkar*. The nature of the marriage alliances

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<sup>161</sup> K.N.Panikkar, *Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar 1836-1921*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1989, pp.20-21. The British official perception of the traditional system and the rights and obligations of the *janmi* and *kanakkaran* was based on Brahmanical accounts such as *Keralolpathi*, *Kerala Mahatmyam* and *Vyavaharamala*, or information provided by the Brahmin landlords. On the basis of this the government agreed with interpretation given by the district officials and identified the *janmis* as 'ryots' in whom 'the exclusive right to the hereditary position and usufruct of the soil was vested'. The *janmis* were thus recognised as independent owners of land who 'possessed a property in the soil more absolute than even that of the landlord in Europe'.

<sup>162</sup> K. N. Panikkar, 'Agrarian Legislation and Social Classes ...', *op.cit.*, pp.880-888

<sup>163</sup> *Melcharth* means an overlease. K.N Panicker, *Against...*, *op.cit.*, p.21. The Sadar Court's decision of 1854 that the *kanam* was terminable at the expiry of the 12 year lease period, was effectively used by the *janmis* to evict their tenants.

between Nair women and Namboothiri *janmis* and the education and employment opportunities offered by the colonial administration substantially contributed to this. Several Nair families received *kanam* land through the *sambandham* alliance with the Namboothiris and thereby were able to improve their economic status. They subleased these lands to *verumpattakkar* at a highly enhanced rate of rent.<sup>164</sup> The rent thus appropriated was used for acquiring more *kanam* land resulting in its concentration in the hands of Nair class. Along with this a few Nair *kanakkar* were graduating themselves to the position of landlords which is clear from the following table. It indicates a decline of Namboothiri monopoly of land to the advantage of the Nairs and other lower castes.<sup>165</sup>

Caste	Number	
	1803	1887
Namboothiris	37	217
Upper intermediate castes	11	69
Nairs	46	411
Mappilas	8	92
Thiyyas	1	112

Source: K.N.Panikkar, 'Land Control, Ideology and Reform: A Study of the Change in Family Organization and Marriage System in Kerala', p.37

While the old Nair aristocracy continued to cherish feudal values, the youngsters among them grabbed the opportunities offered by the colonial rule and became prominent in political and administrative fields.<sup>166</sup> They were appointed as village officials and *adhikaris*. Realising the importance of education in the new

<sup>164</sup> K.N.Panikkar, 'Land Control....', *op.cit.*, p.37

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> Among the Indians employed by the British immediately after the annexation of Malabar the Nairs had a fairly good share. In 1799 in the British administration there were 89 members from Malabar of whom 44 were Nairs. The village revenue officials in Ernard and Valluvanad Taluk were almost exclusively drawn from the upper caste Hindus like Nairs, Menons, Panikkars and Kurups.

socio-political arena they educated their children and most of the second generation rose to the higher post of Munsif, Magistrates and Judges.

The social and economic changes during British rule and the emergence of the money economy completely altered the traditional *tarawad* system also, and in the changed social climate the junior members viewed *tarawad* as an impediment to their progress and urged for its dissolution. The Namboothiri practice of patrilineal joint family system and the law of primogeniture followed by them, maintained intact the special position enjoyed by them in regard to land ownership.<sup>167</sup> By the second half of the nineteenth century, the educated middle class Nairs began to disapprove of the *sambandham* marriage alliances practised in their community.<sup>168</sup> Their major problem was the impartible matrilineal joint family or *tarawad* system. By the end of the nineteenth century, owing to the British colonial impact and several economic factors the *tarawad* system had started disintegrating. In many instances the younger members instituted legal cases to fight for their right, to a separate share in the family property or for an independent residence away from the main *tarawad* house.<sup>169</sup> Moreover, in the matrilineal system a man's lifetime possessions was transferred at his death to the common stock of his *tarawad* rather than to his own progeny. Therefore, William Logan recommended that it was necessary to confer on all adults, male or female the power to regulate by will, the inheritance of their self acquired property.<sup>170</sup> The

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<sup>167</sup> T.C. Varghese, *op.cit.*, pp.42-43, The *tarawad* property was completely managed by the *karanavan* without considering the interests of other members.

<sup>168</sup> During the Marriage Commission's visit to Malabar in 1891 several educated Nairs expressed their opposition to *sambandham* system. For instance, a correspondent wrote in *Kerala Patrika* as follows: "Several tenants in Malabar are afraid to give evidence before the Marriage Commission, for their landlords threaten them with evictions and *melcharts*, if they were to do so. Any reformation in the *Malayali* marriage customs is impossible unless it is made compulsory that all Namboothiri Brahmins should marry girls of their own caste." K. N. Panikkar, 'Agrarian....', *op.cit.*, p.882

<sup>169</sup> G.Arunima, *There Comes Papa: Colonialism and the Transformation of Matriliney in Malabar 1850-1940*, Orient Longman, Hyderabad, 2003, p.106

<sup>170</sup> K.K.N Kurup, *Modern Kerala.....*, *op.cit.*, p.47



emerging professional groups from these land owning families also supported such an action on the part of the government.<sup>171</sup>

During the second half of the nineteenth century the tendency to resort to court action to eject tenants increased. Once the situation worsened, in 1880, the government appointed a special commission headed by William Logan to re-examine the land tenures. Proposals put forward by Logan were intended to bring out thorough changes in the tenurial systems of Malabar and restrict the freedom of contract in agrarian relations.<sup>172</sup> It was therefore intended for eliminating agrarian tensions. Logan in his report recommended not only tenancy legislations including the prohibition of large-scale evictions of the tenants by the *janmis* but also social reforms for enforcing institutional changes in society.<sup>173</sup> Government did not enact any legislation based on the Logan report, which would have curtailed the rights of *janmis*. But from this period onwards there were a number of inquiry commissions, legal discussions and heated debate among the *janmis* and

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<sup>171</sup> The Marumakkathayam Act in 1933 provided for partition of family property and inheritance of the father's self acquired property by his children.

<sup>172</sup> In his report of 1882, as the Special Commissioner to investigate the grievances of tenants in Malabar, Logan maintained that prior to the commitment of the British rule, no private property in European sense of the term existed in Malabar, that *janmam* right did not import absolute property in the soil, that the three classes connected with the land - the *janmi*, the *kanakkar* and the actual cultivator had been co-proprietors entitled each to one-third share of the net produce. For details see T.K, Ravindran, 'Traditional Land . . . .', in M.G.S Narayanan, *op.cit.*, p.188. He also found that when the members of the joint families or *tarawad* had no stimulus to exert in the wealth producing activities, on account of the corporate control over land, labour and capital, it adversely affected the production of the country. Therefore, Logan found that the liberation of Nairs from their false position in which they were placed by tradition was a primary necessity for themselves and the government. For details see K.K.N. Kurup, *William Logan: Study in the Agrarian Relations of Malabar*, Sandhya Publications, Calicut University, 1981, p.49

<sup>173</sup> The Malabar Tenancy Bill 1924, *Malayam District Gazette Supplement*, RAK, July 1924, p.25. Evidently, the intermediary *kanakkar* would not be able to maintain their social and economic position unless the *janmis* were deprived of their right to eviction. This was the central issue in the tenant movement in Malabar and the demand for agrarian legislation which in reality was an outcome of the struggle between the intermediary class and the *janmis* for appropriating the peasant's surplus. K. N. Panikkar, 'Agrarian Legislation....' *op.cit.*, p.882

*kudiyans* which by the end of the century culminated in the formation of separate organisations both by *janmis* and *kutiyans*.<sup>174</sup> The average number of eviction suits increased by 450 percent over the thirty years from 1852 to 1883.<sup>175</sup> Though the government passed Malabar Compensation for Tenants Improvements Act in 1887 to curtail this, it proved to be too inadequate to provide relief to the majority of tenants. The amended Act could not address the grievances of the tenants as the *janmis* found loopholes in laws against powerless tenants.<sup>176</sup> The following table shows the eviction suits decreed after 1887.<sup>177</sup>

Year	No. of evictions decreed
1887	2819
1890	4227
1893	3797
1896	3213
1899	3418
1902	3135
1903	3825

Source: K.N Panikkar, *Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar, 1836- 1921*, p.41

<sup>174</sup> Sunandan, ‘Acharam to.....’, *op.cit.*, p.185. The *janmis* organized themselves under Kerala Janmi Sabha, Dharmachara Sabha, Uttara Kerala Sabha to safeguard their interests. From 1904 they published a monthly *Janmi* and they decided to remain united irrespective of their castes and all other differences. K.N.Panikkar, ‘Agrarian Legislation....’, *op.cit.*, p.884

<sup>175</sup> P. Prabhakar, ‘Agrarian Social Structure and Peasant Consciousness and Mobilization in Kerala during the Colonial Period 1800 – 1947 - A Case Study of Malabar’, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Calicut, 2012, p.101

<sup>176</sup> A.K.Gopalan, *Manninnuvendi* (Mal), Chintha Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, Reprint, 2011, p.11

<sup>177</sup> K.N Panikkar, *Against...*, *op.cit.*, p.41, This Act did not directly provide security of tenure, instead created a powerful instrument in the hands of tenants, especially the *kanakkar* for escaping arbitrary evictions. It also provided for the payment of compensations at the time of renewals. Consequently, the government had prepared a monthly price list for the four important crops of paddy, pepper, arecanut and coconut which was constantly used by the tenants and younger members of the household as reference while instituting cases against the *tarawad* for compensation. G.Arunima, *There Comes*, *op.cit.*, pp.122-123

In fact, the number of eviction suits instituted in the various courts in Malabar increased in the post 1900 period. In 1919, 1920 and 1921 there were 5074, 5142 and 4490 suits respectively.<sup>178</sup> Here the tenant cultivators, unaware of the judicial practices, could not expect justice from the Munsifs, who mainly belonged to the upper caste landowning families. Since the landlords did not issue rent receipts, the tenants had no defence if cases were instituted in courts. Moreover, they could hardly afford litigation, as the court procedures were very expensive.<sup>179</sup> At the same time the non cultivating *kanakkar* who had the financial stability to meet litigation and many practising as lawyers, were familiar with court procedures. They resisted the efforts of the *janmis* to eject them from their holdings.

As the feudal order gave way to a colonial capitalist economy, a bureaucracy not dependent on the feudal lords emerged. The intimate knowledge of the working of the judiciary and the power and privileges derived from the official status helped the educated class to increase the extent of their land holding. G.Arunima argues that from the mid nineteenth century the bulk of the judicial cases in Malabar were related to disputes over land.<sup>180</sup> Most of the advocates belonged to the Nair community who exercised much power and influence in the colonial courts. E.M.S. Namboothiripad stated that the new class of educated young men and officers of the Nair community were politically and culturally far more advanced than their landlords who, however, were economically and socially dominant in the countryside. A substantial section of this educated land owning group became a part of the emergent middle class in Malabar. The official policy of the government with regard to the agrarian system in India was expressed as: 'it

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<sup>178</sup> K.N.Panikkar, 'Peasant Revolts in Malabar in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in A.R. Desai (ed.), *Peasant Struggles in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1979, p.615

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.606-607. A Mappila tenant told Logan that he did not expect the Hindu munsiff to give a verdict against his landlord, Azhuvancherry Namboothiripad, 'who was worshipped by Hindus as a God'.

<sup>180</sup> G.Arunima, *There Comes...*, *op.cit.*, p.14

is most desirable that facilities should be given for the gradual growth of a middle class connected with the land'.<sup>181</sup> The Malabar Tenancy Commission noted that, the '*kanamdar* form a large section of the middle class of Malabar, chiefly drawn from the professional classes, government servants and people of like status'.<sup>182</sup> But K.N. Panikkar says that the sequence was in reverse order, that the middle class had its social origins in the rent receiving rent paying class of intermediary *kanakkar*. For these intermediary *kanakkar*, land was an investment from which they were keen to derive the maximum benefit and resorted to different methods and forms of exploitation that were typically 'feudal'.<sup>183</sup> C.A. Innes also stated that, the *kanamdar* is often a professional man, *vakil*, clerk or *karyasthan* who had no tie of any kind with his *kanam* property and regarded it merely as an investment. K.N. Panikkar stated that, by the end of the nineteenth century their world had changed from a life confined to the *tarawad*, the village temple and Namboothiri *illam* to one of competition in the government offices and judicial courts, a change from the recesses of the *nalukettu* to the exciting atmosphere of urban centres like Calicut and Madras, besieged with modern ideas and modern ways of life.<sup>184</sup>

The Malabar Tenancy Act of 1930 brought about significant changes in land tenures and agrarian relations in Malabar. The act aimed at the removal of a few glaring defects in the tenancy reforms, more specifically it wanted to control arbitrary eviction and rack renting. The act granted conditional security of tenure to the *kanam* tenants.<sup>185</sup> The curbs affected by its provisions on the absolute powers of the *janmis* were beneficial to the interest of the actual cultivators. The Act provided for permanent occupancy rights to all tenants. It forbade eviction except for certain reasons and laid down norms for fixing fair rent. *Melcharth* was also

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<sup>181</sup> K.K.N.Kurup, *William Logan....*, *op.cit.*, p.14

<sup>182</sup> G.O.no.4192, dt.02/10/1930, Law Department, RAK, p.3

<sup>183</sup> K.N. Panikkar, 'Land and Labour .....', *op.cit.*, p.198

<sup>184</sup> K.N.Panikkar, 'Land Control.....', *op.cit.*, p.46

<sup>185</sup> K. Gopalankutty, 'Anti- Landlord Movement in Malabar 1935- 1939', in M.G.S. Narayanan, *op.cit.*, p.210

abolished. The act conferred fixity of tenure and fare rent on all cultivating *verumpattamdars*, subject to a few reservations. It also gave rights of renewal to all customary *verumpattamdars*, *kuzhikanamdars* and certain types of *kanamdars*. A *kudiyirippu* holder of ten years standing was given the right to purchase the land from the landlord at market price in case of eviction.<sup>186</sup> Soon land became a salable commodity, and consequently a land market developed in Malabar. Following this many people started investing more on land as the Malabar Tenancy Act provided fixity of tenure.<sup>187</sup> Along with this, the colonial economy gradually lifted a new stratum to wealth and power, that is the Mappilas and Thiyyas. Both these groups as traders and merchants benefited more from cash crop cultivation, commercialization of agriculture, and from the expansion of trade and commerce. With the income they earned through trade and other activities, they were able to acquire the landed properties that had earlier belonged to the superior-caste land owning communities.<sup>188</sup> In the aftermath of the Malabar Compensation for Tenants Improvements Act many landlords had begun to resort to overleases, putting the costs of evicting the incumbent tenant on the overlessee. A large number of these overlessees were drawn from the class of newly rich and influential Thiyyas, either professionals or emigrants investing in land. A typical example was the Thiyya lawyer, C. Krishnan, who supplemented his fluctuating professional earnings by collecting the rent on lands which his father had bought on overlease.<sup>189</sup> There were a large number of lawyers and judges from among the Thiyyas like Panangadan Kannan, E.K. Krishnan, Churayai Kunhappa, Kottieth Ramunni, Oyitti Kunhiraman, Potheri Kunhambu, Poovadan Raman etc. This helped them in litigation related to land. Thus, the British administrative system and land policies facilitated the growth of a heterogenous middle class in Malabar.

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<sup>186</sup> G.O.no.4192, dt.02/10/1930, Law Department, RAK

<sup>187</sup> T.C. Varghese, *Land Relations....., op.cit.*, p.138

<sup>188</sup> Radhamani.C.P, 'The Formations and Policies of Colonial Agriculture in Malabar', *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, vol.6, no.2, 2021, p.466

<sup>189</sup> Dilip M. Menon, *op.cit.*, pp.63-64

## INDUSTRIAL MIDDLE CLASS

Apart from the newly introduced sphere of English education, the colonial government's economic changes expanded several other spheres of Malabar economy, which produced new social groups that could be described as middle classes. The most prominent among them were associated with the industrial sector. The development of industries in Malabar contributed to the development of the middle class as a dominant group. Basel Mission was the pioneer in setting up industries in Malabar, largely to provide employment for its converts. The Mission started operating in Malabar from 1834 onwards incorporating industrial activities along with its missionary works and initiative in education. They started functioning with experiments in traditional crafts like weaving and also in agriculture and later switched over to modern crafts like watch making, book binding and printing. These activities later resulted in the establishment of modern industrial units in Malabar.<sup>190</sup> Establishment of the large Industries involved recruiting and disciplining a sufficiently large labour force. The labour force itself consisted mainly of converts from different caste backgrounds. In fact, it was the expulsion of converts from the traditional caste related occupations and joint families that prompted the Basel missionaries to initiate economic activities. Missionary as well as non-missionary sources have indicated that the lower castes including the Thiyya and Cheruman constituted the majority of Basel Mission converts.

Religious conversion as well as employment in Mission industries raised their social status and offered them scope for social mobility. The setting up of a

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<sup>190</sup> Jayaprakash Raghaviah, *Basel Mission in Malabar and South Canara 1834 -1914: A Study of its Social and Political Impact*, Gian Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990, p.1. Basel Mission established weaving factories at Kannur (1852), Kozhikode (1859), Codacal (1860), Chombala (1860), Thalassery (around 1860), Quilandy (1880) etc. Tile factories were established in in Codacal (1887), Palakkad (1887), Feroke (1905).

tile factory at Chompala in 1890 led to 153 conversions.<sup>191</sup> Though converts were drawn predominantly from lower castes there were also a small number of upper caste converts like Nayars.<sup>192</sup> Though they were coming from different caste backgrounds, they lived and worked together in the caste stratified environment of Malabar. Basel Mission industries had provided employment opportunities not only to converts but also to non-converts. According to the statistics of employment, as of 1913 out of a total number of 3633 employees in Basel Mission industries 954 persons were non converts. The natives were appointed in different capacities in the newly established factories and paid higher wage scales.<sup>193</sup> Later some of them became factory owners. For instance, Churikkat Samuel, one of the converts who worked in a weaving establishment of the Basel Mission set up his own weaving factory.<sup>194</sup> There was considerable cooperation between the Thiyya entrepreneurs and the Basel Mission since the factories set up by the Thiyyas tended to manufacture clothes for local consumption while the mission factories were geared to an export market. Samuel Aaron, the proprietor of Aaron Mills estimated that, by 1918 there were between 100 and 150 factories in Kannur and its suburbs.<sup>195</sup> In Kannur, C. Aaron, a Thiyya by birth, later a Basel Mission convert, started a 'company' (at the time small textile factories were known as 'companies') with the help of the Mission.<sup>196</sup> The first to establish a weaving mill among the native entrepreneurs was Samuel Santhosh, father-in-law of C. Aaron.<sup>197</sup> In North Malabar Basel Mission educational institutions and industrial

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<sup>191</sup> Dilip M. Menon, 'A Fragile Affluence: Workers and Political Rhetoric in Kerala, 1930-1948', in M.P. Mujeeb Rahman and K.S. Madhavan (ed.), *Explorations in South Indian History*, Sahitya Pravartaka Cooperative Society, Kottayam, 2014, p.289

<sup>192</sup> Jayaprakash Raghaviah, *op.cit.*, p.22

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.45- 46

<sup>194</sup> C. Samuel Aaron, *Jeevithasmaranakal* (Mal.), Kannur, 1974, p.18, 28, quoted in Dilip M. Menon, 'A Fragile ....', *op.cit.*, p.289

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, p.48

<sup>196</sup> C. Samuel Aaron, *op.cit.*, pp. 17-18 quoted in Sheeja.P.C, 'The Last Phase of Colonialism in North Malabar: Socio-Economic and Cultural Transformation, 1900-1947' Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Calicut, 2014, p.85

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

establishments played a significant role in empowering the lower castes. Consequently they were able to break free from the caste-based economic structure dominated by the *janmis*.

The economic advances attained through colonial bureaucracy and through participation in British trade enabled the natives to make more investment in industries. In 1884, F.H.Wilkinson the District Judge, inaugurated Thiruvannaur Cotton Mill, the first locally owned industry with modern management techniques with A.K.T.K.M. Narayanan Namboothiri, Kalyanji Sundarji, A.L.A.R. Ramaswamy Chettiar, Vrindavan Das and Purushottam Das as the shareholders.<sup>198</sup> Following this P. Raman started Puthiyara Tile Works in 1909 and Nagjee Purushottam started the Vegetable Soap Factory in 1938. Many beedi manufacturing centres were also established during this period especially in North Malabar. The Swadeshi movement provided a boost to the beedi industry as many switched over from cigarettes to beedis as a part of boycott of foreign goods. The expansion of domestic market attracted many new entrepreneurs towards this industry and, by 1930s, many new beedi firms were established. Important among them were Chatta, Madan, Sadhoo and Haridas.<sup>199</sup> According to 1921 census, 14 beedi establishments in Malabar employed 373 workers and in 1937, there were around 1,000 beedi workers in Kannur town alone.<sup>200</sup> Along with this many large-scale industries like cotton spinning, weaving, handloom weaving, saw mills, match factories, brick factories, coir factories etc. were established in different parts of Malabar.

### **BREAKING CASTE HEGEMONY: THE THIYYA MIDDLE CLASS**

Among the lower classes the Thiyyas took advantage of the opportunity provided by colonial modernity and a larger part of the matriculate in the region

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<sup>198</sup> Sreejith K., *op.cit.*, p.17

<sup>199</sup> T.M. Thomas Issac, Richard W.Franke et.al., *Democracy at Work in an Indian Industrial Cooperative-The Story of Kerala Dinesh Beedi*, ILR Press, Ithaca , 1998, p. 24 quoted in Sheeja P.C., *op.cit.*, p.87

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25



came from the Thiyyas. The acquisition of English education was represented as a means to enhance their economic status and acquire a better social status by escaping from the degraded position in the caste hierarchy. The educational institutions started by the Basel Evangelical Mission under the initiatives of Herman Gundert and Samuel Hebich enabled all sections of the people to attain secular education irrespective of their caste and religion. The Thiyyas made use of this opportunity and emerged as a literate group qualified for serving the colonial administrators. Owing to their educational advancement they were recruited to government services which accelerated the development of a professional class among them and they later became the backbone of the middle class in Malabar. The Basel Evangelical Mission, established in Switzerland in 1815, began its activities in North Malabar a quarter of a century later, establishing a network of elementary and high schools by the end of the nineteenth century. The Thiyyas were among the first to join these institutions and a significant minority had subsequently worked their way into the colonial administration as tahsildars, lawyers, pleaders, sub-judges and up to the ranks of deputy collectors.<sup>201</sup> Katharina Poggendorf says that since the entry into this professional class was through education in the English medium, the emerging middle class was predominantly high caste.<sup>202</sup> But unlike the other parts of India the middle class in Kerala, especially Malabar constituted both the upper and lower strata of the society. Initially, the educated classes were drawn primarily from upper castes, especially Nairs, it was not long before members of the Thiyya community also came forward for education and constituted a major part of the middle class. Though they are depressed one in the Hindu caste hierarchy they had some traditional background in Sanskrit and other learnings. It is generally believed that all the Thiyyas were toddy tappers but actually though they monopolised this business only a few of them engaged in toddy tapping. There were peasants, businessmen, weavers, wood cutting, coir making, teachers, scholars, physicians and soldiers from this

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<sup>201</sup> Dilip M. Menon, *Caste, Nationalism* ..... *op.cit.*, p.64

<sup>202</sup> Katharina Poggendorf-Kakar, *op.cit.*, p.127

community in the traditional society of Malabar.<sup>203</sup> Though some of the Thiyyas were traditional intellectuals and rich, they were completely neglected by the high caste people before the British occupation of Malabar. The Thiyyas experienced equal treatment under British rule ever since the English had taken control of the area. This is very clear from the statement made by A. Aiyappan that “an Ezhava under the Hindu regime could not even dream of becoming a *desavazhi*, but under British rule half a dozen of them became *adhikaris* in the British Malabar district”.<sup>204</sup> He further states that the *adhikari* was a very important administrative post since he acted as the tax collector, the police officer, the judge and the link between all the government departments and villagers.

Kannur, Thalassery, Kozhikode and Palakkad were the important centres of European activities in Malabar. These centres provided more job opportunities even in the early periods of European contacts. A group of native contractors from the Thiyya community rose to the occasion in these centres and monopolised the supply of provisions, vegetables, toddy etc. The Thiyyas had nothing to fear about the violation of their caste purity and some of their women developed a relation with the European masters.<sup>205</sup> The intermingling of Thiyya women with English men during the British colonial period indeed had significant implications for their descendants. The offspring of these unions received better education and employment opportunities than the rest of the community. Thiyyas in North Malabar, developed a smoother relationship with the European rulers than Hindus elsewhere in Kerala.

The following remarks of Chamier, the Superintendent of Central Jail of Kannur, attested this cordial relationship ‘from our experience of the Thiyyas, of North and South Malabar, we judge them to be the most orderly, industrious and capable people and it is a matter of no little surprise that a community who had

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<sup>203</sup> K.K.N Kurup, *Modern Kerala...*, *op.cit.*, p.84

<sup>204</sup> A. Aiyappan, *Iravas and Culture Change*, Madras, Government of Tamil Nadu, 1943, p. 19

<sup>205</sup> K.K.N. Kurup, *Modern Kerala .....**op.cit.*, p.84

been for centuries suppressed and deprived of education should have been able, as soon as education was thrown open to them, to produce a number of most able students and highly accomplished men'.<sup>206</sup> The British, unlike Kerala's princes, readily employed Thiyyas, and the Thiyya factotum became a constant companion of some British officials.<sup>207</sup> This exceptional kind of Thiyya collaboration with the English and their mixing with the officers and soldiers of the British battalion stationed in Kannur since the early nineteenth century provoked the indignation of the elders.<sup>208</sup> Moorkkoth Kumaran stated that as this was considered scandalous, Moorkkoth Kumaran's father and some others excommunicated such women and their children. Later, during his community reform activities, Moorkkoth Kumaran brought them back into the Thiyya community.<sup>209</sup> When they started interacting with the British, they realised that the Europeans were not keen to observe the rules of caste, pollution and purity. The end result of all this was that many of the Indian-born higher officers in the administration of Malabar until the second quarter of the twentieth century came from the Thiyya community.

In 1868 the Thalassery judiciary had four native officials, one among them was a Thiyya. Of the four candidates qualified for the police department in North Malabar, three were Thiyyas namely Uppot Ramunni, Odayoth Bapoo and Onden Kunhambu.<sup>210</sup> Similarly, of the eight candidates qualified for the vernacular department of civil service, four belonged to the Thiyyas.<sup>211</sup> Apart from these

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<sup>206</sup> Chamier's report in Madras Times published in *Mitavadi* vol.3, no.9, 1915, pp.40- 41

<sup>207</sup> Robin Jeffrey, *Politics, Women and Well-Being: How Kerala Became a Model*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 1992, p.50, A small community, the so-called 'white Thiyyas' resulted, and though the suggestion of concubinage with Europeans became a great embarrassment in the twentieth century, such arrangements brought considerable advantage in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

<sup>208</sup> Cyriac K. Pullappilly, 'The Ezhavas of Kerala and their Historic Struggle for Acceptance in the Hindu Society', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, vol.11, no.1-2, 1976, pp.25-46

<sup>209</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *op.cit.*, p.16

<sup>210</sup> *Malabar District Gazette*, 1868, RAK, p.154

<sup>211</sup> *Malabar District Gazette*, 1869, RAK, pp.10-11

Thiyyas engaged in different occupations. For instance, Kallandi Ramakrishnan, C.K Vijayaraghavan and Tayyil Uppot Vijayasekharan were ICS officers from this community. Justice Krishnan Madras High Court Judge, Churayai Kanaran, Uppot Kannan and Rao Bahadur Chantan Deputy Collectors, Panangadan Kannan and E.K. Krishnan Sub Judges, Churayi Raman, Churayi Govindan, Onden Kunhambu, Karayi Govindan, Cheruvari Karunakaran etc. were Tahsildars, Churayai Kunhappa, Kottieth Ramunni, Oyitti KunhIRaman, Potheri Kunhambu, C.Krishnan, Poovadan Raman, Koroth Ramunni, O.Krishnan, Achatt Achuthan etc. were Lawyers, Panagadan Raman, Moorkkoth Kumaran, Muliyl Krishnan, Muliyl Ramotti, Poovadan Ambu, Thatha Kanaran, Palleri Kannan Kutty, Moorkkoth Srinivasan, I.K. Kumaran etc. were Teachers and Dr. Ayyathan Gopalan, was Allopathy Medical practitioner.<sup>212</sup> There were many Thiyyas who held the post of Subedar and Jamedhar in the local militia under the East India Company and Tellicherry was a strategic centre of the company in Malabar. Thiyyas were appointed as army sentinels at Mayilankunnu, Morakkunnu, Dharmadamkunnu etc. Thiyyas were also army officers under the East India Company and they had a regiment in Malabar earlier.<sup>213</sup>

Moorkkoth Kumaran states that in 1884 when he joined Basel Mission School at Thalassery, its headmaster was Panangadan Raman, a Thiyya. Later Panangadan Raman took B.L degree and became a lawyer. Then Tatha Kanaran, another member from the community became the headmaster of the school. Similarly, P. Sangunni the first Indian principal of Victoria College, Palakkad was a Thiyya. Moorkkoth Kumaran's house itself is an example of people of the same

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<sup>212</sup> K.K.N.Kurup, 'English Education and Social Progress Among the Thiyyas', in M.G.S. Narayanan, *op.cit.*, p.436. Churayai Kanaran was the only Indian of that time to get a pension equal to his salary. Velayudan Panikkassery, 'Churayai Kanaran', *Vivekodayam*, vol.1, no.3, 1967, pp.53 - 56

<sup>213</sup> D.O.no. 22111-1 dt 22nd October 1936, Public Department, Govt.of Madras, RAK, quoted in Stella Joseph, *op.cit.*, p.66

family engaging in different professions.<sup>214</sup> In Malabar a job in the government service was much desired as it removed the caste based grievances of individuals from lower communities. For instance, even a peon in revenue service belonging to a lower community enjoyed special privilege, that he could visit the residence of a Brahmin. Such a visit, otherwise not permitted by caste rules. As such a government job brought elevation to an individual born in a depressed community in this caste status. As a matter of fact, the members of the Thiyya community tried their best to free themselves from the constraints of caste by pursuing English education and employment in the service of the government.<sup>215</sup>

The Thiyyas also took full advantage of the social and economic reforms administered by the British. Robin Jeffrey in his study on Travancore pointed out that the trade in coconut products and liquor added to the prosperity of the Ezhavas in Travancore.<sup>216</sup> The same can be seen in the case of Thiyyas of Malabar also. Being toddy tappers traditionally they took advantage of the new excise regulations which made the production and distribution of toddy and other alcoholic beverages a profitable enterprise, effectively monopolising the liquor industry. In the early nineteenth century, the Excise Department had not yet come into existence and the rights to sell and tap toddy were auctioned by the Revenue Department of the government of Madras. Speculators and contractors were given a free hand in administering this ramshackle system and sections among the Thiyyas, who monopolised the toddy tapping profession, created informal empires crisscrossing the countryside.<sup>217</sup> The Thiyyas supplied *Rakku*, an alcoholic product from toddy and earned much profit from this business. They took toddy shops on the basis of annual lease in different taluks of North Malabar. A few Thiyya families came to dominate the toddy and *arrack* business by buying up the rights

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<sup>214</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *op.cit.*, pp. 29 - 38. He was a teacher and a very reputed intellectual, his father Moorkkoth Ramunni was a toddy contractor, his sister's husband Churayi Kanaran was Deputy Collector, one of his uncles Butler etc.

<sup>215</sup> K.K.N.Kurup, 'English Edu...', *op.cit.*, p. 436

<sup>216</sup> Robin Jeffrey, *op.cit.*, pp. 139-141

<sup>217</sup> Dilip M.Menon, *op.cit.*, p.64

for a whole taluk and, in the mid nineteenth century, Moorkkoth Ramunni was the head of a company controlling all the shops in Malabar.<sup>218</sup> Moorkkoth Kumaran remarks that his father Ramunni monopolised liquor and *Rakku* business in Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranadu and Kozhikode taluks. Similarly, Karayi Bappu and Karayi Kutty, two brothers from the Thiyya community engaged in this business with the support of the British officials.<sup>219</sup> Thus, the economic and educational advancement acquired through British contact made them become a greater part of the middle class in colonial Malabar.

### **REFRAMING MIDDLE CLASS CULTURE**

Contact with European countries influenced the culture and lifestyle of the middle class considerably. The strong currents of this influence is visible from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. Under the colonial administration it became possible for people with different caste and religious affiliation to study in the same school and work in the same office or factory and the caste system began to lose its moorings. In its place rose a new middle class with its own culture. Colonial transformation of the relations of production contextualized the cultural articulation of a new set of values, prejudices, and tastes for the colonial middle-class, reflecting both regional and cosmopolitan flavours.<sup>220</sup> B.B.Misra remarks that, though heterogeneous and even mutually conflicting at times, the middle class exhibited in great measure an element of uniformity not only in their behaviour pattern and style of life, but also in their mode of thinking and social values.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>219</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *op.cit.*, pp.2-3

<sup>220</sup> Utsa Ray, *op.cit.*, p.6. Utsa Ray observes that, despite the critique against many of these changes as being 'foreign,' there was no denying the fact that Yardley lavender soaps, pince-nezes, silk curtains, and gramophones had become an integral part of Bengali middle class homes by early twentieth century.

<sup>221</sup> B.B. Misra, 'The Middle Class of Colonial India: A Product of British Benevolence', in Sanjay Joshi, *The Middle Class...*, *op.cit.*, p.42

The activities of this Western educated group transformed the existing pattern of society in Malabar. The colonial modernity produced drastic changes in the attitude of the middle class towards traditional society, marriage, family, women, behaviour patterns, leisure, attire and so on. From the late nineteenth century onwards, there was a self fashioning of the middle class and it was a gendered one.

The English language played an important role in the emergence of this middle class culture. English education made its benefactors adopt a semi-Western lifestyle in dressing, manners and attitudes. The majority of young men and women with an English education exhibited mannerisms which created the impression that the purpose of English education was the imitation of European lifestyles.<sup>222</sup> This meant that at women's clubs, tea parties, entertainments and reformist forums, a certain type of language, largely English in its lexis, held together by Malayalam connectives began to be used.<sup>223</sup> Aping the Europeans also led to change of names, 'Vasu' becoming 'D'Vaz', 'Raman' becoming 'Raymond', 'Achuthan' becoming 'Atchison', 'Peraya' becoming 'Pereira' and so on.<sup>224</sup> N.C. Sekhar, the veteran communist leader, admitted that it was the desire to belong to the group of fobs who spoke English with a twang who were beginning to be spotted in social gatherings that prompted him to go for English education.<sup>225</sup> A certain 'club culture' soon began to be associated with this middle class. The Cosmopolitan Club in Thalassery is an example of this. It began as a European Club which was renamed New Cosmopolitan Club in 1932. The colonial culture of public gatherings, club meetings and entertainments, conferences etc. had a significant influence on the rich and educated Thiyyas of Malabar. Chief among

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<sup>222</sup> P.K.Parameswaran Nair, *C V Raman Pillai: Jeevacharithram* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1992 (First published 1948), p.216

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> Joseph Muliyl, *op.cit.*, p.355

<sup>225</sup> N.C. Sekhar, *Agniveedhikal* (Mal.), North Kerala Printers and Publishers, Kannur, 1987, p.47

them was the SNDP Club in Calicut, which became a famous centre for meetings of Thiyya community and provided resources such as free reading rooms, indoor games, musical entertainments and accommodation for visitors amongst other advertised facilities. This club helped facilitate key connections between the Thiyya people during this period.<sup>226</sup>

Some of the novels written during the time highlight the ways in which Western education conferred a sense of liberty and fortitude and a receptiveness to new ideas on freedom and democracy. Two novels which project British influence in Malabar, from diametrically opposite points of view, are O.Chandu Menon's *Indulekha* and Kizhakkeppatt Ramankutty Menon's *Parangodeeparinayam*. While the former extols the virtues of English education, the later satirizes it. For Chandu Menon what made Indulekha different from other women of her family was English education and the characteristic temperament and attitudes of English women she had acquired. But the same English education which was responsible for the social mobility of Indulekha and Madhavan is shown as the root cause of the snobbery and other vices of Paragoda and Parangodi the protagonists of Ramankutty Menon's novel. The tenth chapter of the novel titled "Eighteenth Chapter, or a Discussion", which is a parody of the eighteenth chapter of *Indulekha* is set apart for a discussion on English education. In Komattil Padumenon's novel *Lakshmeekesavam* Akkarappatt Prabhu the feudal baron is surprised at the sight of a man passing through with an open green fabric umbrella in his hand. When the Prabhu asked his manager about the man, he replied 'that is Pandarappampil Narayan, he has taken to learning English'.<sup>227</sup>

C.V. Raman Pillai expressed his criticism of this middle class culture in his fiction. C.V. thought it mere ridiculous folly to speak English, rather than Malayalam at home, to cultivate English etiquette even in the interactions between parents and children or to insist that domestic servants should be designated

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<sup>226</sup> Bijina.M., *op.cit.*, p.132

<sup>227</sup> Komattil Padumenon, *Lakshmeekesavam* (Mal.), in George Irumbayam, *op.cit.*, p.133



'butler' or 'valet'. When C.V's *Kuruppillaa Kalari* (A school without a teacher) was published readers thought that the English couple in the story was modelled on real people that C.V. knew personally. The episodes in the story - the proposals for marriage, the parties, the meetings of women's clubs – appeared to be fictionalized accounts of real-life events.<sup>228</sup>

Colonial culture also impacted the way people conducted themselves. Gomathi Amma (Daughter of Swadesabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai) describes the changes that came over her husband A.K. Pillai on his living in England. She recalls that this transformation was reflected in his style of dressing, his punctuality, his discreet conversations and his amiable behaviour in public.<sup>229</sup> Gomathi Amma also remarks that she found her mother more influenced by English culture than the traditional Indian culture she was born into. K.P. Kesava Menon found much to be imitated in the lives of the English people. He observes how he was impressed by the clean and beautiful cities, the regulated traffic and the disciplined lives of ordinary people during his stay in London. He was fascinated by the way the woman in the family he lived with in London looked after her household.<sup>230</sup> It is interesting to note that even laughing in public was frowned upon by colonial etiquette. Parangodi followed this etiquette to the letter: 'Parangodi hated laughter in public. When she found anything amusing or funny she just smiled. When she found it difficult to suppress a laugh, she would stifle it with her handkerchief. If that did not work, she would bite the forefinger of her right hand and stare at the floor till the urge passed'.<sup>231</sup>

The colonial influence was clearly visible in the designing of homes and their interior decoration. From the late nineteenth century onwards, along with the

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<sup>228</sup> P.K. Parameswaran Nair, *op.cit.*, pp.216-219

<sup>229</sup> Gomathi Amma, *Dhanyayayi Njan* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 1979, p.179

<sup>230</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *op.cit.*, p.36

<sup>231</sup> Kizhakkeppatt Ramankutty Menon, *Parangodeeparinayam* (Mal.), D.C. Books, Kottayam, 2004, Reprint, p.256

traditional homesteads, houses constructed along modern lines, partly under European influence were coming into existence in Malabar. Sreejith K. describes in detail about the changes that had occurred in the construction of houses in Malabar. Large houses are no longer the prerogative of the high castes, just as tiles, formally forbidden to the lower caste can now be used by anyone who can afford them. There was plenty of tiles to be had in the region with the beginning of a series of tile factories under the auspices of the Basel Mission.<sup>232</sup> Along with this the demand for wood also increased and consequently teak plantations were set up in different places. Many houses belonging to the middle classes built during this period, like the British Bungalows, had high roofs, verandahs, big windows and porches for cars.<sup>233</sup> C.Krishnan had a great fascination for items of furniture, his daughter notes, buying any high-priced furniture he set his eyes on.<sup>234</sup>

There are graphic descriptions of the transformation of the *tarawad*, the traditional upper caste joint-family home in Kerala in Uroob's novel *Mindappennu*. 'In place of the *poomukham* appeared the modern portico, in the *thekkini* (living room) chairs and sofa sets appeared, the floor which was simply plastered with a mix of cow dung and charcoal began to be tiled, cheap prints of landscape paintings appeared on the walls.<sup>235</sup> There is a description of a house with its interiors set in Victorian style in Cheruvalath Chathu Nair's novel *Meenakshi*, 'the interiors of the house were furnished with expensive sofa sets, carpets, glass lamps of the latest fashion and mirrors'.<sup>236</sup> There is mention of a Bungalow named Puthen Malikakkal surrounded by a beautiful garden in which English plants grew. The home of Naidu in *Lakshmeekesavam* also has an English parlour, its floor carpeted, decked with large marble tables, a gleaming varnished couch, mirrors

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<sup>232</sup> Sreejith K., *op.cit.*, p.61

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.61-62

<sup>234</sup> Velayudan Panikkassery, *op.cit.*, p.63

<sup>235</sup> Uroob, *Mindappennu* (Mal.), Poorna Publications, Kozhikode, 2017, Reprint, pp.15-16

<sup>236</sup> Cheruvalath Chathu Nair, *Meenakshi* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1990 (First published 1890), pp.8-9

with golden frames and large clocks on the walls.<sup>237</sup> Framed photographs and bookshelves also appeared in the parlours of middle class homes during the time.

Another transition the middle class went through was in clothing. The idea of wearing a 'decent dress' took ground. Till the end of the nineteenth century dress and ornaments were marks of one's caste in Malabar. Neither men nor women of the lower castes were allowed to wear upper garments.<sup>238</sup> But by the beginning of the twentieth century men and women of lower castes too began to appear dressed more 'decently'. One of the important items on the agenda of the reformist movements was the adoption of new dressing styles. Discussing the influence of Western culture on the daily lives of the people, N.C. Sekhar writes in his autobiography: 'shirts and banians have become common. It is rare these days to see anyone with an umbrella made of palm fronds, held up or worn like a cap. Upper garments, variously described as '*kuppayam*', '*udupp*' and the like have become part of the common people's sartorial requirements.<sup>239</sup> Trousers, shirts, coats and ties began to be worn by government officials, doctors, lawyers and judges as more 'dignified' items of clothing. 'My dressing habits changed drastically as I joined the English school. A shirt was compulsory. The *kadukkan* (stud) on my earlobes disappeared. I had my hair cropped, wore a coat and carried a fabric umbrella and a fountain pen to school'.<sup>240</sup> The older generation considered the students of English schools as *parishkarikal* (fashionable). Many English schools had also introduced modern Western games. Moorkkoth Kumaran recalls that students played games like badminton, cricket and tennis at his school. The physical instructor at the school during his tenure was none other than Keeleri Kunjikkannan, who went on to become one of the founding fathers of Indian circus. Such references can be seen in contemporary literature also. Madhavan the

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<sup>237</sup> Komattil Padumenon, *op.cit.*, pp.184-185

<sup>238</sup> K. N. Panikkar, *Colonialism, Culture and Resistance*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2015, p.106

<sup>239</sup> N.C.Sekhar, *op.cit.*, pp.46-47

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p.46

protagonist of *Indulekha* excelled in lawn tennis and cricket while Indulekha was adept at playing the piano and the fiddle.

The reformist movements succeeded in radically altering women's dressing habits. Till the end of the nineteenth century, women from the lower castes were not allowed to wear any upper garments. Even Namboothiri women, who just wrapped a shawl around their otherwise naked torso, were not much different. C.Kesavan recalls in his autobiography how, when his mother started wearing a blouse her mother-in-law beat her up and how ultimately she ended up wearing the blouse only in her bedroom in the presence of her husband.<sup>241</sup> The Namboothiri Yogakshema Sabha, Namboothiri Yuvajana Sangam and Antharjana Samajam devised their own strategies for sartorial reforms among *antarjanams*. The entire reform literature of the period directed against 'ghosha' (veil) which finally culminated in the public appearance of an *antarjanam* without ghosha. Parvathi Manezi was clad in a sari and blouse when she attended the Edakunni session of the Namboothiri Yogakshema Sabha.<sup>242</sup> In M.P. Bhattathiripad's play *Rithumathi* (The adolescent girl) the protagonist Devaki had the bitter experience of having her blouse torn to shreds by an uncle who was enraged at the violation of tradition. When he ordered her to take off her blouse, her reply was: 'Nobody can make me take off my blouse. I won't – even if I am skinned alive'.<sup>243</sup> Moorckoth Kumaran observes that Thiyya women were the inspiration for young women of the generation in wearing saris. They had, in turn, acquired the habit from Parsi women, who were a considerable presence in Malabar at the time. Thiyyas were allowed to wear only a mundu which barely reached down to their knees. Choorayi

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<sup>241</sup> C. Kesavan, *Jeevitha Samaram* (Mal.), Prabhatham Printing and Publishing, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999 (First published 1968), pp.72-73

<sup>242</sup> Mayadevi.M, 'Fashioning Body: Sartorial Reforms and Nambuthiri Women', *Ishal Paithrkam*, Mahakavi Moinkutty Vaidyar Mappila Kala Academy, Kondotty, vol.32, 2023, pp.133-145

<sup>243</sup> M.P Bhattathiripad, *Rithumathi* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur, 1991, (First published 1944), p.37. In Cherukad's *Muthassi*, Nani was forced to take off her 'Kuppayam' by her *muthassi* (Grand Mother) inspite of her objection. Cherukad, *Muthassi*, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 1989, p.21

Kanaran, a Thiyya from Thalassery who rose to become Deputy Collector for South Malabar under the colonial administration, encouraged Thiyyas to break this restriction and start wearing longer mundus which reached below the knees. He also persuaded Thiyya women to wear upper garments and jewels of the latest design.<sup>244</sup>

Western cuisine too had been adopted by the upwardly mobile class as a sign of dignity and prestige. By the turn of the twentieth century coffee and tea had captured the imagination and the diet of the middle class. A.R.Venkatachalapathi, in his study, shows how tea and coffee became common beverages for the middle class at this time. He says that drinking coffee came to be tied to a whole range of cultural practices. In fact coffee for instance became the touchstone of hospitality. Every guest to a Tamil middle class home was offered a cup of coffee.<sup>245</sup> He had stated that 'let's have some coffee' was the way of welcoming a guest and the ultimate insult to a person was to say that he would not even offer a cup of coffee to visitors. While coffee became the cultural marker of the Tamil middle class, tea came to be related to the urban working class.<sup>246</sup>

N. Subramanian, makes a similar observation in his autobiography that 'the habit of coffee-drinking, I believe, entered our household only a few years before my birth (1915). Probably, it was only after 1918 that coffee drinking became a tradition with my father'.<sup>247</sup> Such observations recur frequently in the reminiscences and memoirs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.' Appu Nedungadi was very fond of tea; it was said that the children of his house called him 'Tea Ammavan' as he drank tea and started the practice of offering it to guests. This observation is reflective of his appreciation of European culture.

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<sup>244</sup> Velayudan Panikkassery, *op.cit.*, p.34

<sup>245</sup> A.R. Venkatachalapathy, *In Those Days There Was No Coffee: Writing in Cultural History*, Yoda Press, New Delhi, 2006, p.17

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p.25

<sup>247</sup> Quoted in A.R. Venkatachalapathy, 'In Those Days There Was No Coffee, in Sanjay Joshi (ed.), *The Middle Class in.....*, *op.cit.*, pp. 261-277

Salads, soup, dessert, use of kerchief, knife and fork etc. were novelties of modernity that entered his house, and of course in the dining rooms of other middle class and elite people.<sup>248</sup> During the colonial period tea shops became very common in Malabar. Sometimes it even acted as centres of political discussions.

In the fictional writings of the period, there are many instances of coffee being offered to guests. In *Lakshmeekesavam* tea, coffee and biscuits are served to Kesavan at Devarajan Naidu's home.<sup>249</sup> There are references in *Parangodeeparinayam* too: 'It is probable that Parangodi developed an interest in European habits after reading books in English. She insists on having tea and bread for breakfast. She has to have glassware for serving her food'.<sup>250</sup> In *Saraswatheevijayam* the conversation between Sankunni Menon and Ukkappa Menon makes the colonial influence on cuisine clear: 'The meat is not cooked the way it is done at your home. This is a European dish with potatoes added'.<sup>251</sup> C. Krishnan's daughter Umbooli Achuthan observes that her father, early in his life, was fond of dishes like cutlets and had appointed a butler to cook them.

Colonial modernity created a new consciousness and identity among the middle class and freed them from the traditional bondage of caste and class. Consequently, they became critical of the traditional value systems, social relations, practices and beliefs. Modernity and colonial ties persuaded the middle class to restructure the society where family and women became the contested sites for the reformers. The Western educated young man wanted in their homes order, efficiency and hygiene, in their wives literacy, education, companionate marriage and love.<sup>252</sup> Increasing economic independence resulted in the breakdown of the

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<sup>248</sup> Meera Prathap, 'Nangalude Tea Ammavan', *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, Calicut, October 2000, p.16., quoted in Bijina, *op.cit.*, p.14

<sup>249</sup> Komattil Padumenon, *op.cit.*, p.185

<sup>250</sup> Kizhakkeppatt Ramankutty Menon, *op.cit.*, pp.253-354

<sup>251</sup> Potheri Kunhambu, *op.cit.*, p.105

<sup>252</sup> Judith E. Walsh, *Domesticity in Colonial India: What Women Learned When Men Gave Them Advice*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2004, p.87

traditional joint family structures into nuclear family units, creating opportunities for greater intimacy between the marriage partners. They started restructuring the older patriarchy and began to construct new ideals of families, marriages and domesticity. However, access to knowledge and the public sphere was actually defined along gender lines, where men were to remain within the public domain and women within the domestic which will be discussed in the third chapter.

The expansion of the money economy, decline of feudal structure, the opportunities provided by the colonial government to educated intelligentsia etc. led to the development of a new middle class in Malabar. Since the nineteenth century, it appears that middle-class lifestyles, in spite of their many regional and situational specificities, were becoming more homogenous in the course of reform movements.<sup>253</sup> Joshi, in his study on the colonial middle-class in North India, suggests that being middle-class was a project of self-fashioning. This was achieved through engagement in public sphere politics and cultural entrepreneurship in colonial North India.<sup>254</sup> This self fashioning is visible among the middle class of Malabar from the nineteenth century onwards. The first marker of this transition can be traced in the development of a print culture and reading public in Malabar. The advances made towards general literacy created a rapidly expanding number of new readers, while at the same time facilitating the emergence of modern literary genres such as the novel, short story, poems etc. Equally significant was the downward social mobility of print, manifested in the availability of inexpensive publications with large print runs. This eventually led to the formation of a heterogeneous literary public sphere in Malabar and that will be discussed in the second chapter.

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<sup>253</sup> Henrike Donner (ed.), *Being Middle-Class in India A Way of Life*, Routledge, New York, 2011, p.2

<sup>254</sup> Sanjay Joshi, *The Middle Class . . . .*, *op.cit.*, intro., p.xix

## CHAPTER II

# **THE GROWTH OF PRINT CULTURE AND A READING PUBLIC**

The most prominent outcome of colonial modernity in nineteenth century Kerala was the inception of print and print culture. Print has made radical changes in the socio-cultural and educational realm in Kerala. With better opportunities for education and the increasing awareness of the importance of reading and writing, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed a growth in literacy rates. Increased literacy was naturally accompanied by an increase in reading, accelerated by a greater availability, accessibility, and affordability of books and magazines. With the introduction of English education and English literature the natives of Kerala were introduced to a new sphere of knowledge and new literature. The literary forms like the novels and short stories were seen as media to convey the new ideas in society to accelerate progressive changes. This accelerated the development of a reading public in Kerala thereby creating a literary public sphere.

Printing is a technological advancement that enabled the record of the events in history. The invention of printing is relevant not only in the history of bookmaking or information dissemination or communication, but also is of prime importance in the history of civilization itself. Mankind achieved an important milestone in cultural history through printing. Thomas Scott, the famous Bible scholar and missionary trainer, made a very important statement regarding printing to the missionaries who were going to Africa and Asia: “The printing machine was an excellent piece of equipment that became the cause of European civilization. If the Asian and African continents would sometime achieve an equivalent share of



the light and progress that was created in Europe through the reformation, it would be through the printing press”.<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth Eisenstein’s *The Printing Press as an Agent of Social Change* is widely recognised as a seminal work in the study of print culture. Eisenstein demonstrated that the printing press wielded significant influence in driving social change in early modern European society and the use of this new technology produced unexpected results.<sup>2</sup> She has pointed to the significance of print as a means of fixing, preserving, and circulating novel ideas in society. Ananda Wood defines modernity as ‘the profound process of cultural transformation which starts with the introduction of printing and goes on to develop the use of printing and subsequent communications media into a major way of organizing knowledge and culture’.<sup>3</sup>

Print and print culture is entirely different. When the historians define print culture they focus on the authors, printers and publishers and everybody else existing on the periphery.<sup>4</sup> The transfer of words and images from the world of printing into other areas of society signifies the presence of a print culture. Toby Barnard stated that ‘there was no print culture in Ireland until the 1750s, because it was only then that politicians first turned instinctively to the press for politics and political discussion. He suggests that in the Irish context, print circulated for over 200 years before a discernible ‘print culture’, as such, existed’.<sup>5</sup> According to Jason McElligott and Eve Patten a print culture can be said to exist when men and

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Babu Cheriyan, *Benjamin Bailiyum Malayala Sahithyavum* (Mal.), D.C. Press, Kottayam, 2008, pp.49-50

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth L.Eisenstein, *The Printing Press an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, USA, 2005 (First Published 1979), pp.686 - 690

<sup>3</sup> Ananda Wood - *Knowledge Before Printing and After: The Indian Tradition in Changing Kerala*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1985, p.5

<sup>4</sup> Leslie Howsam, ‘The Practice of Book and Print Culture: Sources, Methods, Readings’, in Jason McElligott and Eve Patten (ed.), *The Perils of Print Culture : Book Print and Publishing History in Theory and Practice*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2014 , p.19

<sup>5</sup> Jason McElligott and Eve Patten, *op.cit.*, p.4

women from a range of backgrounds are used to seeing, reading, buying and borrowing print in a variety of social contexts and when print is traded as a commodity within a market economy.<sup>6</sup> It is impossible to conceive of a print culture in any society without the presence of serial publication, newspapers, magazines etc. which will contribute to, and be dependent upon, the increasing ubiquity of print and its related commercialisation.<sup>7</sup> Print provided platforms for readers to understand their worlds in many different and complex ways.

The history of printing began with Johannes Gutenberg's famous 42-line Bible that was printed using moveable metal types.<sup>8</sup> Before the advent of printing, manuscripts were copied by hand. In such manuscripts, the name of the author of the work would not be mentioned; instead, the name of the scribe and the date of copying would be recorded in the colophon attached to the manuscript. Hand-copying was a much tedious, time consuming and expensive process. It is said that Gutenberg was inspired to invent printing after seeing the image of the Carthusian Monks at the Mainz city spending their lifetime in solitude, copying the Bible by hand.<sup>9</sup> In fact, Gutenberg printed the first book, the Bible in Mainz, Germany, in 1455. Following this, around 60 cities in Germany had established printing presses by the end of the fifteenth century. Similarly, printing was introduced in other European cities around the same time.<sup>10</sup> At the close of the fifteenth century, there were around 1700 printing presses in 300 cities in Europe. It is estimated that around 2,00,00,000 copies of 40000 books, including reprints, were printed at these early presses. These editions are now called 'Incunabula'.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.6 - 7

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> It is so-called due to 42 lines being printed per page.

<sup>9</sup> Babu Cheriyan, *op.cit.*, p.51

<sup>10</sup> Basel (1466), Venice (1469), Paris (1470), Geneva (1478), London (1480), Stockholm (1483) etc. *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> K.M.Govi, *Adimudranam Bharathathilum Malayalathilum* (Mal.), D.C. Offset Printers, Kottayam, 1998, p.19

The initial need for print technology in India, as in the case of Europe, came from the desire to increase the circulation of the Bible.<sup>12</sup> Though the printing press was introduced in India by the Portuguese Jesuit Missionaries to print Christian literature it became a real social force that influenced the life and culture of the people only in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It was in 1556 that the printing machine first reached India, at Goa. With the Portuguese conquest of Goa by the governor, Afonso de Albuquerque, the Portuguese settled at Goa and gradually the Christian Missionaries began conversion of the natives and propagating the gospel. It was to aid in the spread of the gospel that the printing press was established in Goa. The first book to be printed at this press was the *Doctrina Christum* (Thampuran Vanakkam), a book on Christian teaching by Francis Xavier.<sup>13</sup> Later, printing presses were established in different regions across India. Printing presses were established in Tamil Nadu in 1712, and in Bombay in 1772. Similarly, in Calcutta, James Augustus Hickey introduced printing for the first time in 1777. Between 1777 and 1800, there were approximately 17 printing presses and 40 printers in Calcutta. Other than the East India Company Press established in 1779, and the Swedish Mission Press in 1800, all the rest were private or individual enterprises.<sup>14</sup>

## **PRINTING IN KERALA**

Kerala was drawn very slowly into the world of print. The Christian Missionaries were the pioneers of press in Kerala. In the initial stage the Basel Mission and Church Mission Society played a crucial role in the development of printing presses in Kerala. The advent of printing became one of the formative

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<sup>12</sup> G. Arunima, 'Imagining Communities Differently: Print, Language and the Public Sphere in Colonial Kerala', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Sage Publication, vol. 43, no.1, 2006, pp. 64-65

<sup>13</sup> B.S.Kesavan, *History of Printing and Publishing in India: A Story of Cultural Reawakening*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, vol.II, 1988, p.603, In the year 1577 at Cochin John Gonsalves was the first to carve Malabar Tamil types, through which for the first time the teachings of the catholic church were edited in print and published in India.

<sup>14</sup> K.M.Govi, *op.cit.*, p.65

factors for the social reformation and modernity in Kerala in the nineteenth century and enabled tremendous progress in the cultural and material life. Printing was first introduced in Kerala by the Portuguese Jesuit Missionaries. As elsewhere in India, these presses were established to aid the propagation of Christianity. The introduction of printing was essential to ensure widespread availability of material that would enable the new converts to learn the foundational principles/doctrine/ catechism of the Church, and also for education, especially in learning their native language.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, printing presses began functioning at Kollam (Quilon), Kochi (Cochin), Vypeenkotta and Ambalakkad. *Doctrina Christina*, a catechism book by John Gonsalves is considered to be the first book to be printed in Kerala, though it was in Tamil.<sup>15</sup> In 1577, the Jesuits established a printing press at the Holy Cross Church in Chendamangalam, Vypeenkotta. *Doctrina Christina* and *Rudiments of the Catholic Faith* were the first two books to be printed there.<sup>16</sup> Only two copies of *Doctrina Christina* are surviving today: one printed at Kochi, and the other printed at Kollam. In 1605, the press at Vypeekotta was shifted to Cranganore (Kodungallur) in the wake of the Dutch invasion of Kochi.

Printing presses were established at Ambalakkad in 1679, and at Varappuzha in 1773. During the Dutch invasion, all the presses except the one at Ambalakkad were destroyed.<sup>17</sup> The Ambalakkad press is historically significant as it was from this place that Arnos Pathiri (Johann Ernst Hanxleden) printed the first Tamil dictionary. Even though there were a number of printing presses in Kerala by this time, Malayalam was not printed. Moreover, the first Malayalam book was

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<sup>15</sup> B.S. Kesavan, *op.cit.*, p.603, Printed at San Salvador Press attached to the seminary at Thankassery in Kollam on twentieth October 1578.

<sup>16</sup> P. Thankappan Nair, 'Vaipicotta and Ambalakkadu- Two Landmarks of Early Printing in Kerala', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, vol. 4, 1977, pp. 58-59

<sup>17</sup> Puthuppally Raghavan, *Kerala Patrapravarthana Charithram* (Mal.), D.C. Books, Kottayam, 2001(First published 1985), p.12

not printed in Kerala, but in Amsterdam, in 1678. The book was *Hortus Malabaricus* in which the names of plants were printed with Malayalam types along with Arabic, Sanskrit and Latin types. The first book that was printed fully in Malayalam was the *Samkshepa Vedartham* by Clement Pianius Pathiri that was printed at Rome in 1772. In the following years *Sidharoopam* (1790), *Hundred proverbs* (1791) were also published. The first Malayalam printing in India was carried out from the Courier Press in Bombay, which also carried out the printing needs of the East India Company. The Malayalam letter types were etched by Bahramji Jijibai, who was the typographer there. Robert Drummond's *Grammar of the Malabar Language* was the first Malayalam book to be printed there in 1799. Scholars like K.M. Govi opine that since Malayalam letters are present in almost every line of the book, it can be considered as a Malayalam book.<sup>18</sup> However, the first book in India to be printed entirely in Malayalam was the Malayalam translation of the New Testament of the Bible, popularly known as the *Ramban Bible*, at the Courier Press in 1811.

Benjamin Bailey was perhaps the person who exerted the greatest influence on, and changed the course of printing in Kerala. In 1821, he established the Church Missionary Society (CMS) Press in Kottayam, and cut the first Malayalam types in Kerala. The first book actually printed in Kerala is considered to be Bailey's translation of eight stories from English to Malayalam for children, titled *Cheru Paithangalkku Upakarartham Engleeshil Ninnu Paribhashappeduthiya Kathakal* which was published in 1824 from the CMS Press. In 1824, *Visudha Mathayude Suvishesham* was translated and printed by Bailey in Malayalam. In 1842, the complete translation of the Bible into Malayalam was printed, which was the first Malayalam Bible. Benjamin Bailey was also the first lexicographer of Malayalam, preparing the first Malayalam-English Dictionary in 1846, titled A

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<sup>18</sup> K.M. Govi, *op.cit.*, p.101

*Dictionary of High and Colloquial Malayalam and English*, and the first English-Malayalam dictionary in 1849, titled, *A Dictionary, English and Malayalam*.<sup>19</sup>

The London Missionary Society (LMS), established a printing press at Nagercoil in 1821, thus invigorating and contributing greatly to printing in Kerala. It was the English missionary, Reverend Charles Mead who conceptualized the printing press, and took efforts to train and impart printing skills. The LMS also established presses in Neyyoor in 1830 and in Quilon/Kollam in 1830.<sup>20</sup> Periodicals such as the *Suvishesha Doothikai*, *Pala Deepikai* (1840) *Suvisheska Prabhala Vilakkam* (1841), *Desho* (1861), were printed at the LMS Press at various periods.

Greatly inspired by the example of the CMS Press, Swathi Thirunal, the ruler of Travancore, took initiatives for the establishment of a press which was fully owned and operated by the state. In 1836 he issued orders for this and the press came to be known as the Travancore Government Press. The press was mainly established for the production of government almanacs, and the first almanac came out in 1837.<sup>21</sup>

## **MALABAR AND ITS NEW PRINT CULTURE**

It was the Basel Mission which made significant contributions towards printing in the Malabar region. With branches of the Mission being established at Thalassery in 1839, Kannur in 1841, and at Kozhikode in 1842, the requirement of printing presses became inevitable. At that time, there were no presses at Mangalore nor at other branches of the Basel Mission. The German missionary, Gottfried Hartmann Weigel, was tasked with making trips to Bombay in order to get the tracts, pamphlets, and other small books of the Mission printed. With the

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<sup>19</sup> Babu Cheriyan, *op.cit.*, p.42

<sup>20</sup> K.M. Govi, *op.cit.*, pp.118-119

<sup>21</sup> S.Unnikrishnan, 'Beginning of the Printing Industry in Travancore', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, vol.30, 2003, pp.93 - 102

establishment of the CMS press at Kottayam, the Basel Mission sought their aid for the printing of literature in Malayalam. Copies of the Prayer Books printed in 1838 by the CMS for the Basel Mission are kept at the British Library.<sup>22</sup> With the increase in the outreach activities of the Mission, plans had to be formulated for printing at the Basel Mission itself. Subsequently, in 1842, the Basel Mission press was established in Mangalore, with the *Lord's Prayer* being the first booklet to be printed there. *Kerlalolpathi* (1843) and *Pazhanchol Maala* (1845) were other important publications printed here. Till another press was established at Illikunnu, all the printing needs of the Basel Mission in Thalassery were fulfilled at Mangalore.

With the activities of the Mission increasing in the Malabar region, on 23 October 1845, the first printing press in Northern Kerala, the Basel Mission press at Illikunnu, was established under the supervision of Hermann Gundert. The Illikunnu press printed books in Malayalam, English and Tamil. Since the Mission schools had already begun functioning by this time at Thalassery and Kadirur, the printing of textbooks was also an important requirement of the Basel Mission. All the Malayalam publications issued by the Basel Mission between 1848 and 1864 were printed at the Illikunnu press.<sup>23</sup> The people of Northern Kerala were introduced to books and to printing through the publication of Hermann Gundert's works at this press. Religious pamphlets and booklets, textbooks for schools, the printing needs of the Mission, and other books were undertaken here. Most of them have been revised and reprinted. Graham Shaw opines that the first book to be printed at the Illikunnu press was the *Panchangam* in 1846, whereas Moorkkoth Kumaran states that it was a small religious booklet that was first printed here.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> K.M.Govi, *op.cit.*, p.126. For details see K.M.Govi, *Public Library* (Mal.), Centre for South Indian Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, 2009

<sup>23</sup> B.S. Kesavan, *op.cit.*, p.640 , During his two decades of stay in Malabar Gundert wrote 19 prose works in Malayalam. He translated John Banyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in to Malayalam with the title *Sanchariyude Prayanam*.

<sup>24</sup> K.M. Govi, *op.cit.*, p. 130

Following this, printing presses were established at different places in Kerala under the initiative of various individuals.<sup>25</sup>

The history of printing in Kerala can be classified into two phases: the first decade of the nineteenth century, and the years following the second decade of the nineteenth century. In the first phase, when reading and writing was limited among the people, printing was unable to bring around significant changes in the cultural/social scenario of Kerala and could not produce a print culture. In addition, religious propagation was the major focus of the missionaries who used printing to bring out printed materials. It was in the second decade of the nineteenth century that newspapers and magazines began to develop, resulting in the printing and publication of a secular nature. The publication of the journals *Rajyasamacharam* in June and the *Paschimodayam* in October of 1847 by Hermann Gundert at the Illikunnu press in Thalassery marked the beginnings of this stage. Forty two volumes of the *Rajyasamacharam* were printed between June 1847 and November 1850.<sup>26</sup> This was not a newspaper in the strictest sense, but a periodical that dealt with religious themes. Its aim was to inform, exhort and encourage the believers around the world with news regarding the expansion of the kingdom of God. The name of the editor/s and that of the publisher were not printed. However, it is stated on the cover page that it was printed at Thalassery.<sup>27</sup>

The approach of the *Paschimodayam* however, was different from that of the *Rajyasamacharam*, with the religious overtones being replaced with secular themes. The *Paschimodayam* was printed for 4 years between October 1847 and August 1851.<sup>28</sup> The first issue stated that the aim of this publication was to instill

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<sup>25</sup> St.John Printing Press(1860), Vidyavilasam (1861),Western star (1864-65), Keralamithram (1865-66), Keralavilasam(1890) etc.

<sup>26</sup> Sally Jacob, 'A Study on Early Malayalam Periodicals: Especially Njananikshepam and Vidyasamgraham', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Mahatma Gandhi University, 2011, p.25

<sup>27</sup> N.Sam, *Malayala Patrapravarthanam Pathonpatham Noottandil* (Mal.), D.C. Books, Kottayam, 2003, p.21

<sup>28</sup> G.Priyadarsanan, *Malayala Pathrapravarthanam Praramba Swaroopam* (Mal.), Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur,1982, p.17



scientific temper amongst the people of Kerala, and accordingly, it discussed topics such as Astronomy, Science, Geography, History, Travel etc. Along with this, the then Kerala history, society and different customs of the land were discussed in the title *Kerala Pazhama* and many maps were used to describe the geographical matters. Therefore, this magazine is also considered by many to be the first scientific journal in Kerala.

Between 1847 and 1890, 26 periodicals were published in Malayalam.<sup>29</sup> Among these the *Njananikshepam* printed from the CMS press at Kottayam in 1848 deserves special attention. The title was printed in both English, as *The Treasury of Knowledge*, and in Malayalam as *Njananikshepam*, and the contents of the magazine were true to its name. Dense scientific topics, simple worldly narratives, and modern literary works were included. It was the *Njananikshepam* that started the publishing of the new literary genres such as the essay, the short story and the novel, which were to exert so great an influence on reading habits and mould the literary sensibilities of the people. The first short story in Malayalam that appeared in periodical form, the *Aanayeyum Thunnaneyum*, was printed in this magazine. In addition, the beginnings of the novel can also be seen in the *Njananikshepam*. Arch Deacon Koshy's *Pullelikunju* was published in this magazine in 1860.<sup>30</sup> National news, international affairs, global happenings, descriptions about various countries, new inventions and discoveries in the West etc. were published in the *Njananikshepam*. Following this many magazines were published like *Western Star* (1864), *Keralam* (1866), *Sandishtavadi*(1867), *Keralapathaka* (1870), *Keralopakari* (1874) *Sathyanada Kahalam* (1876)*Malayala Mithram* (1876), *Kerala Deepakam* (1878), *Kerala Chandrika* (1879), *Kerala Mithram* (1881)*Vidyavilasini* (1881), *Kerala Patrika*(1884), *Keraleeya Suguna Bodhini* (1886), *Malayali* (1886), *Nasrani Deepika* (1887),

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<sup>29</sup> G.Priyadarsanan, *Kerala Pathra Pravarthanam Suvarna Adyayangal* (Mal.), Current Books, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, pp.35-36

<sup>30</sup> Arch Deacon Koshy D.D., *Pullelikunju* (Mal.), CMS Press, Kottayam, 1959 (First published 1882), p.13

*Kerala Sanchari* (1888), *Kerala Nandini* (1889), *Vidyavinodhini* (1889) *Malayala Manorama*(1890) etc.<sup>31</sup> Among these the important ones are *Vidyavilasini* (Thiruvananthapuram) *Kerala Sanchari* (Kozhikode) and the first women magazine *Keraleeya Suguna Bodhini* (Thiruvananthapuram).<sup>32</sup>

The Newspaper was an important link that connected reading with the public more intensely. The periodicals, magazines and newspapers beginning with the *Rajyasamacharam* established in Malabar a modern rationality that was possible only through reading. The newspaper allowed for the widespread dissemination of conflicting political and cultural views and interpretations in cheap and easily available form. During the nineteenth century there were three main newspapers in Malabar, *Kerala Patrika*, *Kerala Sanchari* and *Malabar Manorama*.<sup>33</sup> Three English newspapers *Malabar Spectator*, *West Coast Reformer*, and *Champion* were also circulated in Kozhikode.<sup>34</sup> The first public newspaper to be published in this region was the *Kerala Pathrika* published from Kozhikode *Vidhyavilasam* press in 1884 under the editorship of Chengulath Valiya Kunjirama Menon. Appu Nedungadi the author of *Kundalatha*, Mooliyil Raman who was the court translator in Kozhikode, Kannambra Kunjunni Unni Nair, and Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar were associated with and wrote articles for *Kerala Patrika*. Potheri Kunhambu wrote articles in this newspaper about religious reforms, the irrationality of traditional practices, and the inhumanness of the caste system.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> G. Priyadarsanan, *Kerala Pathra Pravarthanam.....*, *op.cit.*, p. 36

<sup>32</sup> G. Priyadarsanan, *Adyakala Masikakal* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 2007, p.16

<sup>33</sup> Sreejith K., *The Middle Class in Colonial Malabar: A Social History*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2021, p.50

<sup>34</sup> Rekha, 'Women and Journalism in Colonial Kerala', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, 2016, p.90

<sup>35</sup> G.Priyadarsanan, *Malayala Pathra Pravarthanam.....*, *op.cit.*, p.154

In 1886, the *Kerala Sanchari* started publication with Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar as its editor. Even before the publication of the *Kerala Sanchari* Poovadan Raman established a printing press under the name Kozhikode Spectator Press, and began to publish an English newspaper called *The Malabar Spectator*. Later, understanding the fact that, it was not sufficient to make only the government and the prominent English-knowing citizens aware of the injustices occurring in the nation, but that it was necessary to have a newspaper in Malayalam to form public opinion about such incidents among the common people, he started the *Kerala Sanchari* newspaper after consulting with Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar.<sup>36</sup> It highlighted the vision of the middle-class, giving importance to critiquing socio-cultural-political issues. The title of the first editorial was *Loka Samastha Sugino Bhavanthu*. K.P. Padmanabha Menon observed that Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar, who used to style himself as *Kesari* was the best Malayalam newspaper correspondent of his day. His chaste diction and his humour invest his writing with an indefinable charm.<sup>37</sup> Later Moorkkoth Kumaran, C. Krishnan, C.P. Govindan Nair held its editorship. Following this Vagbhatananda's *Atmavidya Kahalam* and *Mitavadi* under the editorial ship of Moorkkoth Kumaran carried on a reformist agenda. *Atmavidya Kahalam* opposed the caste inequalities and superstitions in the society whereas *Mitavadi* stood for the plight of the Thiyyas.<sup>38</sup> *Veenapoovu* the well known poem by Kumaranasan first published in *Mitavadi*.

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<sup>36</sup> Moorkkoth Kumaran, *Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar* (Mal.), Malayalam Men of Letters Series, V.V Publishing, Thiruvananthapuram, year not mentioned, pp.67-68, Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar wrote many articles in the *Kerala Sanchari* under the contextual pen names *Kesari*, *Vajrabahu*, *Vajra Soochi*, and *Deshabhimani*.

<sup>37</sup> K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, vol. IV, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 2001, p.544

<sup>38</sup> Started from Thalassery as a weekly in 1907, from 1913 onwards *Mitavadi* was published as a magazine from Kozhikode under the editorship of C.Krishnan. The publication stated that it was 'A Malayalam Magazine from the Thiyya's. G.Priyadarsanan, *Malayala pathra pravarthanam praramba...*, *op.cit.*, pp.118 -126. Also see V.R.Pameswaran Pillai, 'Sevana Thirishna Thikanja C.Krishnan', C.Krishnan Birth Centenary Supplement, *Vivekodayam*, vol.1.no.6, 1967, pp.19-20

By the time of publication of *Mathrubhumi* in 1923, print culture had proliferated in Malabar and soon the paper acquired the reputation of a national newspaper.<sup>39</sup>

The beginnings of the twentieth century saw radical changes in print culture. This was the result of educational growth and transformations in the socio political and cultural arenas during this period. People began to be aware of the need to organize themselves as communities for their upliftment and against the suppression and oppression of the upper-classes. As a result of the development of this community consciousness numerous publications of various communities found expression in the first half of the twentieth century. The community organisations like Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP), Nair Service Society (NSS), Yogakshema Sabha, effectively used printing as a tool for sustaining themselves, to express their grievances, to point out shortcomings, to gain their rights and to publicise their programmes. At the same time, printing was equally used by the upper-classes for wiping out the superstitions and evil practices in their own communities.

The interests of the Nair communities were highlighted by the publications like *Nair, Kerala Samudaya Parishkari, Nair Samudaya Parishkari, Samadarsi* etc. and the interests of the Kerala Brahmin community were projected by *Unninamboothiri, Yogakshemam, Mangalodayam* etc. *Vivekodayam, Mitavadi, Sahodaran, Navajeevan, Kerala Kaumudi* etc. were the platforms for the Thiyyas to fight for their rights.<sup>40</sup> Similarly the publications like *Muslim, Deepika, Al-Islam, Al-Amin* etc. projected the interests of the Muslims. The reformist discourse in these publications will be discussed in detail in the third chapter.

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<sup>39</sup> *Mathrubhumi* is one of the top most newspapers in Kerala and played an important role in inculcating the spirit of nationalism among people. It was started on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1923 as a tri-weekly under the editorship of K.P. Kesava Menon from Kozhikode. In 1930 *Mathrubhumi* became a daily. It was banned for some time during the Second World War.

<sup>40</sup> G.Priyadarsanan, *Adyakala...., op.cit.*, pp.9-12. In 1904 the official organ of SNDP Yogam, *Vivekodayam*, was founded under the editorship of Kumaran Asan.

## NEW GENRE OF READING - THE NOVEL

The development of printing during the colonial period played a central role in imparting the new culture of the West to the indigenous people. By facilitating access to literary products, print contributed to the making of a new cultural taste and sensibility.<sup>41</sup> The impact of printing was not confined to English literature alone. The growth of printing facilities in vernacular languages during the nineteenth century contributed to the spread of a new cultural taste. Chandu Menon's account in *Indulekha* is self explanatory as to how he could create new literary and cultural taste among the vernacular intelligentsia. The colonial cultural conquest through remodelling of beliefs and behaviour was facilitated by print.<sup>42</sup>

It was only in the late nineteenth century that books and periodicals were published on a large scale and dominant English influence commenced in the cultural realm. Most of the books produced before this were mainly religious text and school text books. By this time all sorts of print literature grew over the country, and many new genres such as the essay, novel, short story, literary criticism, biography, poetry, plays etc. The result of the interaction between the Western and indigenous culture is finely and creatively represented in literature.

One of the most conspicuous cultural fruits of the colonial encounter was the novel which debuted in India during the nineteenth century. This literary form was highly appreciated by the new literate under the colonial system. The emergence of the novel in the West has traditionally been linked to the rise of capitalism. Literary critics are in agreement that the new genre represented the social aspirations of the middle class created by the industrial revolution.<sup>43</sup> The availability of English literary text encouraged and inspired the Indian writers to

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<sup>41</sup> K.N. Panikkar, *Colonialism, Culture and Resistance*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2015 (First published 2007), p.154

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p.155

<sup>43</sup> Shivarama Padikkal, 'Inventing Modernity: The Emergence of the Novel in India' in Tejaswini Niranjana, P.Sudhir, Vivek Dhareshwar (ed.), *Interrogating Modernity: Culture and Colonialism in India*, Seagull Books, Kolkata, 1993, p.220

make use of this creative medium in various Indian languages. Thus, the emergence of the novel in the nineteenth century can be seen as a pan Indian phenomenon. The Western influence in Indian literature, first can be traced in Bengali literature and thereafter its influence spread to other regions.<sup>44</sup> In 1858, Peary Chand Mitra published, under the pseudonym of Tekchand Thakur, the first Bengali novel, *Alaler Gharer Dulal*. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's *Durgeshanandini* was published as early as 1865 and his *Kapalakundala* in 1866 and by 1885 the Bengali language had over 50 novels.<sup>45</sup> In Marathi, Baba Padmanji published *Yamuna Paryatan* in 1857; in Assamese, Padmanabha Barua's *Bhanumati* came out in 1890; in Tamil, *Kamalampal Charittiram* (1893), *Indulekha* (1889) in Malayalam, and *Indirabai* (1899) in Kannada were published. During the same period, novels were written in Gujarati, Hindi, Telugu, Urdu and Kashmiri as well.<sup>46</sup>

A flood of novels deluged Kerala society in the twentieth century, which in turn accelerated the development of a reading culture. Until the publication of the new genre of novels the publications in Malayalam were largely textbooks that narrated European advancement in science and technology and missionary publications to spread christianity. Towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a 'dialogic mode' sharply became dominant in the literary production especially in novels of the newly emergent male intelligentsia. Literary production serves as a means through which the dominant group constructs its reality, hopes and aspirations and in Kerala too the new literary production like the novel

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<sup>44</sup> K.M.George (ed.), *Adhunika Malayala Sahithya Charithram Prasthanangaliloode* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 2011 ( First published 1998), p.150

<sup>45</sup> K.M. George, *Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1972, p.10. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the publishing industry, comprising the writing, printing and distribution of books and periodicals, was the largest indigenous enterprise in Calcutta. For details see Tapti Roy, 'Disciplining the Printed Text: Colonial and Nationalist Surveillance of Bengali Literature', in Partha Chatterjee(ed.), *Texts of Power: Emerging Disciplines in Colonial Bengal*, University of Minnesota Press, London, 1995

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p.221

represented the aspirations of the newly emergent middle class and provided literary expression to their emotions.

The novel as a new literary genre provided a form flexible enough to initiate public communication more intensely than newspapers in the region.<sup>47</sup> Literary connoisseurs who till then depended on Sanskrit works and *Manipravala Kavya* became fans of novels.<sup>48</sup> The advertisement of novels in contemporary magazines of the time is the most conspicuous indicator of the extent of this phenomenon.<sup>49</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century 13 novels were published in Malayalam though some of them are not considered as mainstream novels. Most of the nineteenth century novels were published from Malabar. The novels from Malabar included *Kundalatha* (1887), *Indulekha* (1889), *Indumathee Swayamvaram* (1890), *Meenakshi* (1890), *Saraswativijayam* (1892), *Parangodeeparinayam* (1892), *Sarada* (1892), *Lakshmeekesavam* (1892), and *Sukumari* (1897). The novels published from Travancore during the period were *Ghatakavadam* (1877), *Pullelikunchu* (1882), *Parishkkarappathi* (1892) and *Naluperiloruthan* (1893) and the historical romances, *Akbar* (1894) and *Marthanda Varma* (1891). According to George Irumbayam writings like *Pullelikunju* (1882) and *Kundalatha* (1887) were precursors of the Malayalam novel and indicators of the interest of Malayalam writers and readers in prose fiction and these developments eventually culminate in the writing of *Indulekha* (1889), the ‘first’ Malayalam novel.<sup>50</sup> In

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<sup>47</sup> Shiju Sam Varughese, ‘Colonial Intellectuals, Public Sphere and the Promises of Modernity: Reading Parangodeeparinayam’, in Satheesh Chandra Bose and Shiju Sam Varughese(ed.), *Kerala Modernity: Ideas, Spaces and Practices in Transition*, Orient Blackswan, Hyderabad, 2015, pp.41-58

<sup>48</sup> George Irumbayam, *Malayala Novel Pathonpatham Noottandil* (Mal.), Department of Cultural Publication, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997, p.191

<sup>49</sup> The women magazines of the period like *Lakshmeebai*, *Mahila*, *Vidyavardhini* etc. contains advertisements of novels including its content.

<sup>50</sup> M.P. Paul, an important literary critic of the twentieth century in his book *Novel Sahityam* published in 1930 designated O. Chandu Menon’s *Indulekha* the status of the first proper novel in Malayalam. The novels like *Pullelikunju*, *Ghatakavadam*, and *Kundalatha* written before *Indulekha* did not receive much attention from literary historians. Most of them marginalised these works, not even considering them as novels.

Malabar, the novels represented the passionate deliberation of the socio political cultural concerns of the period as visible in *Indulekha*, *Parangodeeparinayam*, *Meenakshi* etc. whereas in Kochi and Thiruvithamkoor newspapers and magazines took the key roles.

According to K.N. Panikkar 'the novels of the late nineteenth century display the development of a new literary genre consciously borrowed from the English. While introducing the new literary genre novels the concern of the colonial state was the construction of a colonial subject, a cultural symbol for Indians in their quest for modernity'.<sup>51</sup> The proliferation of print technology enabled the emergence of the novels as a printed book that could be purchased from the market at an affordable price. In 1887 when *Kundalatha*, the first novel in Kerala was published, print technology was well established in literary production.<sup>52</sup> By 1890, there were ten presses in Kerala, three of which were in Kozhikode.<sup>53</sup>

Even before the publication of *Kundalatha* and *Indulekha*, there were prose works that displayed the characteristics of the novel. Arch Deacon Koshy's *Jathi Bedham* was printed in serialized form in the August, September, and November issues of the *Njananikshepam* in 1860. The complete collection of these articles in book form, *Pullelikunju*, is considered by many to be a novel.<sup>54</sup> *The Slayer Slain*, by Mrs. Collins, was published serially in the *Vidyasamgraham* in 7 issues from July 1864 onwards. After the death of Mrs. Collins, Richard Collins translated it into Malayalam as *Ghatakavadam*. Some consider this to be the first Malayalam

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<sup>51</sup> K.N.Panikkar,*op.cit.*, p.154

<sup>52</sup> As soon as it was published, Kerala Valiyakoyi Thampuran and later P. Govinda Pillai, *Malayala Bhasha Charitram* (Mal.), Sahithya Pravarthaka Cooperative Society, Kottayam,1965, p.420, and M.P. Paul *Novel Sahithyam* (Mal.), National Book Stall, Kottayam,1953 (First published 1930), p.161 accorded this status to *Kundalatha*.

<sup>53</sup> Sreejith K., *op.cit.*, p.46

<sup>54</sup> Arch Deacon Koshy D.D., *op.cit.*, p.13



novel.<sup>55</sup> Hermann Gundert of the Basel Mission translated John Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress* into Malayalam as *Sanchariyude Prayaanam*. This translation is notable for the fact that it introduced both readers and writers to a literary form that was similar to the novel, and succeeded in instilling interest in this genre.

Between 1880 and 1885, K. Chidambara Vadyar translated 'As You Like It' and 'The Winter's Tale' from Charles Lamb's 'Tales from Shakespeare' as *Kamakshi Charitram* and *Varshakaala Katha* respectively. Around the same time, the Basel Mission also published the Malayalam translation of *The History of Phulmani and Karuna* as *Pathminiyum Karunayum*.<sup>56</sup> The printing of these three works within the span of three to four years showcase the interest of the readers in such writings. T.M. Appu Nedungadi in the preface to the first edition of *Kundalatha* stated that: 'In English there are many books in the category of novels that offer a very pleasant pastime for the readers. I hope that this book will be able to provide a pastime devoid of evil to the general public who do not know English'.<sup>57</sup> (My Trans.)

Appu Nedungadi, the author of *Kundalatha*, was much conscious of the novelty of the form when he published it for the first time. He was anxious about the characters and incidents as they bore no resemblance to what his readers were familiar with. He emphasized the strangeness of the location and the names of characters - *Kalinga*, *Kuntalam*, *Kundalatha*. Such names were used so that the readers would think that the events in this novel happened in a country far away from Kerala.<sup>58</sup> He writes that since *Malayali* readers do not know English well enough to read novels arriving from England, are forced to spend their time

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<sup>55</sup> George Irumbayam, *op.cit.*, pp. 35-36

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p.52

<sup>57</sup> Appu Nedungadi, *Kundalatha*, Madras, 1887, pp.1-2

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* The novel is set in a fictitious place called *Kundalam* and the names of the chief characters are *Kundalatha* and *Taranathan* and the people of Malabar were not familiar with either the place or these names. This is one of the reasons why *Kundalatha* is not considered as the first Malayalam novel.

reading books like the *Ramayanam*, *Mahabharatam*, *Nalacharitam* etc. Though *Kundalatha* was published two years prior to *Indulekha*, it did not have much impact on readers whereas *Indulekha* was immediately and immensely popular and became the rage of the reading public of Kerala.<sup>59</sup>

Chandu Menon, one of the prominent representatives of the newly emerging middle class intelligentsia in Malabar, also expressed anxiety when he published his debut well known romantic social novel *Indulekha*. Contrary to his expectation the *Malayalis* wholeheartedly welcomed the new literary genre that is visible from the overwhelming popularity of this novel. The first edition of *Indulekha* sold out within 3 months of its publication. He says,

"I never anticipated writing a second preface for the same book when I completed writing the preface to the first edition on December 9, 1889. Even if I had to write one, I never even in my wildest dreams imagined that it would be necessary so soon. The first printing of this book, which went on sale at the start of January 1890, was finished by March 30. This book was still in high demand, which prompted the publication of a second edition and, consequently, this preface".<sup>60</sup> (My Trans.)

*Indulekha* was the first Malayalam bestseller and the first Malayalam work to be translated into English. Columns appeared in different newspapers such as *Madras Mail*, *The Hindu*, *Standard*, *Kerala Patrika* and *Kerala Sanchari* appreciating the book and he also received several letters. Its English translation also came within a year of its publication. In its preface Chandu Menon recounts the circumstances in which he took to writing a novel like *Indulekha* when he was

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<sup>59</sup> K.M. George, *op.cit.*, p.90

<sup>60</sup> O.Chandu Menon, *Indulekha* (Mal.), Poorna Publications, Kozhikode, 2016, Reprint, p.22. Before the publication of *Indulekha* by Sahithya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangam in 1955 it had 51 editions. See M. Kuttikrishnan, 'Indulekhayude Nooram Pirannal', *Grantalokam*, vol.41, Issue.6, June 1989, p.10

a Munsif at Parappanangadi. Among other things his account reflects how a new literary taste and through that a new cultural taste was developing among the middle class. In official duty he had considerable leisure time to read a large number of English novels. This new found love of literature in him supplanted the normal leisure activity of *vedi parayal* among friends and members of the family. Consequently his circle of intimates felt somewhat neglected. To compensate for this he attempted to convey to them in Malayalam the gist of the stories of novels he had been reading. Initially they were not particularly interested in the stories of English romantic encounters but they soon developed a taste for them. Then he thought of writing a novel in English fashion.<sup>61</sup>

In his letter to Dumurgue explaining what induced him to write *Indulekha* Chandu Menon says “first my wife’s often expressed desire to read in her own language a novel written after English fashion”.<sup>62</sup>

“Moreover a desire on my part to try whether I should be able to create a taste among my Malayalam readers not conversant with English, for that class of literature represented in the English language by novels, of which at present they have no idea, and to see whether they could appreciate a story that contains only such fact and incidents as may happen in their own households under a given state of circumstances, and to illustrate to my malayali brethren the position, power and influence that our Nair women who are noted for their natural intelligence and beauty would attain in society if they are given a good English education”.<sup>63</sup>

As the response towards *Indulekha* was far beyond his expectations he was encouraged to write his second novel *Sarada*. Following *Indulekha* C.V.Raman

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<sup>61</sup> W. Dumurgue C.S., *Indulekha* (Trans.), Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing, Kozhikode, 1965, intro., p.x, Also see Moorkkoth Kumaran, *Rao Bahadur Oyyarath Chandu Menon* (Mal.), Malayalam Men of Letters Series, V.V. Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, Year not mentioned.

<sup>62</sup> W. Dumurgue C.S., *op.cit.*, intro., p.ii

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, intro., p.xvi

Pillai's historical romance *Marthanda Varma* also received unsurpassed acceptance.<sup>64</sup> Three months after *Indulekha* was published, Padinjare Kovilakath Ammaman Raja wrote the *Indumathee Swayamvaram*. George Irumbayam opines that it was the widespread approval and reception accorded to *Indulekha* that prompted Ammaman Raja to compose the *Indumathee Swayamvaram*.<sup>65</sup> Following this, there came about a number of novels in Malayalam, both imitating and parodying *Indulekha*. These created a popular taste for novels. Apart from the mainstream novels the contemporary magazines also published novels in serial forms.

In the twentieth century the trends of social reforms as a part of National Movement had emerged among different communities. In this phase novels found a new resurrection with a new face in content and presentation that produced radical impact in the society. It was marked as progressive literature which brought about a new sensibility and realism. They exposed the prevailing social structure of Kerala society which was based on social relations defined by caste system. The under-privileged classes like the ordinary workers, scavengers, thieves, and so on were brought to mainstream society. The trend of realism in the treatment of the conditions and problems of contemporary society can be seen in the writings of Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, P. Kesavadev, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai etc.<sup>66</sup> In course of time the upper class also used novels to expose the complex family relations and the status of women. The works of V.T Bhattathiripad, Muthiringod Bhavatrathan Namboothiripad, Lalithambika Antarjanam etc. are the best examples for this. In the twentieth century there was also the proliferation of short stories, poems, dramas etc. almost all set in the Kerala context.

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<sup>64</sup> K.M. George, *op.cit.*, p. 96

<sup>65</sup> George Irumbayam, *op.cit.*, p. 131

<sup>66</sup> K.K.N.Kurup, *Nationalism and Social Change: The Role of Malayalam Literature*, Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1998, pp.94 - 97

## THE PUBLIC SPHERE AND THE NEW READING PUBLIC

From the 1690s onwards Britain witnessed the growth of a new kind of middle-class reading public, in direct relation to the growth in size and importance of a middle class. They occupied a middle position ‘below’ the aristocrats and ‘above’ the labourers and mainly constituted the merchants, tradesmen, shopkeepers, and officials in the administrative apparatus. New forms of reading the newspaper, the periodical and the magazine, novels etc. accounts for the major expansion of print culture in close relation with the newly emergent middle class.<sup>67</sup>

Sumit Sarkar observes that the entry of print culture, Western education along with the creative indigenous response to them through the vernacular prose valorized book learning to an unprecedented extent among the colonial middle class of nineteenth century Bengal.<sup>68</sup>

The period between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century constituted a decisive phase in the history of colonial Malabar. The most remarkable phenomenon of this period was the emergence of a reading public and the consequent evolution of a public sphere. The reading culture resulted in the creation of a free-willed individual and this became the foundation of the public sphere. Printing could not achieve far-reaching consequences in the first-half of the nineteenth century. However, in the latter-half, with the formation of the new middle-class that inculcated colonial ideas and was influenced by Western values, a common public-sphere was created in which they could strongly oppose the forces that controlled the existing socio-cultural-political state. The well-educated middle class used printing to express their ideas, concepts, and also for raising protests.

In colonial Kerala, during the later decades of the nineteenth-century, a number of new developments, including the growth of a strong print culture,

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<sup>67</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution*, Penguin Books, London, 1965, p.182

<sup>68</sup> Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997, p.282

development of education, the establishment of a modern literary space, and the introduction of modern literary genres such as the novel and the short story, created a new community of reading public. At the beginning of the early modern period, books were either expensive and almost fetishistic items such as highly ornate bibles and devotional works, or they were expensive items such as school books or prescribed texts for those studying law, medicine or theology. But by the end of the nineteenth century, books were ubiquitous, unexceptional, and everyday commodities. Thereafter, print literature blossomed all over the country, giving rise to newspapers, novels, plays etc. Cheap printed books made knowledge more available to all who could read, and made the ability to read an increasing necessity for those who wanted to raise their social economic status.<sup>69</sup> The establishment of presses made it possible to produce and distribute identical copies of particular works in large numbers. Thus, literature as a product, became easily accessible in the public sphere, rather than being the privilege of the elite or the wealthy.

This growth of print culture succeeded in bestowing upon Malayalam language an official status, not necessarily as the main, or only, language of administration, but as the principal language of communication and expression, which cut across community differences.<sup>70</sup> It was actually Herman Gundert who contributed the most to this process by publishing a book on Malayalam grammar and a dictionary. He had also written a book on the history and geography of the region titled *Malayala Rajyam*. Malayalam has got its distinct identity from the days of Thunchath Ezhuthachan who had enriched the language with words from the everyday language of the common people. It was later taken up by the nineteenth century writers like O. Chandu Menon who in the preface of *Indulekha* has written that this book was written in the language ordinarily spoken in his home.

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<sup>69</sup> Gail Minault, *Gender, Language and Learning: Essays in Indo Muslim Cultural History*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2009, p.84

<sup>70</sup> G.Arunima, *op.cit.*, p.73

The notable writers such as Kerala Varma Valiyakoi Thampuran, A.R. Raja Raja Varma, Kunji Kuttan Thampuran, Appan Thampuran, Kumaran Asan, Ulloor S.Parameswara Iyer, and Vallathol Narayana Menon entered the sphere of Malayalam literature during this time. This was also a period of translations. Many great works from different languages were translated into Malayalam, and the late nineteenth century saw the publication of a significant number of writings in vernacular language. This steadily increased the quality of books available to the reading public. The availability of printed literature influenced a shift in people's attitudes toward leisure. Reading provided an entirely new way of spending leisure time for the educated middle class. The Malayalam novel is a product of the transformation that occurred in the socio-cultural spheres of Kerala in the nineteenth century. With the publication of *Kundalatha*, *Indulekha*, *Marthanda Varma*, *Sarada* etc. literature moved closer to the daily lives of the common people, and prose, as a literary genre, began to gain notice. For those who were able to read and write, the novel became an enjoyable pastime. A.R.Venkatachalapathi in the Tamil context says that 'there is no autobiography or memoir of the times without reference to novels and novel reading'.<sup>71</sup> When the events and incidents occurring in the day to day lives of the people, around them, and in their society began to be depicted through the novel, along with the events that they wished to see happening in the society, literacy and literature moved closer to each other. *Indulekha*'s dissemination and sales, and the ensuing debates and discussions, is a reflection of the influence exerted upon the readers by the novel. In the preface to the second edition of *Kundalatha*, Appu Nedungadi cited the good reviews and feedback about the novel that had appeared in the contemporary newspapers and magazines, and in the letters that he received from readers.<sup>72</sup> The popularity of novels in the nineteenth century shows how a new literary taste was developing among the *Malayalis*.

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<sup>71</sup> A.R.Venkatachalapathy, *The Province of the Book: Scholars Scribes and Scribblers in Colonial Tamil Nadu*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2015, p.76

<sup>72</sup> Appu Nedungadi, *op.cit.*, p.3

Those who professed to read held hopes to belong to the cultured elite, and stacked their shelves with books.<sup>73</sup> There was also a craze for reading English among the educated middle class which was sometimes considered as a status symbol. The circulation of English newspapers in Malabar was the best indicator for this. The *Malabar Spectator* was published 6 years before the publication of *Kerala Patrika*. When C. Krishnan converted *Mitavadi* into a magazine, one page was exclusively reserved for English. Moreover G. Priyadarsanan says that the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was very popular in Malabar.<sup>74</sup> The craze for English reading was also attested by the contemporary novels, magazines and autobiographies.

The act of reading printed texts linked the reader to a public market of print capitalism. A transition from group reading to individual reading was an immediate and important consequence. Since books could be purchased by individuals, the need for group reading and public recitals sharply declined. Increasingly, reading became a private activity enabling the reader to go back to the book again and again at leisure and to internalize the content of literary products.<sup>75</sup>

In the nineteenth century, conscious attempts were made to popularise reading among the general public. The literary appreciation of the public was influenced by newspapers and magazines with sections set apart for book reviews. The magazines of that period had a special section called '*Vayanamuri*' (Reading Room) to introduce the newly released books in Malayalam. An article containing a comprehensive description of novels such as *Kundalatha*, *Saraswathivevijayam*, and *Marthanda Varma* appeared in the *Vidyavinodhini* magazine. The article also mocked the imitation of the English novels by the Malayalam authors: "When a novel is written, it must state that it follows the manner of the English novel. If

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<sup>73</sup> Sreejith K., *op.cit.*, p.49

<sup>74</sup> G. Priyadarsanan, *Kerala Pathra Pravarthanam.....op.cit.*, p.1

<sup>75</sup> K.N. Panikkar, *op.cit.*, p.155



such a note is omitted, the readers who have not studied English will think that it is utter nonsense. If this note is included, they will remain quiet, under the impression that it is but an English novel”.<sup>76</sup> (My Trans.)

*Mitavadi* also had a critical section titled *Pusthakabhiprayam*. Its purpose was to introduce the readers to newly published books and authors. It has published commentaries on about 150 books like *Ambu Nair* (Moorkkoth Kumaran), *Bilathivishesham* (K.P. Kesava Menon), *Parinamavadam* (Pareri Kunji Chanthu), *Chithrayogam* (Vallathol), *Prarodanam* (Kumaranasan) etc.<sup>77</sup> The availability of monthly periodicals at affordable prices enabled the practice of reading to spread across the country. Books were advertised in a number of different ways: by comparing new releases with well-known works, by highlighting their aesthetic value, or showcasing their value for money. There are also references to booksellers (*Pustaka Chettimar*) who sell books by going door to door. Book clubs were also developed in many towns like Thalassery, Mahe, Kozhikode etc. Even the newspapers and periodicals were widely read through the reading rooms, libraries and coffee shops.

Another instance of how the phenomenon of the reading culture developed in Kerala is that writing became a source of income. With the growth of the reading public, writing became a viable means of generating an income. Gomathi Amma, the daughter of Swadeshabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai, states that when he was banished to Madras, his only source of income there was from the sales of his books: “the expenses for rent and stay, the expenses for education, the expenses for my father’s treatment- were all met from the income generated through the sales of my father’s books”.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Author not mentioned, ‘Puthiya Novel’, *Vidya Vinodini*, book 3, no.6, 1892, p.137

<sup>77</sup> G.Priyadarsanan, *Malayala Pathra Pravarthanam* ....., *op.cit.*, p.171

<sup>78</sup> Gomathi Amma, *Dhanyayayi Njan* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam,1979, p.80

Similarly, the editorials and lead articles of P. Kesavadev that appeared in the *Mathrubhumi Weekly* attracted a high number of readership that resulted in an increase in the number of its subscribers. When the editors of *Mathrubhumi* asked Kesavadev to be a regular writer of articles in their magazine, he replied asking for regular remuneration.<sup>79</sup> K.P.Kesava Menon says that when he published his book *Bilathivisesham* in August 1916, he was overjoyed by the response it received from the public and felt an indescribable joy when he received the proceeds from the sale of the book.<sup>80</sup> In that period, many writers who lived away from home, or had an education against the wishes of their family, or those who could not afford a formal education due to the poor financial status of their families, met their needs from the remuneration obtained through their writings. C.J. Thomas, V.T. Bhattathiripad, C.H. Kunhappa, and Moorkkoth Kumaran are just few of the many writers who have testified to this.

The literature of the period shows the expanding phenomenon of reading culture in Malabar. It indicates the presence of bookshelves and libraries at home, which in those days had become a marker of urban middle-class culture. In the photographs available of public figures during this time, the background is almost always formed by bookshelves.<sup>81</sup> In the novel *Indulekha*, the character Suri Namboodiripad who represents tradition, is stunned by the bookshelf he encounters in the sitting room of the heroine Indulekha.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, It has been said of Barrister Krishna Menon in the novel *Sarada*, that he had approximately 2000 books at his residence at Madras, and at his own house in Kerala: “As soon as Krishna Menon was informed that a book had been published in England, he would never fail to make arrangements to have it sent to him. One could never see

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<sup>79</sup> P. Kesavadev, *Ethirppu* (Mal.), Prabath Books, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999 (First published 1959), p.313

<sup>80</sup> K.P.Kesava Menon, *Kazhinjakalam* (Mal.), Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Ltd., 2012 (First published 1957), p.47

<sup>81</sup> Sreejith K., *op.cit.*, p.63

<sup>82</sup> O. Chandu Menon, *op.cit.*, p.158

him at any time without a book in his hand”.<sup>83</sup> The novel *Meenakshi* also indicates the presence of bookshelves in the house of Tahsildar Kunji Krishna Menon. In the novel *Lakshmeekesavam* while giving a description of the Bungalow of Devarajan, a trader in Mysore, there are references to a bookshelf in his visitors room.

Lalithambika Antarjanam, C.H. Kunhappa, Moorkkoth Kumaran, Devaki Nilayangod, V.T. Bhattathiripad etc. have described the reading habits of that period, and the literary discussions that would take place in the homes of the educated, and about the private libraries at certain houses, in their autobiographies. C.H. Kunhappa describes the literary discussions, poetry recitals, and the collections of books in both English and Malayalam at K.T. Chanthu Nambiar’s house.<sup>84</sup> C. Umbooli Achyuthan, the daughter of C. Krishnan, records the reading habit of her father in this manner:

“Father used to order new books based on their reviews in major English newspapers. Over time, it grew into a large collection of books. In addition, he had a slip printed out and affixed to the top of his book shelf, stating that the books were “Not for circulation”. Only Manjeri Rama Iyer was accorded the liberty of borrowing father’s books for reading”(My Trans.).<sup>85</sup>

Lalithambika Antarjanam states that with the learning of letters, reading became a part of the daily lives of many people. She records that since her father and grandfather were fond of reading, they had a collection of all the books and magazines of the period and that this helped enrich her reading habits. She also mentions the literary discussions that were held at various houses during that time and in such discussions, detailed analysis of new books and their themes were also

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<sup>83</sup> O.Chandu Menon, *Sarada* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1997, Reprint, p.140

<sup>84</sup> C.H. Kunhappa, *Smaranakal Mathram* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur, 2000 (First published 1981), p.92

<sup>85</sup> Velayudan Panikkassery, *Ayyankali Muthal V T Vare* (Mal.), Current Books, Kottayam, 2007, p.64

brought forward. During this period, reading was also transformed into a symbol of status. Sometimes books became ornamental objects in the drawing rooms of the educated middle class. Contemporary newspapers and magazines were subscribed to, in order to preserve and maintain the family honour, and kept intact, without even their wrappers being opened.<sup>86</sup> Here, one can see books, bookshelves, and reading becoming permanent fixtures in middle class families.

The press initially used by the missionaries was soon utilised by the newly emergent middle class to propagate their ideas of a new society which attracted the readers more to the print media. This is visible in the phenomenal growth in the number of publications like magazines, newspapers, journals, novels, short stories, poems etc. Thus the development of print facilitated a shared world of readers and writers where they could indulge in discussions and debates on matters of public interest and create an opinion among its readers irrespective of caste, religion and sex that eventually led to the formation of literary public sphere in Malabar. The libraries established in different parts of Malabar accelerated the growth of the reading public and the creation of a public sphere.

The public sphere is a theoretical concept put forward by Jurgen Habermas in his work *The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*<sup>87</sup>, to characterize European social transformation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this work Habermas describes how the public sphere in Germany, Great Britain, and France in the above-mentioned period underwent a transformation from a sphere where the rulers were displaying their power, to becoming a bourgeois public sphere inhabited by property-owning and literate men discussing central social and cultural issues.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Author not mentioned, 'Pusthaka Vayana', *Yuvajanamithram*, book. 1, issue. 2, 1917, p.39

<sup>87</sup> Originally written in German in 1962 and published in English in 1989.

<sup>88</sup> Larsen H., 'Theorizing Public Libraries as Public Spheres in Library and Information Science', in Sundqvist A., Berget G., Nolin J., Skjerdingstad K. (ed.) *Sustainable Digital*

The theoretical approaches to the public sphere can be categorised into two. The first considers the public sphere as a space where people from different backgrounds set aside their differences and engage in rational discourse as abstract individuals, as a display of the ideals of modernity, especially rationalism. The second view, particularly adopted by historians, considers the public sphere as a space for free expression of people regardless of their backgrounds, a space for autonomy. Taking a strict approach from either viewpoint, without taking into account the ideals of both rational modernity and autonomy, results in a rather narrow expression of the public sphere.<sup>89</sup>

The terms ‘public’ and ‘public sphere’ have been contested ever since Habermas introduced this theory. During the period, there was a proliferation of historical studies that appropriated his conception of the public sphere. Habermas conceived the ‘public sphere’ basically as a bourgeois one that emerged as individuals came together as the public. According to him, this phenomenon was facilitated by different types of social institutions like the coffee houses in England, Parisian salons in France, and reading clubs in Germany during the eighteenth century.<sup>90</sup> Habermas observes that in the first decades of the eighteenth century there were about 3,000 coffee houses in the city of London alone, where the regular visitors discussed literature, politics and the news in the newspapers.<sup>91</sup> For Habermas, this sphere where ‘private people come together as a public’ represented an ideal public sphere.

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*Communities*, 15<sup>th</sup> International Conference Proceedings, iConference, Sweden, 23–26 March 2020, pp.564-570

<sup>89</sup> Pramod Kumar Mohanty, ‘Mapping the Public Space: Discourses on Hegemonies, Identities and Cultural Politics at Colonial Cuttack 1803-1947’, *Indian Historical Review*, vol. 41, no.2, 2014, pp. 235–270

<sup>90</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, (Trans.) by Thomas and Frederick Lawrence, The MIT Press, Massachusetts, 1989, pp. 36–38

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32

In Kerala, the public sphere developed in its own distinctive way, entirely different from the European experience. This was, to a great extent, due to the intervention of colonialism. The historical context of the development of the middle class is also quite different in India from that of the West. The process of modernisation in the nineteenth century in the forms of printing press, printed books, newspapers, magazines, reading rooms, libraries etc. provided the middle class with ever-increasing resources and spaces to articulate public opinion that led to the development of a 'critical' public sphere. By providing an outlet for public expression on matters of 'common concern', the medium of print also became a vector for disseminating and implementing middle class thought and vision. Consequently, they became instrumental in forging a cultural and political identity by articulating 'public opinion' on matters of public importance in the 'public sphere'. As J.Devika remarks, a public sphere emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Kerala, in which public interest became the key concern, and issues came to be debated in its terms. But this must not be taken to indicate the presence of a full fledged civil society of individuals. Rather it refers to the formation of many discussion groups in which participants who had acquired certain skills attempted rational deliberation on issues and themes that were identified for limited reasons often as public.<sup>92</sup>

The concept of 'public opinion' came into being primarily in modern literature, public meets, libraries, reading rooms, factories, clubs, tea and coffee shops. This resulted in the development of a 'new consciousness', which transformed such isolated individuals or groups of individuals into 'new collectivities' that accelerated the creation of a public sphere. This led to community formations with its own methods and platforms for creating public opinion. Each group, while trying to stake its claim to constitute the 'public', turned to different techniques like the media, mobilisation through speeches,

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<sup>92</sup> J.Devika, *En-Gendering Individuals: The Language of Reforming in Twentieth Century Keralam*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2007, p.6

drama, social work, literary creations, and political activism of different modes. It was continually necessary to establish, control and restore the perfect fit between the people and various advocating groups of 'public opinion'.<sup>93</sup>

In his study, Habermas details how the literary and political traditions created the identity of the self in the middle class. In Malabar the advent of the newspapers and novels, the establishment of libraries and reading rooms and the development and expansion of the reading community led to the creation of this self-identity. More than being a mode of entertainment and leisure for the middle class, the early novels put forward strong indications of the public sphere. The Indian novel was an artistic as well as intellectual response to the contemporary socio-political situation, and not merely a literary activity. This is clearly exemplified in the Bengali novels of Ramesh Chandra Dutt, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Rabindranath Tagore in which 'the socio political situations existing in the country is picturized right from the early phase of reformerism exuberance to the growth of a revolutionary consciousness among the common masses'.<sup>94</sup>

Similarly early Malayalam literature from Malabar strongly committed to the salvaging of the individual from the tyranny of the existing established social structures and at the same time projecting individuals' search for identity. *Indulekha*, *Saraswatheevijayam*, *Parangodeeparinayam*, and *Sukumari*, which were among the earliest novels in Malayalam, offer a critique on the social issues of the time and modern educated characters in each of these novels fight for their identity. They demonstrate more realistically the interactions and conflicts of people within the society. Moreover, the theme in literature reflected the problems of the daily life of ordinary human beings. Some of the themes that were discussed in such novels such as education of the lower classes, gender justice, communal

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<sup>93</sup> Pramod Kumar Mohanty, *op.cit.*, pp.235–270

<sup>94</sup> K.Venkata Reddy and Bayappa Reddy (ed.), *The Indian Novel With a Social Purpose*, Mehra Offset Press, New Delhi, 1979, p.1

reformation, and the struggle for public spaces hints at the emerging public sphere. The three novels of the nineteenth century *Ghatakavadam*, *Saraswatheevijayam* and *Sukumari* deal specifically with the experience of caste inequalities and two of these novels were written by men of lower caste.<sup>95</sup> Potheri Kunhambu conceived education and conversion to christianity as means to the lower castes to escape from the age-old subordination. He was also conscious of the radical possibilities education opened up for them. According to Dilip Menon, in Kerala Christianity was the interface through which the lower castes experienced modernity and allowed for their entry into the public sphere generated by inter-religious discussions.<sup>96</sup> Potheri Kunhambu the author of *Saraswatheevijayam* wrote essays strongly opposing the inequalities of caste in the pages of *Kerala Patrika* and *Kerala Sanchari*. Similarly Joseph Muliyl encountered the novel *Saguna* written by the Christian convert Kripabai Satyanand in the journal *Keralopakari* which inspired him to write his own novel, *Sukumari*. The missionary journals democratised access to a literate sphere of debate and knowledge and also provided an alternative sphere of reflection on self and society.<sup>97</sup> *Indulekha* depicted the changing aspirations of the Nair families due to colonial education and how the emergent middle class responded to colonial modernity. Madhavan, the protagonist of the novel, presents an emerging trend in the public sphere by comparing *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavata* as works of literature rather than religion and these were seen as similar to the works of Milton and Shakespeare. Similarly, *Sarada* also reflects the condition of contemporary Hindu Nair families and their continuing feud. It portrays many a social evil including the wicked acts of the special experts on litigations appointed in rich families.

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<sup>95</sup> V.M.Achuthan, 'Gurukanda Keralam', *Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, Thozhilali Yuvajana Vayanasala and Grandhalayam, Chovva, 1986, pp.14-16. *Saraswatheevijayam* was written by Potheri Kunhambu, a Thiyya and *Sukumari* was written by Joseph Muliyl, a Thiyya convert to Christianity.

<sup>96</sup> Dilip M.Menon, 'A Place Elsewhere: Lower Caste Malayalam Novels of the Nineteenth Century', in Stuart Blackburn and Vasudha Dalmia (ed.), *India's Literary History: Essays on the Nineteenth Century*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2004, p. 493

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*



Discussions and debates about such novels began towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the ensuing knowledge began to propagate in the social/communal realms. People could relate their life with the content of the novels and that accelerated its popularity. As a creative process, fiction is an expression of the most intimate awareness of the society in which it is born and it evolves.<sup>98</sup> All these novels urged the revamping of the traditional set up and there was a cry for reformulation. At the same time, they did not negate tradition completely, but asked to give up the outdated customs. The novels of the period exposed the irregularities in the society and the resultant discussions in the print media are examples of how reading boosted social transformation and how a public sphere was created. V.T. Bhattathiripad notes that it was his reading of the *Yogakshemam* and *Kerala Patrika* during his younger years that moulded him into a social activist: “My eyes fill with tears of gratitude when I recall that it was the great light of the inextinguishable lamp kindled by that Thiyyadi girl in the atmosphere of the *Ayyappan Kavu* that would guide my feet in my later days” (My Trans.).<sup>99</sup>

Behind this powerful statement is the recognition of the fact that the turning point of his life was being taught the ability to read, which later helped him to become an inseparable part of the emergent public sphere and to transform a whole Namboothiri community. Writer’s circles such as the *Kavi Samajam* that became active towards the last decades of the nineteenth century, played a pivotal role in the formation of public spaces that were progressive in nature, and to sustain active discussions on reading and writing in the public sphere.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> K.Venkata Reddy and Bayappa Reddy, *op.cit.*, pp.2-5

<sup>99</sup> V.T Bhattathiripad, *Kanneerum Kinavum*, in *V.T Yude Sampoorana Krithikal* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 2015, p.211

<sup>100</sup> In 1891, the *Kavi Samajam* was formed under the aegis of the *Malayala Manorama*. Later, it became the *Bhasha Poshini Sabha*. In 1893, the *Bhasha Poshini* Trimonthly Magazine began its publication with Varghese Mappila as the editor.

Sreejith K. observes that cities in Malabar served as an important centre for the formation of a nascent public sphere where public opinion could be formed through the interaction of the civic community and debating societies. Debating societies such as *Sri Jnanodaya yogam* founded in Thalassery in 1906, discussed issues pertaining to public interest like education and social reforms.<sup>101</sup> In different parts of Malabar such debating societies were formed mainly attached to the libraries. The Sen Gupta Library Parayanchery, Desaposhini Library Kuthiravattom, Sanmarga Darshini Library Vellayil, Paral Public Library, Azad Public Library, Vadakara Public Library etc. formed similar debating societies. The library minutes make it evident that several contested topics were discussed there, and many prominent members of the community took part in these debates. The Deasaposhini Library minutes records that Vagbhatananda was invited to deliver a talk on social reforms and the importance of educating women and it created tremendous discussions among the audience.<sup>102</sup> Similarly the debating club in Azad Public Library and Vadakara Public Library conducted weekly meetings and discussions were held on a pre-decided topic which is attested by the Vadakara Public Library Minutes.<sup>103</sup>

Such discussions were also held at homes.<sup>104</sup> Every Sunday, K.P. Kesava Menon and his friends mostly used to meet in Kozhikode and discuss a

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<sup>101</sup> Sreejith K., *op.cit.*, p.37, The *Jnanodaya Yogam* (Awakening of Knowledge) was an extension of SNDP Yogam. Moorkkoth Kumaran, Varuthur Kanniyil Kunhikannan, then president of Thalassery Municipality, Kottyath Ramunni, a lawyer at Thalassery court and K.Chanton, a retired Deputy Collector played a leading role in the establishment of *Jnanodaya Yogam*.

<sup>102</sup> Minutes, Desaposhini Library Kozhikode, 1937

<sup>103</sup> Minutes, Vadakara Public Library, 1932. Personal interview with Kaviyoor Rajagopalan at his Residence, Mahe on 12.04.2023

<sup>104</sup> One half of the eighteenth chapter of *Indulekha* is devoted to a consideration of atheism, or the modern irreligion, as it prevails among the educated *Malayalis*, and the other half to a discussion as to the merits and demerits of the National Congress. This is brought in as a conversation between Madhavan, Govinda Panikkar (his father) and Govindankutty Menon (a cousin of Madhavan, who is also a graduate, but anti - Congress and atheistic.) Madhavan is a moderate Congressman and not an atheist. Madhavan's father is a bigoted Hindu and the conversation of course shows how each of the three thought of religion, and how Govindan Kutty despised the Congress, while Madhavan was a moderate

predetermined topic at different homes. This discussion will last for about two hours. These discussions created enthusiasm among the young lawyers to think and know about public affairs.<sup>105</sup> Later when he moved to Madras, Kesava Menon, along with his colleagues, started the 'Neo Fabian society' with 12 members including among others barrister K. Sankaranarayanan, K.P. Padmanabha Pillai, B.P. Wadia, Chenchaiyah, Chakkara Chettiyar, and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya (sister of Sarojini Naidu). They used to meet every Friday evening at 6 o'clock at one of the members' houses to discuss topical issues. These discussions resulted in the publication of two books, the one on 'Montague Chelmsford Reforms' and the other on 'Voting Right Issues in Madras'.<sup>106</sup> There were also a few public avenues where public meetings were held, the most important being the Kozhikode Town hall. Apart from these public avenues certain well off individuals set up halls in their own premises. In Kozhikode, the house of C. Krishnan had a hall named after his father where frequent public meetings were held and where the likes of Bipin Chandra Pal, C.F. Andrews, Sardar K.M. Panicker, Kumaran Asan and Ulloor spoke.<sup>107</sup> Such meetings were also held in the courtyards of many houses in temporary sheds and in north Malabar some of these sheds later transformed into reading rooms. Moorkkoth Kunhappa depicts such a meeting in the biography of his father Moorkkoth Kumaran. Between 1870 and 1900, at night the house of Churayi Kunhappa (father-in-law of Moorkkoth Kumaran) became a venue for the get together of scholars, officials, lawyers and they used to engage in debates, discussions and criticisms and reciting stanzas. Though it was a Thiyya house, Nairs of the locality also attended the gettogether.<sup>108</sup>

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supporter of it. 'Puritan' critics found fault with the chapter as it doesn't follow from the seventeenth and that it digress from the main theme. We would contend that the eighteenth chapter is the most important one in the novel.

<sup>105</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *op.cit.*, pp.52-53

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p.64

<sup>107</sup> Sreejith K., *op.cit.*, p.38

<sup>108</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *Moorkkoth Kumaran: Jeevacharithram* (Mal.), Sahithya Pravarthaka Co operative Society, Kottayam, 1975, pp.53-54

The importance of the cities can also be traced in contemporary literature. The description of the cities were a part of early Malayalam novels. In *Indulekha* the hero Madhavan visits Bombay and is thrilled by the sights there. Similarly *Sukumari* is set entirely in the city of Kannur with its fort, armoury, army barracks etc. In *Saraswathivevijayam*, Kuberan Namboothiri leaves the village thinking that Marathan the Pulaya boy was killed and reaches Kozhikode. There he encounters a group of lower caste converts to Christianity confident, self assured and speaking in clear accents unmarked by caste. The novel also picturised Marathan's move through the cities of Kannur and Madras. Similarly *Lakshmeekesavam* also presents the picture of a city as a space of material excess. The contemporary magazines also present the description of several cities in and out of Kerala.

Thikkodiyan considered reading as the pathway to the public sphere. He stated that the first step to achieve the awakening of society's conscience, to shatter inequality, and to instil a sense of freedom in the minds of the youth, was to establish a reading room in the village.<sup>109</sup> Thikkodian refers to the steps taken up by K. Kelappan, to establish a rural reading room soon after he was released after being imprisoned for taking part in the Malabar Rebellion. The primary aim behind such endeavours was to instil a sense of freedom and independence among the youth. Thikkodiyan writes:

“With the functioning of such rural reading rooms, people without jobs who would while away their time in gambling and gossip, were drawn to them. A large number of people began to frequent the reading rooms in the evenings. Many were interested in reading the books. The number of volunteers at these reading rooms and libraries began to increase. The youth began to display a marked interest in discussing socio-political issues” (My Trans.).<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Thikkodiyan, *Arangu Kaanatha Nadan* (Mal.), D.C. Books, Kottayam, 2011(First published 1991), p.26

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p.30

Women too, to an extent, were able to step into this literary public sphere. The women comprised a field/arena where the rural reading rooms could function and make inroads. For the women, who were denied the freedom to venture out, such reading rooms became a portal through which they could communicate with the outside world. Indulekha had her own reading room. With respect to data, it is impossible to determine numbers and figures of the people, especially women, who made use of such facilities for reading. The earliest library registers of Malabar recorded only the names of men. The names of women are rarely found in the library registers before the 1930's. However, it is obvious from a perusal of the autobiographies and biographies which came out during this period that women used to read avidly. B. Kalyanamma, Lalithambika Antarjanam, Devaki Nilayangod, and many others have written about their educated brothers bringing them books in secret to read. The early reading rooms, and the ensuing reading culture, provided a means, albeit literarily, for women to access the public sphere though the chances were limited. Through this new culture of reading, women were exposed to new thoughts and new perspectives. This period witnessed the emergence of women as readers and writers which will be discussed as a separate section in this chapter.

As J. Devika rightly remarks, the public sphere developed during this period was a gendered one, where priority was given to men. The early twentieth century public sphere was a structured space that actively promoted gendering in its structure by assigning special slots for women in women's associations or magazines and also by the circulation of new ideals of gendered subjectivity.<sup>111</sup> This was not an egalitarian one since, women remained peripheral to this public sphere in the ongoing public discussions. Access to knowledge and the public sphere was actually defined along gender lines, where men were to remain within the public domain and women within the domestic. Women's duties were always inextricably tied up with domestic duties. The framing of new gender and family

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<sup>111</sup> J.Devika, *En -Gendering.....*, *op.cit.*, pp.7- 8

relations led to the creation of a new domesticity and new womanhood where the status of women tied up within the home. The modern educated women had to negotiate between tradition and modernity.

### **LIBRARIES: POPULARISATION OF READING**

The advent of printing technology and the growth of the print culture at the end of the nineteenth century, led to the growth of a new reading culture. This reading culture had a major role in driving forward the revivalist social and cultural movements in Kerala. The establishment of libraries and reading rooms encouraged and kindled this reading culture and the large number of libraries established in different parts of Kerala are the best indicators of the spread of print culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

It is when the like minded come together that the concept of the library is formed, and becomes a concrete reality. Such libraries also serve as institutions that bring the society together in a common cause. The attraction towards books, enthusiasm for book collection and habit of reading were very common phenomena among the well-to-do Keralites from the mid nineteenth century. Robin Jeffrey notes that in Kerala the demand for reading materials has created its own solutions. A wide network of public libraries and reading rooms were established in different parts. Above all the new reading facilities proved the fact that wealth and urbanization are not a necessary condition for the development of reading culture.<sup>112</sup>

The public library as an institution in the modern sense came into existence only in the nineteenth century. The introduction of printing and publishing of books helped to stimulate the reading habit of the people. Inspired by the quest of knowledge, a class of educated people had contributed for the establishment of a number of libraries. The introduction of Western model of education and new

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<sup>112</sup> Robin Jeffrey, 'Culture of Daily Newspapers in India: How it is Grown, What it Means', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.22, no.14,1987, p.608

knowledge about the Western public library system acted as a catalyst for the establishment of more public libraries. Thiruvithamkoor, Kochi and Malabar region had its own history of public library movement and public libraries existed in these regions even from the early part of the nineteenth century.

The public library established by Swathi Thirunal, the ruler of Thiruvithamkoor, in 1829 was the first public library in Kerala, one of the oldest among the public libraries in India. The provision of providing funds for the reading rooms from the public treasury was also conceptualized by him.<sup>113</sup> It was started by the then British resident Edward Cadogen.<sup>114</sup> In the initial stages it was not a 'public' library in the real sense. This library was originally designed for the use of the European community in Thiruvananthapuram besides others who were invitees to the durbar of the Maharaja. But gradually the natives were allowed to read books in the library paying rupees one as monthly subscription until the establishment of the People's library in Thiruvananthapuram. The Trivandrum Public Library Society by a resolution in 1878 discontinued the system of following the natives to read books in the public library on the ground that there was the People's library catering to their needs. In 1898 when the Trivandrum public library society had agreed to hand over the library to the government during the reign of Sree Moolam Thirunal the doors of the library again opened to the general public.<sup>115</sup> Soon after the People's library merged with the Trivandrum public library in 1899. The success of the Trivandrum public library gave importance to the establishment of other libraries.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> K.M. Anil & Soumya, 'Vayanayum Pothumandalavum', in Shaji Valiyattil (ed.), *Vayana Vazhiyile Malayala Munneettam* (Mal.), Priyatha Books, Kozhikode, 2016, p.39

<sup>114</sup> *Grantalokam*, State Library Council Mughapathram, vol.57, Book 3, 2005, p.9

<sup>115</sup> S.S.Jagnayak, 'Public Library Movement in Kerala', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, vol.14, 1987, p.187

<sup>116</sup> Consequently Kottayam public library was established in 1882. The first rural library was started in 1894 at Vanchiyoor named Sugunaposhini Library with a collection of Malayalam books. The Jnanapradayini Library at Neyyattinkara, the Mundenkavu Sankara Vilasam Library at Chengannur (1910), The YMCA Library at Keezhakara (1911), Sree Chitra Thirunal Library Trivandrum, Raja Raja Varma Library at Padmanabhapuram and Kandiyoor, Jnanapradayani Library at Mavelikara((1913),

In the regions of Kochi and Malabar, however, the reading rooms were established through the efforts of the people.<sup>117</sup> It was nearly three-quarters of a century after the Travancore Public Library was established that the first library in the Malabar region, the Thalassery Public Library was formed. In the first half of the twentieth century, the highest number of reading rooms that sprung up in Kerala was in Malabar. In 1956, when the state of Kerala was formed, there were over 500 libraries and reading rooms in the Malabar region.<sup>118</sup> Social reformers, religious organisations, political activists and worker's movements played important roles in the growth of libraries and reading rooms in this region. In Malabar, the roots for the Progressive Movement and the associated ideologies were formed at the libraries. Just as schools served to make education accessible to all, the libraries too played a parallel role, especially in North Malabar. In addition, the reading rooms played a decisive role in delivering political literacy and awareness to the farmers and the labourers.<sup>119</sup>

The organisational awareness that was created among the public in Malabar as a result of the National Movements played a major role in the formation of reading rooms in this region. During the Freedom Struggle, the libraries and reading rooms in Kerala became a venue of assembly for the public to organize and resist imperial forces. Even in villages where other development activities have failed to make inroads the concept of rural reading rooms became a practical reality. Many of these reading rooms were named after Sree Narayana Guru and Vagbhatananda (the initiators of the Renaissance in Kerala), and other major social

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libraries at Eraniyil and Thodupuzha(1917),The Bharathavilasam Library (1919) were some of the libraries established during this time. S.S.Jagnayak, *op.cit.*, p.187

<sup>117</sup> Ernakulam Public Library (1869), Thrissur Public Library (1873), Kodungallur Public Library (1912), The Yogakshema Library and Reading room Thrissur (1915), The Cherai Public Library and Reading room (1940).

<sup>118</sup> C. Unnikrishnan, *Granthasala Prasthanam Keralathil* (Mal.), The State Institute of Languages, Thiruvananthapuram, 2007, p.1

<sup>119</sup> Personal interview with Rajendran, Librarian, Gurudevavilasam Reading room and Library, Patiam on 13/04/2023, Personal interview with Haridas, President, Paral Public Library on 14/04/2023



reformers and popular political leaders such as P. Krishna Pillai, A.K.Gopalan., E.M.S.Namboothiripad, A.V. Kunjambu etc.

C. Unnikrishnan, in his book *Granthasala Prasathanam Keralathil*, details the elements that influenced the growth and development of reading rooms in Malabar. Of prime importance was the influence of the National Movement. The public libraries and reading rooms formed as a part of the National Movement functioned as organizational centres for resistance. The Kannur Public Library, the Sanmarga Darshini Library at Kozhikode, the Tirur Gramabandu Library, the Kozhikode Aikya Kerala Grantasala were all formed as part of the National Movement.

In 1938, when the leadership of the KPCC was taken up by the Left, one of the working guidelines/directives that this organization gave to its branches was to ensure that each village had its own reading room, and also to set up night-classes for adult education. The vision of this directive intended to make the illiterate literate, and to make periodicals, magazines and publications available to the literate, with the aim of intensifying the growth and progress of the National Movement in general, and the Left Movement in particular.<sup>120</sup> During the tenure of E.M.S.Namboothiripad as the secretary of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee, the circular sent to the Regional Congress Committees urged that a reading room and a night-school be established within the jurisdiction of the respective committees.<sup>121</sup> In fact, as A.K. Gopalan records, the entry of almost all the senior communist leaders into the political arena was through undertaking the organizational role of establishing reading rooms and libraries.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> E.M.S. Namboothiripad, 'Purogamana Sahithya Prasthanam Nalpathiyezhu Varshangalkku Sesham', *Grantalokam*, vol.47,1995, p.13

<sup>121</sup> P.K. Baiju (ed.), *Granthasala Prasthanam Kannuril* (Mal.), EMS Chair, vol.1, Kannur, 2020, p.29

<sup>122</sup> C.Unnikrishnan, *op.cit.*, p.50

Among the reading rooms that started functioning in Malabar as part of the National Movement, the *Kerala Chandrika Vayanasala* is of note. This reading room was established by Moyyarath Sankaran, one of the leaders of the freedom struggle.<sup>123</sup> The reception given at the *Kerala Chandrika Vayanasala* to the “hunger march” led by A.K.Gopalan became a notable event at the time. Later, this was renamed as the Kodiyeri Public Library.<sup>124</sup>

Another important Library that was established as part of the National Movement was the Tagore Library and Reading Room at New Mahe. It was initially named as the *Vijnana Vardhini Vayanasala*. In its early days, the library functioned by distributing the biography of Sree Narayana Guru and the poems of Kumaran Asan at the doorsteps of each house to promote reading among the people. The library also started a *Kaiyehuthu Masika* (handwritten magazine) called *Yuvabhanu* in order to encourage and develop reading and writing skills. This magazine was later revamped and published as *Yuvabharatham*. A literary club, the *Yuva Samaj*, was also formed by the members of this library.<sup>125</sup>

The Gramodharana Vayanasala Cherumavilayi in Kannur was yet another centre of the National Movement. During the period 1940 - 1942, E.M.S. Namboothiripad remained in hiding in the house of Nallakandi Pokkan, a toddy-tapper in Cherumavilayi. It was in order to make English newspapers and other reading materials available to E.M.S. that P. Krishnapillai gave directions for this library to be established there. The establishment of the library was a deliberate ploy by Krishnapillai as the region had low literacy, the suspicions of the secret

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<sup>123</sup> Kaviyoor Rajagopalan who has examined the personal diaries of Moyyarath Sankaran says that even before his death on May 13, 1948, he discussed establishing a library. Kaviyoor Rajagopalan, ‘Moyyaram and C.H’, *Golden Jubilee magazine*, Tagore Library and Reading Room, New Mahe, 1985

<sup>124</sup> Kaviyoor Rajagopalan, ‘Gramathinte Deepakazcha’, in *Poovaka*, Paral Public Library Subash Mandiram Platinum Jubilee Celebration Magazine, 2009, p.57

<sup>125</sup> P.K.Baiju (ed.), *Kannur Granthasala Prasthanam Charithravum Varthamaanavum* (Mal.), District Library Council, vol.2, Kannur, year not mentioned, p.99

police would be raised if newspapers were delivered to individual houses there.<sup>126</sup> The *Deshabhivardhini Vayanasala* that was established at Kakkad in Kannur also was a strong centre of resistance.

The *Velam Pothujana Vayanasala* established in 1934 also became a centre for political activity and peasant movements. This reading room was instrumental in instilling political awareness and contributed to the spread of education amongst the people of this region.<sup>127</sup> Similarly Sreeharshan Reading Room established in 1935 at Kalyasseri in Kannur was also a centre of the National Movement and it became the meeting place of people like A.K.Gopalan, Keraleeyan, and K.P.R. Gopalan. During the same period, reading rooms were established in the neighbouring regions of Parassinikkadavu, Bakkalam, Anchampeedika, Keecheri, Kolacheri, and many others.<sup>128</sup>

Reading rooms and libraries were also formed across the rural regions and villages across Malabar to function as centres to disseminate the ideology of the Peasant and Workers Movement, under the initiative of the popular leaders. During those days, newspapers played a vital role in linking the common man with the outside world. Because it was beyond the means of an average person to purchase a newspaper, people walked for miles to access and read the newspaper. This condition was also an imperative for the establishment of more reading rooms across the various regions of Malabar. People began to visit these reading rooms on a daily basis while on their way to work, and while returning after work to read or listen to the newspaper being read.<sup>129</sup> It became a regular practice for those who were literate to read aloud the newspaper to those who were unable to read. It is evident from the library minutes that people were also hired on daily wages by the reading rooms to read aloud the newspaper to the workers who would go there to

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p.71

<sup>127</sup> Velam Pothujana Vayanasala, *Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 1984, pp.13-14

<sup>128</sup> C.Unnikrishnan, *op.cit.*, p.50

<sup>129</sup> Personal interview with Kaviyoor Rajagopalan at his residence, Mahe on 12/04/2023

rest in between their hard labour.<sup>130</sup> Not only newspapers, but also books were read in this manner. Overcoming the hurdle of the financial impossibility of purchasing and reading a book in private, the common folk began to sit together and listen to the books being read aloud.

The 1930's witnessed great transformations in the political and cultural spheres of Malabar. In the political arena, the National movements gained a definite stronghold. In the cultural sphere, modern values which were till then limited to the upper echelons of the society began to spread to the lower layers as well. With the monopolization of information and education weakening its grip, and the emergence of reading as a new platform of discourse, there emerged a new literate group. In Northern Malabar, the majority of this new category included agricultural labourers, beedi workers, and coir workers. The library registers attest this. In some of the libraries of Malabar the profession of the members, along with their name and address, were included in the library registers and most of the readers were beedi and coir workers.<sup>131</sup> It was within a very short span of time that they became an important facet of the socio-political public sphere in Malabar.

During this period, in different regions of Malabar, reading rooms with the term *thozilali* (worker) in their names began to be formed, such as the *Thozilali Library* at Chovva and the *Thozilali Yuvajana Vayanasala* at Keezhunna, Kakkad. Even before the public library at Chovva was established on 31 December 1939, likeminded workers and labourers had come together to form the *Asan Smaraka Granthashekarana Sangam*. The *Sangam* functioned by gathering together once a week, and exchanging books.<sup>132</sup> In 1934, in order to encourage literacy, reading and general awareness amongst the beedi (native cigarette) workers, the *Sree*

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<sup>130</sup> It is recorded in the minutes book of Thozhilali Yuvajana Vayanasala and Grandhalayam, Chovva, Kannur, Personal interview with Pavithran, Secretary, Azad Library Thalassery, on 11/04/2023.

<sup>131</sup> Library Register, Thozhilali Library Chovva, 1934 - 1936. See Appendix C These workers reacted strongly against social problems of the time. For details see *Communist Party Fiftieth Anniversary Souvenir*, Kannur, 1989-90

<sup>132</sup> C. Unnikrishnan, *op.cit.*, p.58

*Narayana Beedi Thozhilali Vayanasala* was established. By the early decades of the twentieth century, a more general expansion in the reading public was visible in response to the political developments in Kerala. The reading public now included people from all walks of life, such as the professionals, commercial farmers, and merchants, to domestic servants and even labourers. The evolution and development of a socio-political, cultural, and literary revolution and the resulting formation of the public sphere can be traced here centered around such reading rooms and libraries entirely different from the bourgeoisie public sphere in Europe.

Most of these reading rooms functioned in buildings that were built by the agricultural labourers and stone workers at night, working by the light of kerosene lamps, after the day's work of hard toil.<sup>133</sup> The funds for this reading room were obtained by enacting plays, carrying out chit fund schemes, and collecting donations. The Sen Gupta Library, Kozhikode was constructed with the money earned from staging the play *Indulekha*.<sup>134</sup> In addition, for starting new libraries the public gave contributions in the form of land and funds for the construction of library buildings. Almost all the libraries in Malabar were started on lands donated for the purpose. Besides, donation of personal book collections to the libraries was also forthcoming. P.N .Panickar refers to the donation of books by P.N Madhavapillai and many others to start *Sanadhanadharmam Vayanasala*. These libraries and reading rooms quickly became the public sphere of these rural regions. Many of the reading rooms possess a history of having been burnt down, and rising back up in an even better manner.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Personal interview with Narayanan, Secretary, Sen Gupta Library, Kozhikode, 25/03/2023

<sup>134</sup> Sen Gupta Public Library, *Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 1983-84

<sup>135</sup> Under the notion/impression that the libraries of North Malabar were strongholds of the National Movement, many of them were burnt and destroyed by the authorities. There were libraries that were fully burnt, those that were partially burnt, and also libraries that were burnt and destroyed multiple times. Personal Interview with Kaviyoor Rajagopalan, Mahe, 12/04/2023, Sasi, Secretary, M.V.Gopalan Smaraka Library, Kannur, 15/04/2023,

In addition to this, many reading rooms and libraries were established in Malabar as a part of the Renaissance Movement. The influence of Sree Narayana Guru and Vagbhatananda was seen mostly in the Malabar region. Many reading rooms and libraries in this region were named after them. Sree Narayana Guru exhorted the people to be enlightened through education and to be strengthened through organisation.<sup>136</sup>

Many cultural circles and groups were formed during this period, enabling the social, political and cultural issues to be discussed and debated. The resultant discussion within these groups paved the way for the establishment of libraries and reading rooms. It was as the result of the activities of the mutual-help group called the *Vivekodaya Sangam* that the *Sree Narayana Vilasam Vayanasala* at Alavil was established. Similarly, it was the efforts of the *Souharda Poshini Samajam* that led to the Paral Public Library being established in 1934 and the efforts of *Vidyarthi Sangham* contributed to the formation of *Sree Narayana Vayanasala Punnol*.<sup>137</sup> In a similar manner, the *Aikya Pradayini Sahitya Samajam* later became the *Koppalam Yuvajana Samajam Vayanasala*.<sup>138</sup> Again, it was the result of the functioning of the *Janaranjini Sangam* that the Chovva Public Library was formed

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Mini Ramesh, Librarian, Thozhilali Yuvajana Vayanasala and Grandhalayam, Chovva, 15/04/2023.

<sup>136</sup> The Sree Narayana Library and Reading Room, Punnol; Sree Narayana Memorial Library Chokli, Sree Narayana Vilasam Library Alavil, Sree Narayana Library and Reading Room Perallassery, Sree Narayana Library S.N. Puram, Sree Narayana Memorial Library Mangattiri Malappuram, and Sree Narayana Library Olavakkod Palakkad, are some of the libraries and reading rooms named after Sree Narayana Guru. Similarly, the libraries named after Vagbhatananda include the Vagbhatananda Vilasam Library Kuthuparamba, Gurudeva Vilasam Library, Pattiam, Sree Vagbhatananda Library Azheekode, Gurudeva Vilasam Library and Reading Room Pathayakkunnu, and Sree Vagbhatananda Library Eranjipalam.

<sup>137</sup> 'Poovaka', Paral Pothujana Vayanasala Subhash Mandiram Platinum Jubilee Aaghosham, 2009, p.21, It was Kaumudi Teacher who inaugurated the Paral Public Library on 16 September 1934. Kaumudi Teacher was a Gandhian and an Indian freedom activist from Kannur. She was known for voluntarily donating her ornaments to Gandhi when he visited Vatakara on 14 January 1934. This was acknowledged by him when he wrote an article "Kaumudi's renunciation" in Young India. *Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, Sree Narayana Vayanasala and Grandhalayam, Punnol, 1978

<sup>138</sup> Kaviyoor Rajagopalan, *op.cit.*, p.26

in 1939. The formation and establishment of such circles, social groups, reading rooms and libraries reflected the ideals and the concepts of the newly developing middle class. Through such institutions, the creation of social-awareness amongst the common folk was made possible, resulting in a revamping of the educational system in Kerala and a transformation of the socio-cultural sphere.

During the 1930s and the 40s, when the freedom struggle was intensifying in India, there were organized efforts to kickstart a Reading Room Movement in Malabar.<sup>139</sup> Following the lead of P.N. Panicker in Travancore, strong attempts were made in Malabar by K. Damodaran to bring libraries and reading rooms together into an organized movement. The first meeting in this regard was held on twentieth April 1937 at the *Gramabandu Granthasala* at Tirur. Following this, the same year, on 14<sup>th</sup> May, a large meeting was held at the town hall in Kozhikode in order to form the organizing committee. Maduravanam Krishna Kurup was elected as president, and K. Damodaran was elected as the secretary. The first official meeting of this organization, the *Akhila Malabar Vayana Sangam*, held at the Town Hall in Kozhikode on 11 June 1937 was inaugurated by K. Kelappan.<sup>140</sup> Around 300 representatives from over 150 libraries and reading rooms participated in this meeting.<sup>141</sup>

A working committee of 16 members, including Maduravanam C. Krishna Kurup, Moyyarath Sankaran, Kozhippurath Madava Menon, M.K. Kelu Nair was elected, with K. Damodaran as the convenor, for the further functioning of this

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<sup>139</sup> M. Govindan Nambiar, 'Granthasala Prasthanam Oravalokanam', *Smaranika*, C.R.C. Pothujana Vayanasala Granthalayam, Kadamberi, 2001, pp.91-92, Also see E.K.Nayanar, *Olivukala Smrithikal* (Mal.), Chintha Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, 1995, pp.128-130

<sup>140</sup> Maduravanam Sree Krishnakurup, 'Keralathile Granthasala Prasthanam: Pramba Kalathe Parisramangalude oru Samshipta Vivaranam', *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 18<sup>th</sup> July 1943, p.9

<sup>141</sup> Pattam G. Ramachandran Nair, *P.N. Panickarude Jeeva Charithram* (Mal.), Cultural Publications Department, Govt. of Kerala, 2004, p.159

organization.<sup>142</sup> However, with the imprisonment of the leaders of this movement and other political leaders in Malabar, this venture gradually fizzled out. But still, the enthusiasm and organization that was fuelled by this movement gave rise to the opening of many other libraries and reading rooms in Malabar. One such example is the formation of the Desaposhini Public Library at Kozhikode in October 1937.<sup>143</sup> The Library minutes make it clear that there were 117 members at its beginning.

Thus, the habit of reading, which would form the foundations of social reform and political awareness, was nurtured and encouraged by the various reform movements through the establishment of reading rooms and libraries. While reading rooms were used as instruments of social progress, for the transformation of the people, and for the creation of a new awareness that led to social reforms, there was also opposition from the part of the conservatives against the establishment of reading rooms. During K.Kelappan's attempt at establishing a reading room, there were attacks on him, and upon the reading room by the conservative elements who alleged that such reading rooms would 'spoil the youth'. Similarly Thikkodian refers to such opposition in his village when a *Grameena Vayanasala* was inaugurated by P. Ravunni Menon, *Mathrubhumi's* founder editor. Many households had also banned the reading of books within their premises. Thikkodiyan writes about seeing books for the first time in his house: "Some have joined the reading room in secret. The books must be read without grandfather knowing about it. He considers only the scriptures and epic poems as

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<sup>142</sup> K.A.Somasekhara Kurup, *Keralathile Grathasala Prasthanam Charithravum Niyamavum: Pravarthakarkkoru Margarekha* (Mal.), Kurups Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, 1998, pp. 32-34

<sup>143</sup> On 26 September 1943, at the meeting of the *Malabar Granthasala Sangam*, a bill was passed to expand the working of the Library Movement across the length and breadth of Kerala so as to reach every Malayali. On 1 December 1943, the *Kerala Granthasala Sangam* was officially registered. C.Unnikrishnan, *op.cit.*, p.50. The representatives from Malabar included Barrister Vengayil Kunhiraman Nair, T.V. Chathu Nair, N. KrishnanNair, E. Kunji Kannan Nair, C. Unni Raja, Balamani Amma, and Kathulli Lakshmikutty Amma. They could be regarded as the members of the newly emerged middle class of Malabar.



books. Therefore, the books were brought to the house and read in stealth” (My Trans.).<sup>144</sup>

Similarly, V.T. Bhattathiripad reminisces about spotting the signboard of a run-down reading room in Thiruvananthapuram at a time when he was wandering about aimlessly, and states that that particular reading room, and the reading he did there, and the literary discussions held there, created a major change in his life. It was through such discussions that V.T. began to develop and voice out his own thoughts and opinions, and later, gained the courage to present them before the public.<sup>145</sup> Social workers such as Kumaramangalath Kuttan Namboothiri and Padinjare Kuthulli Narayanan Namboothiri , who later became his co-activist, in addition to well-wishers such as Muringatheri Venkiteshwaran and Changanasseri M.S. Potti, were all friendships that were forged in that reading room.<sup>146</sup>

The political discourses that developed along with the emergence of the public sphere, played a pivotal role in democratizing reading. The possibilities offered due to the creation of the public sphere were greatly enhanced by the leftist thought that took root in the 1930s and by the efforts of the workers’ organizations. Here the propagation of ideology and the formation of opinions were achieved primarily through the reading of newspapers and books. It was the libraries and reading rooms that raised the awareness of the people and the need for organization among the public. The reading culture thus nurtured through these libraries and reading rooms played a vital role in making possible the formation of the public sphere in Malabar. Public libraries can function as open and inclusive spaces where citizens gather to discuss cultural and political matters. Public libraries have placed growing emphasis on their function as meeting places and as hosts of cultural and

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<sup>144</sup> Thikkodiyar, *op.cit.*, p.43 , There were deserted spots in his *Nalukettu* which were not used or frequented by others. He records that he used to read in such spots, and that if the elders confiscated or hid the books, he would manage to somehow find them, and read.

<sup>145</sup> Velayudan Panikkassery, *op.cit.*, p.64

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p.77

political events. The practice of reading aloud the newspapers at tea-stalls and at beedi factories, libraries, reading rooms and the ensuing discussions brought together the people of Malabar to take interest in reading there by creating a literary public sphere.

### **PRINT CULTURE AND ‘READING WOMEN’**

With the inception of colonial modernity, education and reading which had hitherto remained as the monopoly of the elite class men, reached women in the nineteenth century. Print allowed the mobilisation of large groups of people around them and very soon women became increasingly significant in the literary arena. This resulted in the formation of a public sphere in Kerala. Women were able to step into the literary public sphere with certain limitations. It was only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that reading women became increasingly visible.<sup>147</sup> This new reading culture among women was nurtured through the leisure time permitted to females in their traditional roles. The logic and technologies of print capitalism, including the market of texts and advertisements shaped the putative privacy of the female reading public.<sup>148</sup>

Western education led to the creation of ‘the reading woman’ in the nineteenth century. The coming of the Europeans introduced new ideas regarding the roles and capabilities of women, and these concepts were accepted by some of the educated Indians. Texts on religion, law, politics, and education carried different pronouncements for men depending on caste, class, age and religious sects. In contrast, such differences of women were overshadowed by their biological characteristics and the subordinate, supportive roles they were expected

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<sup>147</sup> Jacqueline Pearson in her work argues that the growth of female reading audiences from the mid eighteenth century to the early Victorian era represents a vital episode in women's history in Britain. For details see Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1999

<sup>148</sup> Mytheli Sreenivas, *Wives, Widows and Concubines: The Conjugal Family Ideal in Colonial India*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2009, p.118

to perform.<sup>149</sup> The general practice of the period was to educate only boys. Across all castes, but especially in the upper castes, females were denied education. However, by the late nineteenth century, as a response to the changing demands of life under colonial rule, the English-educated middle class men tried to reform the social conditions of women through education. The newly-literate women exhibited an ardent urge for reading. Before colonial education became widespread in Kerala, reading had been a primarily ritual activity. M.S.A. Rao points out that, in earlier times the women in old *tarawads* and *illams* of Malabar spent their leisure time reading sacred lore. In the earliest women memoirs there were references of a passionate desire to learn to read. Devaki Nilanyangod in her autobiography recounts that the menstruation period provided more leisure time for women to read, as they had nothing worthwhile to do while confined to ritual seclusion.<sup>150</sup>

There was a steady growth of female readers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This resulted in the motif of the ‘reading woman’ in contemporary novels and magazines. The proliferation of magazines, especially women’s magazines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contributed to the growth of female readership. These new female readers had diverse literary tastes, so a wide range of articles on a variety of topics that were intimately interwoven with women became essential. This period also witnessed the growth of women’s involvement in literary culture as writers too.<sup>151</sup> Though early novels were primarily published in Malabar in the north, whilst periodicals were predominantly published in southern Kerala. In 1885 the first magazine

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<sup>149</sup> Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2000, p.1

<sup>150</sup> Devaki Nilayangod, *Kalappakarchakal* (Mal.), Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 2008, pp.30-32

<sup>151</sup> Though the advent of print led to a renaissance in the thoughts regarding a woman, a further analysis of the social movements reveals that the early women writers comprised only those from the upper-class. Therefore the contemporary works of the time reflected the lives and experiences of only the *Savarna* women. Several of these articles were explicitly titled as “Hindu Woman”, “Nair Woman” and so on.

exclusively dedicated to women, *Keraleeya Suguna Bodhini* was published as a monthly from Thiruvananthapuram, believed to have been edited by an all-male editorial team and predominantly featured contributions from male writers.<sup>152</sup> But within 6 months the publication was stopped. The first volume of *Keraleeya Suguna Bodhini* stated that while in Kerala there were many newspapers and magazines run by great men which was truly commendable, all these publications were designed with the male reader in mind. It also continued by stating that there was no newspaper or magazine in Kerala meant for enhancing the knowledge of women or for their entertainment, and that this magazine, the *Keraleeya Suguna Bodhini*, was for the women of Kerala.<sup>153</sup>

“Nothing related to political matters is included here. Philosophy, physical science, humorous stories that entertain, moral essays that enlighten, stories, women’s duty, culinary science, music, histories of exemplary women, history of places, book reviews, essays on other educational subjects will be published. This book will contain these mostly in prose and sometimes in verse. We shall not include reductive religious debates here”.<sup>154</sup>

It is doubtful whether women contributed to that publication. In those days the writers were not particular about writing their names in the articles and some of them even wrote in pseudo names. Some historians question the veracity of the name Bhagwati Amma that is mentioned in some of the editions of the magazine and say that it may be the pen name of a male author.<sup>155</sup> Despite the fact that the journal was initiated and contributed by men *Keraleeya Sugunabodhini* became instrumental in making women step into the world of reading and writing and thus become a part of the emerging literary public sphere.

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<sup>152</sup> G.Priyadarsanan, *Kerala Pathra Pravarthanam ...*, *op.cit.*,p.14

<sup>153</sup> *Keralee Sugunabodhini*, book.1,vol.1, July, 1885, p. 12

<sup>154</sup> *Keralee Sugunabodhini*, book.1,vol.1, April, 1885, p. 11

<sup>155</sup> G. Priyadarsanan, *Manmaranja Masikakal* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 1971, p. 69

In the same period a magazine called *Maharani* was published once in two months from Madras which was also meant for women.<sup>156</sup> *Sarada* started in November 1904 from Tripunithura was the first women's magazine to have a woman editor. Except K. Narayana Menon, its owner, all who worked at this magazine were women. Almost all the articles in *Sarada* were written for women and by women. The patrons of *Sarada* were Ikkuvamma Thampuran, Rani Sethu Lakshmibai and Rani Parvathy Bhai. B. Kalyani Amma, T.C. Kalyani Amma and T. Ammukutty Amma served as its editor.<sup>157</sup> But within two years, its publication stopped. It was in 1907 that the magazine resumed publishing, this time from Thiruvananthapuram. In the introduction to the resumed publication, Swadeshabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai stated that, when the magazine was discontinued, it was the readers who were the most hurt, reflecting the popularity and readership of the magazine.<sup>158</sup> In 1913 a magazine in the same name *Sarada* was started from Punalur. It was also a women's magazine run by T.K. Kalyanikutty Amma.

The magazine *Lakshmibai* was started in 1905.<sup>159</sup> The majority of the essays and articles in this magazine were written by women. These articles highlighted 'responsibilities' and 'duties' of women and the need for reforms among them. Thottekkat Ikkavamma, Tharavath Ammalu Amma, B. Kalyani Amma, K. Ammalukutty Amma, Kuttikunju Thankachi, K. Chinnamma etc. were very prominent among them. Apart from the mainstream writers some women like Mantharavettil Lakshmi Amma, Cheruvari Kausalya Amma, P.Kavamma, K. Padmavathi Amma etc wrote articles for this magazine.

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<sup>156</sup> A.Krishna Kumari, *Vanita Patra Pravarthanam: Charithravum Vartamanavum* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 2010, pp.29-30

<sup>157</sup> *Sarada*, book I, issue. 1, November, 1904, p. 3

<sup>158</sup> A.Krishna Kumari, *op.cit.*, pp.32-33

<sup>159</sup> *Lakshmibai*, book. 1, no.1, 1905, p. 11

In 1915 again a magazine called *Bhasha Sarada* was published from Punalur under the editorship of Anjal R.Velupillai. Though most of the articles dealt with women it was more of a literary magazine than women magazine. *Mahila Ratnam* was published from Trivandrum in 1916 under the leadership of Kunju Lakshmi Kettilamma. Apart from some women writers like R. Chinnamma, Thaikkunnath Kalyanikutty Amma, and Mayyanad Ikkavamma, famous novelists, poets and essayists of the time like Moorkkoth Kumaran, Kumaranasan, Ulloor etc. also contributed for this magazine. The magazine which enjoyed the longest run of publication was *Mahila*, started by B.Bhagirathi Amma, which was published continuously for nearly 20 years. *Vanithakusumam* started from Kottayam in 1927 was the first magazine to urge for the freedom and rights of women.<sup>160</sup> This was the highest in circulation at that time, indicating the popularity of the magazine among women. Eminent women writers like Thottakkatu Madhavi Amma, Kadathanattu Madhavi Amma, T.C. Kalyani Amma, K. Kalyani Kutty Amma, Ambadi Karthyayani Amma, Mary John Thottam, Tharavah Ammalu Amma, Mrs. I.C. Chacko, Rose Xavier etc. contributed to this magazine. In its last issue of the first year of its publication, the magazine stated that many conservatives were outraged by the efforts of *Vanithakusumam* to liberate women from their oppression and that many of its staff had been advised not to pursue this venture now.<sup>161</sup>

One of the notable magazines from Kozhikode was the *Manorama Samajam Malayala Masika* published in 1930 by the women's organization called Manorama Samajam. The first issues of this magazine mainly contained articles presented in the Manorama Samajam meeting by M.Padmavathy Amma, M.Kunjikutty Amma, P. Lakshmikutty Amma, Mrs.P.K.Varrier, D.Kamalakshmi Amma and Chinnammu Kovilamma about women's education, progress, morality

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<sup>160</sup> *Vanithakusumam*, book. 1, issue.1, 1927, p. 2

<sup>161</sup> *Vanithakusumam*, book.1, issue. 12, 1928, p.1

etc.<sup>162</sup> The persons like Ambadi Ikkavamma, B. Kalyani Amma, V.P. Omana Amma, K.C. Kunjiyanujathi Thampuratti, T.M. Nangunni Kovilamma, E. Narayani Kutty Amma, P.Madhavi Amma and M. Ammukutty Amma also contributed to this magazine. As the title indicates the magazine *Sthree* became a great platform for women to express their literary tastes and to respond to the discussions centred around them.<sup>163</sup> In 1938 Haleema Beevi started the women's magazine called *Muslim Vanitha* in Thiruvalla and she herself was its editor, printer and publisher. In 1946, when the daily newspaper *Bharatha Chandrika* began publication, Halima worked as its editor. Afterwards *Bharatha Chandrika* started a weekly with the same title with the editorship of Halima.<sup>164</sup> In addition to these there were many women's magazines like , *Mahila Ratnam*, *Vanitharamam*, *Vanita Mitram*, *Stree Sahodari*, *Sumangala*, *Sangamitra*, *Christava Mahilamani*, *Sevini*, *Sahodari*, etc.<sup>165</sup> and mostly women were contributors and editorial team members. Thus the shared world of readers and writers created by the new literary genre of the late nineteenth century created a space for debate and discussion.

Such magazines provided a space for women to express their opinions and also fostered their literary endeavours. The articles in these magazines were mainly concerned with themes such as tips on health, nutrition, child care, household management, cooking, etc. Some of the discussions centred around arguments

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<sup>162</sup> Rekha, *op.cit.*, p.96

<sup>163</sup> The outstanding women writers like Parvathy Nenminimangalam, Devaki Narikkattiri, Lekshmikutty Nethyaramma and Ambadi Karthiayani Amma contributed to this magazine.

<sup>164</sup> Rekha, *op.cit.*, p.120

<sup>165</sup> Teena Antony, in her unpublished doctoral dissertation, has compiled the circulation figures for the various magazines, including women's magazines. According to this *Lakshmibai* printed 2,700 copies between the years 1900-1940, for *Sarada* and *Srimathi*, the printing figures for only one particular year are available. *Sarada* printed 750 copies in 1923, while *Srimathi* 700 copies in the year 1930, *Mahila* is said to have had a wider range of readers, and seems to have published 900 copies between the years 1921-1940, and *Vanithakusumam* is reported to have had the maximum circulation figures 2000 copies in the year 1930 alone, See for details, Teena Antony, 'Women's Education Debates in Kerala: Fashioning Streedharmam', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Manipal University, 2013, p.26

for/against female education, reform movements, issues of marriage, dowry, women's rights in property, functioning of women's associations, women in public space, female domesticity etc. In addition to women's problems which formed the subject matter of almost all the magazines, there are articles on the topics which the editors felt women should be informed about, such as the world war, marriage practices in different countries, biographies of famous women etc.<sup>166</sup> Creative writing such as short stories, novels (sometimes in serialised form), and poetry also became part of these publications which captured the attention of women readers. The discussions centered on their life in-and-outside the home, resentment of the patriarchal system, and the curiosity to know the world around them etc. attracted women to read these magazines which in turn inculcated a reading culture among them.

In almost all the contemporary novels of the time, the figure of the women reader is represented and female characters are defined through their reading, and discussions on what they read. As novels began to be published in increasing numbers, more and more women were drawn towards them. The literate women formed a large part of the readership of these romantic novels. The contemporary Tamil magazines of the time refer to women's fondness of reading novels as 'heavenly bliss' as their love for novels was next only to their love for jewels.<sup>167</sup> While referring to the popularity of novels, George Irumbayam comments that 'Women wanted to read something equivalent to gossip, which became the subject matter of novels'.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> There are a large number of articles in *Lakshmibai*, *Vanithakusumam*, *Sarada* related to these subjects. Some of the titles are *Japannile Sthreekalude Vivaham* (Marriage of women in Japan) *Englandile Sthreekalude Vivaha Sampradayam* (Marriage System of Women in England) *Oru Mahathiyude Charithram* (History of a great woman) etc. The biography of many famous women were published in *Sarada* continuously with the title *Mahadikal*. Most of these were written by B.Kalyani Amma. Later she published these biographies as a book titled *Mahadikal*.

<sup>167</sup> A.R. Venkatachalapathy, *op.cit.*, pp.88-89

<sup>168</sup> George Irumbayam, *op.cit.*, p.12



In the first popular novel of Kerala, *Indulekha*, the heroine is presented as a good reader who is interested in reading religious and secular literature. The novel indicates that Indulekha had a habit of reading for long hours at night, and that most of what she reads are novels. Lakshmi Kutty, the heroine in the novel *Lakshmeekesavam*, is an English-educated girl who is fond of reading and in most parts of the novel there are references to the heroine reading the newspaper. She shares her experience of reading, and narrates the stories from the English novels she reads, to Ikkavamma and Meenakshi.<sup>169</sup> The novel *Sukumari* too discusses the reading habits of its heroine Sukumari. She used to read books to Karuna, one of the protagonists of the play regularly and make discussions with her about the topics read.<sup>170</sup> In the novel *Meenakshi* too, there are many characters who are avid readers. Though the novel, *Parangodeeparinayam*, is a satire that ridicules the English system of education, it highlights the growth of reading as a habit. Parangodi, the heroine of this novel, after completing the household chores, would spend the entirety of her free time in reading and writing. In this novel there is a depiction of Parangodi Kutty, the heroine of the novel, reading with much interest the *London Times* paper, reclined on a couch. She was reading Glatson's speech on Home Rule and while reading, she hesitated to welcome her friends.<sup>171</sup> In M.P. Bhattathiripad's *Rithumathi*, the heroine Devaki, who is forced to discontinue her studies on attaining puberty and go back to her maternal home, fills her trunk with books, and states that she would not be able to survive without reading books.<sup>172</sup> She is a prime example of the growing culture of reading among women at that time, which was made possible through the inception of print culture in Kerala. In the preface of some of the novels it is stated that the novel was meant for the

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<sup>169</sup> Komattil Padumenon, *Lakshmeekesavam* (Mal.), in George Irumbayam (ed.), *Nalu Novalukal*, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 1983, pp.162 -166

<sup>170</sup> Joseph Muliyl, *Sukumari* (Mal.), in George Irumbayam (ed.), *Nalu Novalukal*, *op.cit.*, pp.341- 45

<sup>171</sup> Kizhakkeppatt Ramankutty Menon, *Parangodeeparinayam* (Mal.), in George Irumbayam (ed.), *Nalu Novalukal*, *op.cit.*, p.256

<sup>172</sup> M.P. Bhattathiripad, *Rithumathi*, Current Books, Thrissur, 1991 (First published 1944), p.35

women readers. In the preface of *Kundalatha* Appu Nedungadi stated that this novel would provide harmless entertainment for women for whom time hangs heavy on their hands. He was scornful of the *Malayalis* who wasted time repeatedly reading the epics and the puranas and other mythological works. Chandu Menon too makes such statements in *Indulekha's* preface.

Similarly, the magazines and autobiographies of the period also refer to the reading habit of women. The reading room section in *Mahila* makes discussions on books and introduces new book arrivals to women in an appealing way. For instance, while introducing the book *Katharamam*, which contains eight stories by Rabindranath Tagore, it emphasized the content of the book along with the importance of women reading these stories.<sup>173</sup> Similarly, numerous methods for encouraging reading were initiated. An example is the advertisement for the postal library in *Mahila*, which stated: “The postal library is a new arrangement that we started for the benefit of those who love to read novels. Those who pay 3 *kasu* to join the library will receive two novels each month. Books should be returned within five days”.<sup>174</sup> *Mahila* even conducted an essay-writing competition on the topic ‘The best book I have ever read’.<sup>175</sup> In an article titled ‘*Pusthaka Vayana*’ it is stated that while *Malayalis* show great interest in reading books, they should also be very careful in their selection of works. The article goes on to suggest a list of books for women which included the *Ramayanam*, *Mahabharatham*, *Sakuntalam* and some of the leading novels like *Indulekha*, *Parangodeeparinayam*, *Meenakshi* etc.<sup>176</sup> The famous Malayalam writer, M. Leelavathi, recalls her mother's reading habits in an article written in the *Mathrubhumi Weekly*. Her uncle used to bring books for her mother, who would

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<sup>173</sup> *The Mahila*, book.1, issue.1,1921, p.37

<sup>174</sup> *The Mahila*, book.4, issue.9, 1924, See Appendix A

<sup>175</sup> *The Mahila*, book.5, issue. 1,1925, p.2

<sup>176</sup> C.V.K, ‘Pustaka Vayana’, *Bhashaposhini*, vol.1, book.9, 1898, pp.210-216

copy the poems in a notebook. Poems such as *Nalini* and *Leela* were first read by Leelavathi from her mother's notebook.<sup>177</sup>

It is evident from the autobiographies written in that period, that the world of reading as seen in the novel *Indulekha*, was not merely fictional or part of the novel's plot. Lalithambika Antarjanam, a notable woman writer from Kerala, in her autobiography refers to her mother's habit of reading: "The books, magazines and newspapers that my mother kept were my childhood playmates. The issues of magazines like *Bhashaposhini*, *Lakshmbai*, *Rasikaranjini*, *Atmaposhini* and issues of *Swadeshabhimani* newspaper, some banned books like *Udayabhanu* and *Parapuram* etc. she kept for me to read" (My Trans.).<sup>178</sup> Likewise Devaki Nilayangod recalls her reading habits in her autobiography *Kalapakarchakal*. Her brothers used to check out books from the library at Mukkola, and hand them over to her in utmost secret:

"When my elder brothers would come for the evening prayers after their bath, they would come with books hidden under their *Mundu*. After the rites of *Upanayana*, there is another ceremony called the *Chamatha*. The brothers, seated for the ceremony, would slip the books under the board. After the ceremony, when everyone had left, my sisters would move them to the northern wing of the house without anyone's knowledge. It was a crime for girls to read books. If a book were to be found in a girl's possession, she would be punished" (My Trans.).<sup>179</sup>

She further says that "I became obsessed with reading when I saw my sisters reading the translations of the Bengali novels *Durgesanandini* and *Anandamadam*".<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> M Leelavati, 'Sahityathil Oru Penninte Sahasa Sancharangal' *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, January 2010, p.15

<sup>178</sup> Lalithambika Antarjanam, *Aatmakathaykoramugham* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur, 1979, p.35

<sup>179</sup> Devaki Nilayangod, *op.cit.*, pp.31-32

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32

B. Kalyani Amma, one of the famous women writers in the contemporary magazines, in *Vyazhavatta Smaranakal* discusses her early reading and the influence of Swadesabhimani Ramarishnapillai on her reading after their marriage. It is also mentioned that it was her reading and writing skill that attracted Ramakrishna Pillai to her. Kalyani Amma's acquaintance with Ramakrishna Pillai was quite accidental. In 1904 Ramakrishna Pillai happened to read the short story *Lalitha* published by Kalyani Amma in *Rasikaranjini*. The story attracted Ramakrishna Pillai so much that it marked the beginning of the intimacy and friendship that led to their marriage. When he first met her they spent time discussing literature and contemporary literary trends.<sup>181</sup> Gomathi Amma, the daughter of Kalyani Amma, also refers to her and her mother's reading habits in her autobiography. Likewise Lalithambika Antarjanam says that she would read all the newspapers and magazines that were delivered to their house from cover to cover. Since her father and grandfather were avid readers, all the books and magazines that came out in Malayalam till date were present in the house. She states that this was a great influence in her life.<sup>182</sup>

The women's associations also took initiatives to spread the reading culture. Unofficial reading rooms had existed in Thalassery even from 1830 onwards and Karayi Damayandi, a social activist, had initiated a mobile library going from house to house, distributing books.<sup>183</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa in his preface to *Sahasrapoornima* of Revathi Amma also makes a reference to the functioning of a *Streeramajam* at Thalassery and its arrangement to home deliver books to women.<sup>184</sup> J. Devika points out that a *Streeramajam* (women's collective) operating at Thalassery in the 1910s made arrangements to home-deliver library

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<sup>181</sup> B.Kalyani Amma, *Vyazhavatta Smaranakal* (Mal.), D.C Books, Kottayam, 1982, pp.43 - 47

<sup>182</sup> Lalithambika Antarjanam, *op.cit.*, p.104

<sup>183</sup> Kaviyoor Rajagopalan, *Kannur Granthasala Prasthanam Charithravum Varthamanavum* (Mal.), District Library Council, Kannur, 2008, pp.7-8

<sup>184</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, Preface, *Sahasrapoornima* (Mal.) by C.K Revathi Amma, Premier Offset Prints, Calicut, 1977, p.14

books to women.<sup>185</sup> The presence of bookshelves at home provided women an easy access to books. In his article “Our married life,” P. Kesavadev recollects his wife’s habit of reading books from his collection.<sup>186</sup> Similarly Lalithambika Antarjanam, Devaki Nilayangod, B.Kalyani Amma, Gomathy Amma etc. wrote in detail of their reading habit from the library collection at home. In his novel *Muthassi*, Cherukad describes the effect and changes of a reading room upon the women of a village in the 1930s. In the riverside meetings of the young women, certain books, stories and characters took centre place: Suri Namboothiripad from *Indulekha*; Kolambu from *Sarada*; Anathapadmanabhan, Subhadra, Madhavi, Parukutty from *Marthanda Varma*, and many such characters became the subjects of their discussions and analyses. These characters were also made to be linked in one way or the other, with the National Movement and the Congress, and leaders such as Gandhi, Nehru and Kelappan.<sup>187</sup>

Another phenomenon linked to the growth of reading is the advertisements of newly released books in the newspapers and magazines. These ads contained attractive headlines/titles and a brief description of the contents of the books. Attractive offers on the sale of these books were also made. An advertisement that appeared in the *Lakshmibai* went as follows:

‘Malayalathinte Mahathikal’ : “A remarkable book containing the biographies of eleven great women and portraits of eight of them including Rani Lakshmibai, C.I. Manorama Thamburatti, Kuttikunju Thankachi, and Thottekatt Ikkavamma etc. The price of this book in Crown Octavo size, and 192 pages, is only 1 Rupee 4 Ana, including postage”.<sup>188</sup> (My Trans.)

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<sup>185</sup> J. Devika, *En-Gendering....., op.cit.*, p.90, In Kerala the first Stree Samajam was started in Thalassery under Karayi Damayanti in 1880. Later similar organisations were started in Calicut (1902), Palakkad (1904) and Thiruvananthapuram (1908).

<sup>186</sup> P.Kesavadev, ‘Our married life’, *Mahila*, book. 8, issue. 11-12, 1928, p.493

<sup>187</sup> Cherukad, *Muthassi* (Mal.), Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 1989, p.110

<sup>188</sup> *Lakshmibai*, book. 28, no.1, 1932, p.1

Another advertisement went as follows:

‘Bhavana Sugam’: “A must read for everyone, especially ladies! No charges apply on the price of the book or postage. Free for those who want it! Write to us today”.<sup>189</sup> (My Trans.)

Yet another advertisement was as follows:

‘Sulochana, An Exceedingly Wonderful Novel’: Published daily in serial form, with over forty three chapters already published, and the undeniable king of the novels in Malayalam, *Sulochana* will shortly be hitting the stands in book form! Every lady should read this book at least once. The price is just 1 ½ Rupees. For those who write to us within a month with their address, *Sulochana* will be available for just Rupees 1. Only the address is required. The price is not required upfront.<sup>190</sup> (My Trans.)

A large number of such advertisements specially addressing women were printed in the magazines of that time.

During this period, women’s reading was widely commented upon by the middle class and became central to a range of discourses. The literature of the period depicted women longing to read but forbidden to do so. The female desire for reading became problematic, as the conservatives believed that reading was very dangerous. Fears about the reading preferences of women can be seen in the contemporary literature of the time, especially as the fondness of women towards novels was seen as very dangerous. As Martyn Lyons pointed out, ‘reading was an intimate individualistic and often clandestine exercise, as women often read novels in private, in the solitude of her bedroom. Therefore, it was felt that novels could excite the passions and stimulate female imaginations, and that it could encourage

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<sup>189</sup> *Mahila*, book. 8, issue.2, 1928, p.1, See Appendix A

<sup>190</sup> *Vanithakusumam*, book. 8, 1928, p. 306, See Appendix A

romantic expectations on the part of the women. The nineteenth century novel was thus associated with the female qualities of irrationality and emotional vulnerability'.<sup>191</sup> It was considered that novels would make their readers lustful and drown them in the ocean of immorality, and it was opined that even an epidemic of plague and rheumatic fever were many times less harmful than these degenerate novels.<sup>192</sup> In Bengal and Calcutta the fear that indigenous Bengali house wives would turn into “novel reading bibis” found expression in even the most reformist Manual literature (instructional books on domestic matters).<sup>193</sup> In her novel, *Agnisakshi*, Lalithambika Antarjanam has depicted the picture of a woman who suffocates because she is unable to read. In her younger days, Lalithambika had considered writing to be some sort of a crime, and thus, was hesitant to send in articles under her own name. When she submitted an article to *Sarada*, she wrote the name ‘Pangikunju’ under it. She also wrote a special letter to the editors, requesting that if the article were to be published, care would be taken not to reveal her identity.<sup>194</sup> Devaki Nilayangod also mentions that in the early days, it was usual for women to read in stealth as women’s reading was seen as a crime, at least among the Brahmanas.

The novels were seen as a potent threat to traditional male control of women. When V.T. Bhattathiripad published *Rajineerangam*, the conservative community leaders said that the Namboothiri women should not read this novel.<sup>195</sup> Men looked with alarm at the ways in which female tastes sustained authors and publishers as most of the advertisements addressed women readers. Even in

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<sup>191</sup> Martyn Lyons, ‘New Readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children and Workers’, in Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (ed.), *A History of Reading in the West*, University of Massachusetts press, Amherst, 1999, p.319

<sup>192</sup> A.R. Venkatachalapathy, ‘Domesticating the Novel: Society and Culture in Inter-War Tamil Nadu’, *Indian Economic & Social History Review*, vol. 34, no.1, 1997, pp.58-59

<sup>193</sup> Judith E. Walsh, *Domesticity in Colonial India: What Women Learned When Men Gave them Advice*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2004, p.40

<sup>194</sup> Lalithambika Antarjanam, *op.cit.*, p.104

<sup>195</sup> E.D Davis, ‘V.T.Vithacha Navodhanathinte Nadaka Vithukal’, *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021, p.14

education they insisted on formulating a women specific curriculum and preventing women's exposure to the 'wrong kind of books' for fear of exciting their tendencies towards licentiousness. The popular discourses of the period reflected a desire for modernising women on the one hand, and on the other, concerns about potential moral decline and cultural erosion associated with this transformation, as the identity of a culture and community was represented and negotiated through women.

In the ensuing public discussions family, marriage and women became a major area of contestation. The reform discourses of the period accelerated intense campaigning about the needs to restructure the traditional social structure. Every element of family and domestic life has moved into conscious negotiations and debates. The status of women became a major concern in the social discourses. The newly emergent middle class started restructuring the older patriarchy and began to construct new ideals of family, marriage and domesticity. They used the emergent print media to popularise their concept of a new family and marriage which in turn refashioned the traditional social structure and the status of women. This will be discussed in the next chapter.



CHAPTER III

**THE WORLD OF EMOTIONS: TRADITION, CUSTOMS  
AND DISCOURSES ON MARRIAGES AND  
CONJUGAL LOVE**

Marriage and family are the central institutional pattern of social interaction. Marriage has provided human beings with a meaningful means to engage with each other in a private and intimate space, resulting in a wide variety of emotions. It is also a relationship that is about not just a couple but also families and nations, as marriages produce social groups.<sup>1</sup> Throughout much of history, enduring marriages have been considered the foundation of well-ordered households. If European marriage customs, given rough shape by medieval Christianity and evolving across time and place, are used as the baseline, then marriage is the union of two individuals, typically through a ritual or ceremony, which serves to unite not only the individuals but also their respective families or kin networks.<sup>2</sup> Marriage also carries a social obligation towards a family and community but husband and wife have never been considered equal in their privileges and obligations. In India, the mate selection is often decided by the family unit rather than the individual in isolation. This is because marital bonds in India are more usually envisioned as an agreement between two families where the married couple has filial obligations to fulfill that are steeply rooted in familial

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<sup>1</sup> Katie Barclay, Jeffrey Meek and Andrea Thomson (ed.), *Courtship, Marriage and Marriage Breakdown: Approaches from the History of Emotion*, Routledge, New York, 2020, p.1

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2. Also see Katie Barclay, 'Intimacy, Community and Power: Bedding Rituals in Eighteenth Century Scotland,' in Merridee Bailey and Katie Barclay(ed.), *Emotion, Ritual and Power in Europe, 1200–1920: Family, Church and State*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2017, pp. 43–62

cultural and religious traditions.<sup>3</sup> According to Kapadiya the question of selection in marriage may be considered from three points of view namely the field of selection, the party to selection and criteria of selection.<sup>4</sup> Here caste greatly restricts the individual freedom as members face penalties and ostracism for defying caste norms. In the early nineteenth century inter-caste or inter-religious marriages were seldom visualised as the social penalties accompanying such marriages were heavy. Since Marriages are primarily considered as a religious ritual in India, the bureaucratic process of registration of marriages has been regarded as irrelevant or needless by many people and Hindu marriage was usually seen as a sacrament because it is said to be completed only when the sacred formula and ceremonies are performed.

The history of emotion demonstrated how in marriage the ideals of love, joy, sadness and so forth varied in meaning, expression and significance across time and place. Applying histories of emotion to marriage is increasingly significant to European scholarship. Some even went as far as to chart an evolution in intimacy from the domestic cares of the early modern to the union of souls of the eighteenth century to companionship in the nineteenth century, and the modern confluent love of the late twentieth century, which emphasised self actualization and independence.<sup>5</sup> According to studies on early European history of emotion, love played a major role in the eighteenth-century shift in family life from a patriarchal household to the affective individualism of the modern family, which

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Betty Cardona, Robinder P. Bedi , and Bradley J. Crookston, ‘Choosing Love Over Tradition: Lived Experiences of Asian Indian Marriages’, *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, vol. 27, no.3, 2019, pp. 278-286

<sup>4</sup> K.M. Kapadia, *Marriage and Family in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1981 (First Published 1955), p.117

<sup>5</sup> Alana Harris and Timothy Willem Jones, *Love and Romance in Britain, 1918–1970*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2015. Also see William M. Reddy, *The Making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, South Asia, and Japan, 900–1200*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2012

is characterised by increased equality and companionship between men and women.<sup>6</sup>

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were marked by social reforms in Malabar as elsewhere in Kerala. Many of these reforms originated as a response of the middle class towards the age-old customs and traditions. The educated middle class, influenced by Western ideology and culture, felt inspired to fight against the social evils in the society. By the end of the nineteenth century, a number of individuals from Nair caste attained positions of power in the colonial administration. Their participation in the colonial practices produced new notions of individuality and reshaped norms and values concerning social life.<sup>7</sup> Consequently they wanted to restructure the existing marriage practices and the new ideals of marriage were strictly monogamous.

The evolution of the marriage system in Malabar is inextricably interwoven with the caste system and social structure.<sup>8</sup> The first awakening among the Nairs could be seen in their struggle against the prevailing family organisation and marriage system. In the matrilineal tradition of the Nairs, the family was controlled by the *karanavan*, the eldest male member of the family. The Nairs lived in matrilineal joint families, known as *tarawads*, which consisted of a woman, her children, both male and female and all her grand-children by her daughters, all her

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<sup>6</sup> Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800*, Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1977. Also see Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300–1840*, Basil Blackwell, New York, 1986

<sup>7</sup> Sunandan K.N., 'From Acharam to Knowledge: Claims of Caste Dominance in Twentieth-century Malabar', *History and Sociology of South Asia*, Sage Publications, vol.9, no.2, 2015, p.183

<sup>8</sup> The travelogues of the period stated the matrilineal system and polyandrous marriage relationships in various communities. For details see Durate Barbosa, *The Book of Durate Barbosa: An Account of Countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and Their Inhabitants*, vol.2, Haklyut Society, London, 1921 (First published 1812), Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, vol.1, Argonaut Press, 1930 (First published 1727), Francis Buchanan, *A Journey From Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, vol. II, T.Cadell and W.Davis, London, 1807

brothers and sisters, in short all the woman's relatives on the female side.<sup>9</sup> The members of a *tarawad* were co-partners of all family property, whether inherited or earned through the efforts of individual members.<sup>10</sup> The oldest woman in the family had great importance, as the internal affairs of the *tarawad* were managed by the eldest female member. However matriliney among Nairs in the nineteenth century did not mean that women ruled the household.<sup>11</sup> Customs recognized the *karanavan*, as the manager and guardian of family property. The primary responsibility of the *karanavan* was to provide for the maintenance of the entire members of the *tarawad*.<sup>12</sup> Though he had no right of alienation, he possessed enough powers to act as a patriarch, subjecting the other members of the family to his authority.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> T.K. Gopal Panikkar, *Malabar and its Folk*, G.A Natesan and Company Printers, Madras, 1900, pp.17-18, M.S.A.Rao, *Social Change in Malabar*, Popular Press, Bombay, 1957, p.23 Some of the Nair *tarawad* contained a hundred people spanning three or four generations. Each woman had her own room where her young children slept and where at night she was visited by her husbands. Also see Robin Jeffrey, *Decline of Nair Dominance: Society and Politics and Travancore 1847 -1908*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1976, p.15, Robin Fox, *Kinship and Marriage: An Anthropological Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003 (First published 1967), pp.100-102

<sup>10</sup> C.Achuta Menon, *The Cochin State Manual*, Superintendent of Census Operations, Cochin, 1911, p. 246

<sup>11</sup> Robin Jeffrey, 'Governments and Culture: How Women Made Kerala Literate', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 60, no. 3, 1987, pp. 447-472

<sup>12</sup> P.V.Balakrishnan, *Matrilineal System in Malabar*, Mathrubhumi Press, Calicut, 1981, p.44

<sup>13</sup> K.N. Panikkar, *Culture, Ideology and Hegemony: Intellectuals and Social Consciousness in Colonial India*, Anthem Press, London, 2001 (First published 1995), pp.181-182. G.Arunima argues that the designation of the *karanavan* as the *Malayali* equivalent of Roman patriarch was a product of the colonial legal discourses. The colonial judicial interpretations provided *karanavan* with much power. It made the *karnavan* as a natural, all-powerful figure of authority, relegating all others within the *tarawad* to the status of dependent kin. G. Arunima, *There Comes Papa, Colonialism and the Transformation of Matriliney in Malabar 1850-1940*, Orient Longman, Hyderabad, 2003, p.192. Also see G. Arunima, 'Multiple Meanings: Changing Conceptions of Matrilineal Kinship in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Malabar', *The Indian Economic & Social History Review*, vol.33, no.3, 1996, pp. 283-307

Nair weddings were arranged and conducted in a very simple manner. There were two kinds of marriage among Nairs- the *thalikettu* marriage and the *sambandham*.<sup>14</sup> The *thalikettu* marriage was also known as *panthalmangalam* and *manjakulikalyanam*. It had to be conducted before a girl reached her puberty otherwise it was considered as a shame to the *tarawad*. If she menstruates before *thalikettu* has been performed, she should be, in theory, expelled from her lineage and caste.<sup>15</sup> *Thalikettu* marriages are not considered as actual marriages.<sup>16</sup> Once a girl matured, it was not mandated that she marry the man she had her *thalikettu* ceremony with.<sup>17</sup> The *thali* rite marked various changes in the social position of a girl since it brought her to social maturity. Hereafter she was ritually endowed with sexual and procreative functions and accorded the status of a woman. After the rite people address her in public by the respectful title 'Amma' and she must observe all the rules of etiquette associated with incest prohibitions in relation to men of her lineage.<sup>18</sup> After the *thali* tying, each couple was secluded in private for three days. At the end of the period of the seclusion each couple was purified from the pollution of cohabitation by a ritual bath. At the end of the ceremony a cloth was served into two parts and each part was given to the groom and bride supposed to constitute a divorce.<sup>19</sup> But still the bride had one further obligation to her ritual husband, that at his death she and all her children by whatever biological father,

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<sup>14</sup> The travellers accounts and administrative reports are replete with these customs.

<sup>15</sup> K.S.Singh, *People of India: Kerala*, vol.XXVII, part II, Anthropological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1992, p.1119

<sup>16</sup> In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it appears to have been essential that sexual relations might take place if the girl was nearing puberty. But this custom began to be omitted in the late nineteenth century. E Kathleen Gough, 'The Nairs and the Definition of Marriage', in Patricia Uberoi (ed.), *Family, Kinship and Marriage in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005 (First published 1995), p.242

<sup>17</sup> It is only after *thalikettu* has been done that the girl is at liberty to contract a *Sambandham*.

<sup>18</sup> E.Kathleen Gough, *op.cit.*, p.242. Barbosa has given a detailed description of this ceremony and stated that this is the first rite a woman undergoes. Durate Barbosa, *A Description of the Coast of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, The Hakluyt Society, London, 1995, pp.124 - 126

<sup>19</sup> E. Kathleen Gough, *op.cit.*, p.242

must observe death pollution for him.<sup>20</sup> Melinda Moore argues that the ritual acts comprising the *thalikettukalyanam* center around three main symbolic themes. The first of these is female fertility and auspicious marriedness, exemplified by the concept of *mangalyam* for which the *thali* itself stands. The second is the connection of the girl and her *tarawad* with the goddess Bhagavati. The third is the assertion of the prestige, and place in society, of her *tarawad*. The three shade into each other, and bear interesting relations to the process of social change that made the *thali* rite obsolete.<sup>21</sup> Louis Dumont applying the theory of primary and secondary marriages suggested that *thali*-rite was a woman's primary marriage and *sambandham* unions were secondary. He argues that unlike other Indians groups, who treat the primary marriage as the most significant, Nairs treat it as a "mere 'ritual' formality" and *sambandham* is considered as the 'real' union.<sup>22</sup>

The second type of marriage, *sambandham* can be considered as a loose marital relationship. It was arranged by the *karanavans* of the families partners. *Sambandham* includes just a cloth-giving ceremony that formalises a relationship between a man and a woman, as a marriage.<sup>23</sup> Nair families in many parts of Kerala were matrilineal, and a husband merely visited his wife's house. Their children lived in the mother's family. *Sambandham* entails no responsibility or legal obligation on the part of the husband towards his wife and children.<sup>24</sup> So the mother was responsible for the upbringing of the children. But the husband was expected to provide her with small presents of luxury items like bath oil and pay

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* Also see Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Government Press, Madras, vol. V, 1909, p. 315

<sup>21</sup> Melinda Moore, 'Symbol and Meaning in Nair Marriage Ritual', *American Ethnologist*, vol.15, no.2, 1988, pp. 254-273

<sup>22</sup> Louis Dumont, *Affinity as a Value: Marriage Alliance in South India with Comparative Essays on Australia*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1983, pp.135-136

<sup>23</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op.cit.*, p.331. Also see Robin Jeffrey, *Politics Women and Well being: How Kerala Became a Model*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 1992, pp.42-43. Also see T.K.Vellu Pillai, *Travancore State Manual*, vol.1, Government of Travancore, Travancore, 1940, p. 416

<sup>24</sup> C.A. Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, Kerala Gazetteers Department, Government of Kerala, 1997, p.96, Also see Robin Jeffrey, *Decline of...*, *op.cit.*, pp.15-16

her expenses when she had a child.<sup>25</sup> The duration of a *sambandham* relationship was the duration of time the two parties wished to live together. A woman had the choice of ending the relation any time she wanted. Similarly, a husband could stop visiting the wife's home as and when he pleased.<sup>26</sup> Both parties retained the right to remarry once this relationship was terminated. The Madras High Court had decreed in 1869 that 'the relation (*sambandham*) is in truth not marriage, but a state of concubinage into which the woman enters of her own choice and is at liberty to change when and as often as she pleases.'<sup>27</sup> Travellers who visited Malabar during this period like Durate Barbosa and Francis Buchanan were astonished at this peculiar marriage system. By making a comparison with the European marriage system, Barbosa pictured the *sambandham* alliance as immoral.<sup>28</sup> Buchanan had also written about the marriage customs of the Nairs in North Malabar: "Of all the relationships known between men and women, the customs in Malabar are the most immoral and inconvenient".<sup>29</sup> The Basel Missionaries considered the system of *sambandham* alliance as something very close to prostitution. They also viewed casual termination of a marriage as highly objectionable because in Christianity the institution of marriage was considered sacred.<sup>30</sup>

The community promoted hypergamy and endogamy and if a Nair lady made any sexual relationship with men from a lower caste, excommunication was

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<sup>25</sup> Robin Jeffrey, *Decline of . . . .*, *op.cit.*, pp.15-16

<sup>26</sup> T.K.Gopal Panikkar, *op.cit.*, p.22 The 'husband' in a Nair *sambandham* relation was a visitor who would drop by at night and leave at dawn.

<sup>27</sup> K.N. Panikkar, *op.cit.*, p.194

<sup>28</sup> Durate Barbosa, *The Book of Durate Barbosa*, *op.cit.*, p. 40

<sup>29</sup> C.K. Kareem, *Francis Bukkanante Keralam* (Trans.), Kerala Bhasha Institute, Thiruvananthapuram, 1996 (First published 1981), p.75. *Sambandham* matches could also break up, not only because of disagreements between partners, but because *karanavans* forced them to break up to accommodate a high-ranking man's desire for exclusive possession of a woman.

<sup>30</sup> Jayaprakash Raghaviah, *Faith and Industrial Reformation: Basel Mission in Malabar and South Canara*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2018, p.204

the punishment for her blustering.<sup>31</sup> The Nairs of Malabar always preferred to maintain hypergamous marriage relations with the Namboothiri, Thampurans and with high caste Nairs. In addition to this, territorial restrictions were also imposed on the women with regard to their marriage. Women from Northern Malabar were not permitted to marry a man from beyond the borders of Korapuzha river. If they did so they were made an outcast.<sup>32</sup> Though Nairs in both regions followed *marumakkathayam*, substantial differences existed in marital arrangements, residence patterns, practices and rituals. The influence of the Namboothiri community and Nair-Namboothiri relations were rare in North Malabar, whereas in South Malabar a unique alliance between the two communities ruled the region.<sup>33</sup> The chief aim of this stricture was to restrict the sexual freedom of the women to within the borders of North Malabar. There was also the fear that people from South Malabar had loose morals, and that if the women were to mix with them, they would also become wayward. In South Malabar a Nair woman would spend her entire life in her own *tarawad*. They were not required to move to their husband's house after marriage.<sup>34</sup> They would continue living in their own *tarawad* with their children till her death. In North Malabar after marriage the wife lived with her husband in his matrilineal household.<sup>35</sup> It is clear that the *tarawad* system made for brittleness in the marriage relation, and prevented close

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<sup>31</sup> Durate Barbosa, *op.cit.*, p.124. In the pre British period a woman so dismissed became the property of the king or chief and might be sold into slavery with foreign traders. E. Kathleen Gough, *op.cit.*, p. 243

<sup>32</sup> The first woman to cross Korapuzha was Mathuamma, wife of Cheruvalathu Chathu Nair. In 1891 she came to Calicut with her husband, for which they were excommunicated by the caste council. Mayadevi M., 'Notions of Womanhood: Family, Marriage and Morality Among Nairs and Namboothiris in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Malabar', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Calicut, 2017, p.82

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p.67

<sup>34</sup> Kathleen Gough, 'Nair: North Kerala', in David M. Schneider and Kathleen Gough (ed.), *Matrilineal Kinship*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1961, p.390

<sup>35</sup> But still, she continues to have right over the property of her *tarawad*. The husband-wife relation was very strong among the Nairs of North Malabar when compared with South Malabar as wives were protected by her husband and enjoyed right over husband's property.



attachment between husband, wife and children. Men did not support their wives, and obtained no regular economic services from them.

This was not the case of Namboothiris. While the Namboothiris of Malabar held the foremost position among the different castes, they also maintained traditions that were very different from the rest with regards to familial relations. The unique marital tradition among the Kerala Namboothiris distinguished them from the other Brahmin castes across India. The kinship system of the Namboothiris rendered their women powerless. On the contrary, the men held a highly esteemed position in the society while also enjoying the possibility for unfettered sexual freedom. The familial structure and the marital traditions of the Kerala Namboothiris were distinct from that of the Brahmins anywhere else in India. In Namboothiri families, only the eldest son had the freedom to marry from the same caste. This marriage was known as '*veli*'. This resulted in a situation where the number of marriageable men was much less than the number of women who had to be married off. This then led to a situation where the eldest Namboothiri was allowed to conduct a '*veli*' for himself more than once.<sup>36</sup> This was called '*adivedhanam*'. It is believed that Namboothiris brought about this practise to avoid the division and distribution of family property. This meant that only the eldest Namboothiri of the family had the right to handle the family property. The younger brothers (they were called '*aphan*' in the Namboothiri community) would form marriage alliances with other castes including the Nairs. This relationship was referred to as '*sambandham*'. The liaisons were useful to the Namboothiris in two ways, first most obviously, to provide sexual partners for their younger sons, and second, to create useful connections with important families.<sup>37</sup> This would not be considered as a legal marriage. The wife and the kids

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<sup>36</sup> C.A.Innes, *op.cit.*, pp.105-106

<sup>37</sup> Joan P. Mencher and Helen Goldberg, 'Kinship and Marriage Regulations Among the Namboothiri Brahmans of Kerala', *Man*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1967, pp. 87-106. Royal families often chose Brahmins for their women. Since they were wealthy themselves, they had no need for the property of the Brahmins. Additionally, the *sambandham* with the Namboothiri raised their status. For these Namboothiri husbands to remain their

from this alliance had no right to the Namboothiri's *illam* or property. Since Namboothiris followed a patriarchal tradition, male heirs were necessary for the propagation of the family. If the situation arose where the eldest brother didn't have a male progeny, the second eldest was allowed to marry from his own caste. This marriage was known as '*parivedanam*'. Moreover, the eldest son in a Namboothiri family might also form liaisons with women from matrilineal castes, along with his legal marriage.<sup>38</sup>

Since the family property was solely handled by the eldest brother, the *aphans* had no rights or say in it. Once the male child attains maturity and the ceremony of '*samavarthanam*' is over, he loses any position he had in his house. After the death of his parents, he is a mere guest in the '*illam*'. He didn't have the right to talk to or see the wife of his eldest brother. *Aphan* was the kind of husband who would be considered 'polluted' after touching his 'wife' and 'children'. His children did not have the right to address him even by the title of 'father'. Since his 'wife' and 'children' had no position in the *illam* following his *sambandham* marriage, he wandered about without the sense of identity of being either a father or a husband. While over half the number of the Namboothiri population were women who were confined to the interior of their houses, around the same number of Namboothiri men were forced to wander in the outsides as *aphans*, forced out from their own homes. In his drama *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk*, V.T. Bhattathirippad clearly depicts the sufferings of an *aphan* through the dialogue: "I

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husbands, they were regularly given a generous remuneration. They were also given a scrumptious meal with a great spread as well as clothes. P. Bhaskaranunni, *Pathonpatham Noottandile Keralam* (Mal.), Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 2012, p.176. V.T. Bhattathirippad describes this situation ironically as "a pond to play in, an 'oottupura' to eat from, a 'maniyara' (marital bed) to be taken to, is all that is required for a Namboothiri man to be content". See Velayudan Panikkassery, *Ayyankali Muthal V T Vare* (Mal.), Current Books, Kottayam, 2007, p.96

<sup>38</sup> P. Bhaskaranunni, *op.cit*, p. 176

can live as a dog. I can live as a cat. If there is another life, I can be reborn as any lowly animal- but it is impossible to live as an *aphan* again”.<sup>39</sup>

At the same time, Namboothiri women were only allowed to marry from their own caste.<sup>40</sup> Since only the eldest son from the family got married, the number of unmarried women increased in the *illams*. In this situation, girls of thirteen or fourteen years of age ended up becoming the third or fourth brides of men over the age of sixty. Despite this system, there still existed in the *illams* older women with no prospects of marriage.

There existed a peculiar marriage custom called '*mattam*'. Usually, '*mattam*' refers to a situation in which a man would marry off his sister to another and accept the other one's sister as his own bride. However, the Namboothiri community practised this in another way. Older men ended up exchanging their own daughters as brides.<sup>41</sup> This would be the fourth or fifth marriage of the old man. This was not just to marry off one's daughter, but also because it was quite

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<sup>39</sup> V.T. Bhattathiripad, *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk* (Mal.), in *V.T.Yude Sampoorana Kritikal*, D.C.Books, Kottayam, 2015, p.423

<sup>40</sup> The difference between the treatment of boys and girls of the Namboothiri caste is very apparent right from their childhood. Namboothiri women were called '*antarjanam*', which literally translates to "people of the inside". Their lives were ones which were completely confined to the interiors of the '*illams*'. A Namboothiri woman must never leave her home without an '*olakkuda*' (a woven umbrella to shield their face from strangers), *ghosha*, a maid-servant woman and a man servant. V.T Bhattathiripad says that there are historical records of a Namboothiri woman being put on trial for the crime of leaving the house and visiting the temple unchaperoned. V.T. Bhattathiripad, *V.T Yude...., op.cit.*, p.16. Observing the lives of *antarjanams*, E.M.S Namboothiripad opines, "Young girls grow up with the consciousness that they have only a secondary citizenship in the home. The only public spaces accessible to them were the pond and the temple." In her autobiography, Lalithambika Antarjanam makes the comment that she was born in a community that regarded the birth of infant-girls as a curse. Lalithambika Antarjanam, *Aatmakathaykoramugham* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur, 2007 (First Published 1979), p.15 The disgruntled response of her well-educated and acculturated father to the news of her birth makes apparent the piteous condition of women in Brahmin families. "No, I won't continue living here anymore. I am going off to live in someplace like Madras, convert to Christianity and get married to a foreigner." *Ibid.*, p. 15 She understood the root cause of her father's antipathy to her birth from the restrictions that began to be imposed on her following her puberty.

<sup>41</sup> Anagha.B.K, *Kalam Chintheritta Kaivalakal: Sthraina Jeevithathinte Sakshya Pathrangal* (Mal.), Samayam Publications, Kannur, 2015, p. 51

common in those days to marry a girl young enough to be one's own daughter. Sometimes, these marriages were conducted for the Namboothiri in order to acquire a dowry and pay off his debts. This situation was indispensable because women had few options, could only be married to a man of their own caste, and only the eldest Namboothiri of a family could marry within the caste. These marriages to older men increased the number of young widows in the community. Since it was customary to demand a huge dowry, several women remained unmarried until their death. Unmarried Namboothiri women were regarded as a curse. Hence, praying for a good husband was an integral part of a woman's daily routine. In their autobiographies V.T. Bhattathiripad, E.M.S.Namboothiripad, Lalithambika Antarjanam, and Devaki Nilayangod talk about numerous women who couldn't find alliances from their own caste.<sup>42</sup> Even when their marriage was fixed, the women were seldom informed of it. Several times, the woman got to know of it from the servants.<sup>43</sup>

According to the common practice, the eldest Namboothiri (*grihasta*) was allowed to have four wives but there were people with four or five wives.<sup>44</sup> The favoured wife of the '*grihasta*' would be the dominant *antarjanam* in the *illam*. Even though they were married, several of the wives did not know marital bliss. Even after marriage, the women had to often compete and fight with their co-wives

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<sup>42</sup> For those women who died as virgins, it was customary for a Namboothiri to tie a '*thali*' around her before performing her final rites.

<sup>43</sup> V.T. portrays the anxieties of a girl regarding her marriage through the thoughts of Theti in *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk* "I hear people whispering about something or the other. Just this morning, I heard mother talking to Kummini from Varyath about garlands or beaten rice flakes or something similar. Why did kunjipennu bring so much henna with her when she came in the morning? Something doesn't seem quite right. Are they planning to get me married? I don't know. What would be the situation in the house I marry into? How far will it be from here? I know nothing." In the same drama, when he comes to know that the female protagonist Theti is going to be married to an aged man, Parasurama Ayyankar asks V.M. (Both of them are friends of Madhavan, the protagonist of the play) if the alliance has been fixed with the consent of the bride, and he gets the response: "Are snacks eaten after asking the consent of the snacks?" This portrays the helplessness of the *antarjanam* in matters regarding her own marriage.

<sup>44</sup> T.K.Vellu Pillai, *op.cit.*, p. 416

for the favours of their husband inside the 'nalukettu'. Inside the *illams*, *antarjanams* often faced severe punishments like physical abuse. Young women faced torture not only from their husbands, but often from the senior co-wives as well.<sup>45</sup> Young *antarjanams* who were tied to old men through 'adivedhanam' and spent their life wearing the brunt of being a co-wife faced the fate of a harsh widowhood once their husbands passed away. Widowhood makes the woman an inauspicious presence during every auspicious occasion. After their husband's death, these women would spend the rest of their lives in the *illam* itself doing various household chores. Namboothiri women during that time had the status of one of the three: unmarried woman, co-wife or widow. Moreover, women accused of adultery would be outcasted through a custom called *smarthavicharam*.<sup>46</sup>

The Thiyyas of Malabar were a large heterogeneous community who have suffered considerable disabilities as a result of caste system. They were very conscious of their neatness and presentation just like the Nairs. Regarding their

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<sup>45</sup> In Lalithambika Antarjanam's novel *Agnisakshi*, a character called 'Branthi cheriyamma' (literally 'mad little mother' where cheriyamma is a woman younger to one's mother and is like a sister to her, either by marriage or her own blood) has her eyes fractured and ears torn by her husband. Lalithambika Antarjanam writes that this character represents several women she had lived with and that she herself had witnessed Branthi cheriyamma's husband injuring her by throwing a metal vessel at her. Lalithambika Antarjanam, *Agnisakshi* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 2017 (First published 1976), p.108

<sup>46</sup> This was a practice that was found only among the Kerala Namboothiris whereby women and young girls were ousted from the community and abandoned completely. According to the 'smriti' laws, a jury composed of 'smarthas' would be the ones conducting the inquiries. This is why it was called 'smarthavicharam.' The *antarjanam* who is accused of infidelity would be called a 'sadanam' (literally a thing or object) from that moment. If she accepts her crime, she would be ousted from her community. Along with her, her male partners are also thrown out of the community. The expense of the investigation is sometimes so great as to ruin the family. For details see P. Bhaskaranunni, *Smarthavicharam-Oru Padanam*, Sahitya Pravarthaka Cooperative Society, 2000, Madambu Kunjukuttan, *Brashtu*, D.C. Books, Kottayam, 2015 (First published 1973), A.M.N. Chakiyar, *Avasanathe Smarthavicharam*, Department of Cultural Publications, Thituvananthapuram, 2001, Allangode Leelakrishnan, *Thatrikuttiyude Smarthavicharam*, Mathrubhumi, Kozhikode, 2004. In such cases they must join the lower castes, to whom they were formerly sold as slaves and concubines, or go over to the Roman Catholic or Syrian Christians, uniting with some one in marriage. See Samuel Mateer, 'Neoptism in Travancore', *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 12, 1883, pp. 288-306

marriage customs too, Thiyyas were not very different from the Nairs.<sup>47</sup> The Thiyyas of South and North Malabar followed distinctive marital practices. Thiyyas of South Malabar followed a patriarchal system, in which inheritance was through the male line. After the marriage, the wife moved into her husband's house. However in North Malabar, the custom of *marumakkathayam* prevailed, where inheritance passed through the female line and after marriage the wife resided in her own home called *tarawad*.<sup>48</sup> Due to this difference in inheritance, usually marriage would not be made between a Thiyya girl of South Malabar and a Thiyya man of North Malabar, for the reason that the children of such a marriage would inherit no property from the family of either parent. The husband would have no share in the property of his family, which devolves through the women ; nor would the wife have any share in that of her family, which is passed on through the men. So, there would be nothing for the children. But, on the other hand, marriage between a girl of the North and a man of the South was different. The children would inherit from both parents.<sup>49</sup> The *marumakkathayam* system that prevailed in North Malabar favoured temporary connections between European men and Thiyya women. It is recorded, in the Report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, that in the early days of British rule, the Thiyya women incurred no social disgrace by consorting with Europeans.<sup>50</sup>

In Malabar just like the Nairs, the Thiyya girls also underwent the *thalikettu kalyanam* before puberty. *Thalikettu* marriage was very common among the Thiyyas.<sup>51</sup> The marriage has to take place before a girl's puberty. *Thalikettu* marriages of even babies have been conducted and sometimes the groom could be

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<sup>47</sup> P. Bhaskaranunni, *op.cit.*, pp. 357-358

<sup>48</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Government Press Madras, vol.VII, 1909, p. 48, Also see C.A. Innes, *op.cit.*, p.125

<sup>49</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes* .....,vol.VII, *op.cit.*, pp.47-48

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p.36

<sup>51</sup> C.K Revathi Amma, *Sahasrapoornima* (Mal.), Premier Offset Prints, Calicut, 1977, p.40

above sixty.<sup>52</sup> Kunji Amma Shanku (the wife of K.S. Shanku, Sree Narayan Guru's secretary) describes the malpractice of *thalikettu kalyanam* in great detail: "If *thalikettu* did not take place before the age of 12, it would be considered as bad luck. This practice required a lot of money to be spent and was rife with many rituals. Girls who are still breastfeeding, to girls less than 12 years in age, would be taken to the *pandal* and asked to sit in the North-South direction. When the *muhurtam* approaches, according to their own capabilities, the groom would arrive on a horse or an elephant. Sometimes, there would be more than one groom. Even if it was just one groom, he could marry more than one girl. However, he had no right over the girl that he was married to. The *thali* is usually tied by the girl's mother's brother's wife, her father's sister or if she was already betrothed, the mother of her future husband.<sup>53</sup> In some areas *thali* was tied by a woman of a lower ranking caste whose members served the Thiyyas as barbers and midwives. Thiyya men might have hypergamous marriages with women of this caste but Thiyya women might not marry barberman.<sup>54</sup> After the marriage, he would receive a sum of money (two *chakram*) and leave after a bath.<sup>55</sup>

The actual marriage ceremony was called *pudava koda kalyanam*. Members of the bridegroom family visit the house of the bride and exchange a *pudava* and *thorthu* (literally cloth and towel) as a sign of fixing the marriage. The ceremony was something in which the bridegroom was conspicuous by his absence. It was the bridegroom's sister who went to the bride's house, gave her

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<sup>52</sup> C. Kesavan recounts a few things from his own *thalikettu* marriage in his autobiography. C.Kesavan, *Jeevitha Samaram* (Mal.), Prabhatham Printing and Publishing, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999 ( First published 1968), pp. 97-99

<sup>53</sup> Kathleen Gough, 'Tiyar: North Kerala', in David M. Schneider and Kathleen Gough, *op.cit.*, p. 410

<sup>54</sup> The people who offered barber's service to the Thiyyas came to be known as *Kavum Thiyyas*. They formed a separate lower ranking and polluting community and acted as the ritual assistants of Thiyyas. I.R. Krishanan Methala, *Moorkkoth Kumaran Jeevitham Samaramakkiya Nethav* (Mal.), National Book Stall, Kottayam, 2016, p. 25

<sup>55</sup> M.K. Sanu, *Narayana Guruswami: Jeevacharitam* (Mal.), Sahitya Pravartaka Cooperative Society, Kottayam, 1986, pp. 212-213

clothes, and brought her to the bridegroom's house. This gifting of clothes was something performed in the dark rooms of the house. Thus, it is said, even impersonations had happened at marriage ceremonies.<sup>56</sup> The main ritual was to give the girl a *mundu* and then take her home. This was not done by the groom but his sister.<sup>57</sup> However, there were also situations when education was considered.<sup>58</sup> In this community also the girls were not informed of their marriage in advance; occasionally, they learned of it while changing into their bridal dress or from the maids.<sup>59</sup>

In all cases the rite seems, as among Nairs, to have been a mere initiation ceremony which rendered the girl marriageable and instituted the etiquette associated with incest prohibitions between her and her materlineal kinsmen.<sup>60</sup> The woman enjoyed no freedom or privilege in her husband's house; she was not even allowed to sit in the veranda of the house. There were also many divorces among them at the men's discretion. A Thiyya man's obligation to his children ceased if he was divorced from their mother. While the marriage endured he must maintain his children entirely until they reached puberty or married. A Thiyya woman had no claim on her husband's natal group after his death. Unless he had built a separate house, she must leave her conjugal house and never return there after.<sup>61</sup>

In that time, it was common for Thiyya men to marry more than once. For instance, Karayi Bappu had several wives and more kids. The famous Sanskrit

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<sup>56</sup> C.P. Sivadasan, 'Sree Narayana Guru', Sri Jagannatha Kshetra Sathabdi Smaranika, 2008, pp.35-41

<sup>57</sup> M.K. Sanu, *op.cit.*, pp. 213-14

<sup>58</sup> Kunji Amma Shanku's marriage is an example. Despite the sub-castes of Ezhava community not marrying each other during that time, she (belonging to the Panikker caste of Ezhava) was married to Shanku because he was educated.

<sup>59</sup> Revathi Amma's grandmother came to know about her marriage from her servant. She was married off to an old man as his third wife at the age of twelve. C.K. Revathi Amma, *op.cit.*, pp.42-43

<sup>60</sup> Kathleen Gough, 'Thiyyar: North Kerala', *op.cit.*, p. 410

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.412



scholar Karayi Krishnan Gurukkal was one of them.<sup>62</sup> Karayi Damayanti was one among his many daughters. (She had considerable prowess in literature and constituted a women's organisation for the advancement of Thiyya women.) The Thiyyas also followed a practice of several brothers marrying one woman and having sexual relationships with her.<sup>63</sup> An evil custom associated with the *thalikettu kalayanam* of Ezhava or Thiyya community was *madhuram koduppu*. The girl's mother has to serve sweets to the groom. In case the mother serves sweets to the groom as well as his brothers, then the girl becomes wives to those men as well.<sup>64</sup> It has also been said that the Thiyyas of Malabar often followed polyandry as well to avoid the partition and dispersion of family property. This account of traditional and customary practices is necessary for an understanding of the reform attempt and changes that took place in the twentieth century.

#### **CASTE BASED ASSOCIATIONS : MARRIAGE REFORMS**

In India even during the process of socio, economic and political subjugation, colonial education played a kind of liberating role in breaking down traditional norms and values.<sup>65</sup> This led to the development of socio religious reform movements directed towards refashioning family and marriage. Since the early decades of the nineteenth century the trends of social reforms had emerged among different communities and created an atmosphere for social change in

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<sup>62</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *Moorkkoth Kumaran:Jeevacharithram* (Mal.), Sahithya Pravarthaka Co operative Society, Kottayam,1975, p. 34, Moorkkoth Kumaran mentions that several Thiyya women prostituted themselves to the British for money since the beginning of the East India Company's rule. He further stated that certain distinguished and highly placed officials among the Thiyyas used to have daughters of Europeans as their concubines, and also sired children of them. *Ibid.*, p. 16

<sup>63</sup> P.K. Balakrishnan, *Jati Vyavasthayum Kerala Samoohavum* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 2012, p. 314

<sup>64</sup> Jayasree K. Kuniyath and K. C. Sankaranarayanan, 'Amoralities Give Rise to Social Reform Movements of Kerala – A Study of Namboothiri, Nair and Ezhava Women Analogous Vows', *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies* (IJIRAS), vol. 4, no. 3, 2017, p.83

<sup>65</sup> A.R.Kamat, 'Education and Social Change', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.17, no.31, 1982, pp. 1237-1243

Kerala. The initiative for social reforms in Kerala was taken by the Christian missionaries through London Missionary Society, Church Missionary Society, Malabar Basel Mission etc. Though the activities of Christian missionaries were mainly directed towards proselytization of the members of the backward communities to Christianity, their work enlightened certain sections of the society of the superstitious practices, and instilled a feeling of self respect and equality among them. Their endeavours helped people to improve their knowledge of the world and imbibe modern Western ideas.

The socio religious reformers of Kerala realised the fact that, religious reform was an instrument through which changes could be introduced in society, for religious belief and social practices were closely interlinked. P. Chandra Mohan argues that the reformers of Kerala belong to two categories, the first group believed that the changes in belief and behaviour are to be affected through the influence of religion. Thus Chattampi Swamikal, Sree Narayana Guru, Sadananda Swami, Vagbhatananda etc. held spiritual revitalisation as the basis for the advancement of society, which can be noticed in the genesis and growth of Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam, Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham and Atmavidya Sangam.<sup>66</sup> All these associations indicate that the need for revitalisation was generally prevalent among the backward communities. The second group of reformers organised themselves under non religious leadership and gained their ends mostly through constitutional means. The movement of Nair Service Society, Sadhu Janaparipalana Sabha, Yogakshema Sabha belonged to this category.<sup>67</sup>

By the beginning of the twentieth century caste associations superseded general religious and social reform movements in Kerala. The development of print culture, and new modes of communication and association allowed the reformers

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<sup>66</sup> P.Chandra Mohan, 'The Growth of Social Reform Movements in Kerala', in P.J.Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, vol. II, part II, Kerala State Gazetteer, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 459

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

to engage in sustained conversations and arguments with one another and with their orthodox opponents in the public domain. In Thiruvithamkoor two intellectuals, Chattambi Swamikal and Sree Narayana Guru initiated reforms within society. Both movements were almost similar in scope and character. *Vedadhikara Nirupanam*, and *Nijananda Vilasam* written by Chattambi Swamikal represented an intellectual awakening similar to the movement in Bengal during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>68</sup>

In the early twentieth century the new conjugal family pattern began to be widely accepted among all caste groups in Kerala. Consequently, several community based organisations were formed to strengthen the social reforms of the time. All these caste based organizations fervently supported nuclear families and dissolution of the *marumakkathayam* system of inheritance. For initiating social reforms within the Nair community, *Nair Samajam* were formed in different parts of Kerala such as Thiruvithamkoor, Kochi, North Malabar, South Malabar, and so on. In 1877, a few of the alumni of Royal College, Thiruvananthapuram gathered to establish the *Malayali Social Union*. In 1866, they formed the *Malayali Sabha*. Even though the organisation was not exclusive to Nairs, they comprised the larger part of the membership. Following this in 1903, the *Travancore Nair Samajam* was established. In 1905, the *Kerala Nair Samajam* and in 1914, the *Nair Samudaya Bhrithya Jana Sangham* was formed under the leadership of Mannath Padmanabhan and K.Kelappan which later renamed as Nair Service Society (NSS).<sup>69</sup> In North Malabar, the *North Kerala Nair Samajam* was formed with Kesari Nayanar as the Chairperson and P. Rairu Nambiar as Secretary.<sup>70</sup> As these

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<sup>68</sup> K.K.N. Kurup, 'The Intellectual Movements and Anti- Caste Struggles in Kerala', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 55, 1994, pp.673 - 677

<sup>69</sup> Mayadevi.M, *op.cit.*, p. 195

<sup>70</sup> E.M.S. Namboothiripad, *Kerala Charitram Marxist Veekshanathil (Mal.)*, Chintha Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, 2008 (First published 1990), p.185. North Kerala Nair Samajam mainly focused on social reforms and creating unity among the various sub-divisions among the Nairs. A.K.Gopalan, *Keralam Innale Innu (Mal.)*, Chintha Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram, 2016, Reprint, p.34

reform-organisations gained more prominence, backward marital traditions, the confines of family structure, the rules of the *tarawad*, the scheme of *marumakkathayam*, *thalikettukalyanam* etc. began to face scrutiny by youngsters. NSS strongly opposed the practices of *thalikettukalyanam*, *thirandukuli* and *pulikudi* prevalent among Nairs. One of the major suggestions of the *North Kerala Nair Samajam* held in 1916 was that there need to be a change in the practice of *thalikettu* marriage.<sup>71</sup>

The family structure of those days was not something matching the cultural sensibilities of a progressive person. The changes brought in by colonial modernity in nineteenth century Malabar in the economic and social fields were visible in the *tarawads* as well.<sup>72</sup> By the closing decades of the nineteenth century, a section of the Nairs had moved away from the *tarawad*. Observing the state of issues in *tarawad* Report of Malabar Marriage Commission commented that, ‘a house divided against itself stands and most *tarawads* in Malabar are in this condition’.<sup>73</sup> When a group of people live together in a family, their tastes, their financial situation, character etc. would all be different. Some would be government employees of varying official status, some would be holding a high social standing, others would be landlords, farmers and peasants. When people of such diverse backgrounds co-exist, there would be several conflicts between them. The woman’s position is also determined on the basis of the husband’s social standing, so the status of the husband became crucial for women.<sup>74</sup> Only some of them had

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<sup>71</sup> *Nair Samudaya Parishkarini*, vol. 2, 1916, p. 18

<sup>72</sup> K.N. Panikkar opines that the movement for the reformation of social customs, practices and institutions of the Nairs was a direct outcome of the collapse of the economic basis of *tarawad* organisation and the new ideological and cultural perspective acquired by the educated middle class. K.N.Panikkar, ‘Land Control, Ideology and Reform: A Study of the Changes in Family Organisation and Marriage System in Kerala’, *Indian Historical Review*, vol. 4, no.1, 1977, pp.31- 45

<sup>73</sup> Report of Malabar Marriage Commission (Here after RMMC), p.31

<sup>74</sup> While in the earlier period the *tarawad* of the husband assumed profound importance, by the late nineteenth century his profession became more important than *tarawad*. By this time the well to do Nair *tarawads* began to prefer educated and employed persons over landed aristocracies. This is well indicated in some of the contemporary novels like

servants to attend to them, special clothes and accessories etc. This led to the clashes between the women in the family. Thus, there emerged a kind of competition between people who lived together under the same roof. This led to a break-up of the joint family system and the constitution of nuclear families.<sup>75</sup>

Both the English language educational system and demands of employment under British rule reshaped the lives of the Western educated in similar ways in many regions of British India.<sup>76</sup> With the increase in job opportunities under British rule, the middle-class educated youth left their ancestral homes to work in places which allowed them to get exposed to new ways of life and ideas. Life outside Malabar, European contacts and the influence of modern ideas prompted the middle class to make changes in their family relationships and made it desirable to have a wife with some understanding of this new milieu. They managed to accumulate a certain amount of property and the economic independence through salaried jobs contributed to strengthen conjugal relations.<sup>77</sup> The geographical mobility in search for employment outside their home environment led to a lessening of the hold of the joint family. In the Bengali context, Meredith Borthwick says that, the mobility increased not only within government service; among the *bhadralok* the pressure on jobs in Calcutta and the mofussil towns often forced them to follow their fortunes elsewhere. Although it was most common for men in these situations to leave the women of the family behind in the ancestral

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*Manjal, Vasumathi* etc. See V.K.N., *Manjal*, (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 1987, Reprint, Moorkkoth Kumaran, *Vasumathi* (Mal.), Sahitya Pravathaka Co operative Society, Kottayam, 1975

<sup>75</sup> K.Padmavati Amma, 'Malayala Sambradayangalum Avasyamaya Parishkarangalum', *Sarada*, vol. 2, no. 11, 1905, pp.239-244

<sup>76</sup> Judith E. Walsh, *Growing up in British India: Indian Autobiographers on Childhood and Education Under the Raj*, Holmes and Meier Publishers, New York, 1983, intro., p. x

<sup>77</sup> In the pre colonial period under the *marumakkathayam* system basic needs of the members were satisfied by the *tarawad* by meeting their requirements of food, clothes and oil from a common pool of resources. See M.T. Vasudevan Nair, *Nalukettu* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur, 1997, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, *Kayar*, D.C.Books, Kottayam, 2006 (First published 1978), K.P.Kesava Menon, *Kazhinjakalam* (Mal.), Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 2012 (First published 1957)

home in the mofussil, from the 1860s onwards it became increasingly the practice for the immediate family to accompany them.<sup>78</sup> As the value of strong marital ties expanded, men started taking their wives and children with them as a way to escape their lonely lives often in the cities.

By the norms of the traditional family all income should be pooled and this should be utilised at the judgement of the eldest male. The usual practice was the eldest male allocating the material resources to meet the needs of the members of the family. The introduction of individual incomes earned from sources other than the ancestral property constituted a major factor to which the joint family system is called upon to adjust.<sup>79</sup> In all these situations, the old hierarchical joint family was broken up, and the hold of the elders and of the traditions they embodied was consequently loosened. Increasingly, men and women lived among their peers rather than their elders, enabling them to make some departures from previously binding social conventions.

The changing social climate of colonial modernity and changes in the nature of the domestic market significantly increased the demands of the junior members of the family. The existence of *tarawad* and the joint management of properties did not benefit them and they started losing their loyalty to the family, and worked for partition of the properties. In fact, the marriage between the Nair couple was solidified only with the advent of salaried jobs. It came to a point that an employed individual could take care of his wife and children independently without the financial help of the family head. As they got the idea of spending their savings on their own family, they stopped contributing their income to the wealth of the *tarawad* and felt that the *tarawad* was a hindrance to their growth.

The new environment instilled a growing recognition among the middle class that matriliney is unnatural and inspired them to rethink and restructure their

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<sup>78</sup> Such references can be seen in the autobiographies of the period.

<sup>79</sup> M.S. Gore, *Urbanisation and Family Change*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1968, pp.17-18

primitive concept of the 'family'. Praveena Kodoth states that their association with the institutions of the colonial state, through education and employment, and the influence upon them of a set of ideas and morality, which were part of the common sense of colonial administrators, were instrumental in shaping their particular response to *marumakkathayam*.<sup>80</sup>

The modern educated men living outside Malabar were influenced by the new conjugal relations and the then middle class discourses were increasingly centred around this. In Madras, there were social organizations for those who came for study and job. The main topic of discussion in such gatherings was the need to upgrade the 'primitive' concepts of marriage and the family. Often, they, especially the Nair youth, had to face insults because of their marriage system. The Nair family structure created by matriliney and the sexual freedom enjoyed by the community were enshrined in the code of law of the family (*tarawad*). The system of *Sambandham* followed by the Nair community for centuries was questioned.

Nair regulation was the first step to opposing *marumakkathayam* and supporting modern family structures. Under the *marumakkathayam* system of law there is a marked absence of the peculiar advantages and benefits of true marriage, and of family privileges. Virtuous love and the noblest affections, paternal rights, domestic order, the obligation to protect wife and children and the right of men and women to domestic felicity, all are more or less ignored.<sup>81</sup> Some of the more enlightened and educated Nairs realised their degradation, and began to rebel against the age old traditions, and the absurd and demoralising laws under which they are placed. So the Nair reformers wanted to bring regulations to the marriages within the caste, such as ending the practice of *sambandham*, giving men in the family the right to property, giving the wife and kids a right to the man's property,

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<sup>80</sup> Praveena Kodoth, 'Courting Legitimacy or Delegitimizing Custom? Sexuality, Sambandham, and Marriage Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Malabar', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2001, pp. 349 - 384

<sup>81</sup> Samuel Mateer, *op.cit.*, p.298. Samuel Meeter gave wide circulation to the charge that within the *tarawad* incest was common.

and so on. The first steps to initiating these changes started with the opposition to *sambandham* from within the community itself. *Sambandham* constituted an illegal union under colonial law, the women involved became concubines rather than spouses.<sup>82</sup> The characterizations of *sambandham* that treated women as concubines offended educated Nairs. Educated Nair youth questioned the legal basis of this type of marriage, and highlighted the instability of this relationship as well as the disjointed identity and lack of security to the children borne from it. A new generation of youngsters with merely the right to live in the *tarawad* as a member of the family, but lacking any individual freedom or right had been formed due to this *marumakkathayam* system. They neither knew the affection of a father-child relationship nor the stability of a family. The marital relationship between the man and the woman was just the relationship of a visitor who comes over at night. The man and the woman in the *sambandham* shared a purely sexual relationship. They could not have the stability of a husband-wife relationship or the security of a family.

The economic and political changes that occurred during the colonial age changed the social structure of Kerala completely. Educated people developed rational, democratic and novel thoughts. These changes influenced the pre-existing family structure, marital traditions, inheritance laws and so on. The first effort in this direction was started in 1869 when a memorandum was sent to the government stressing the need for changes in the existing marriage pattern.<sup>83</sup> In 1878, a society called the *Malayala Sudrachara Parishodhana Sabha* and in 1879 the Malabar Marriage Association was founded to bring about a marriage law among *marumakkathayam* Hindus.<sup>84</sup> In 1890, C. Sankaran Nair who was a member of the

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<sup>82</sup> RMMC., p.11

<sup>83</sup> In 1869 The Madras High Court decreed that the relation *sambandham* is in truth not marriage but a form of concubinage into which the woman enters of her own choice and is at liberty to change when and as often she pleases. Madras High Court Report, 1868-1869, vol. IV, pp. 196-203. Also see K.N.Panikkar, 'Land Control, Ideology....', *op.cit.*, p.43

<sup>84</sup> Janaki Nair, *Women and Law in Colonial India: A Social History*, Kali for Women in collaboration with the National Law School of India University, Bangalore, 1996, p.154,



Madras Legislative Assembly, submitted a Bill to legalise marriage. This is the Malabar Marriage Bill which became popular as the Nair Marriage Bill. The Bill proposed that *sambandham* marriages should be subject to the law, and that the wife and the children from this relation should have a right to a part of the man's self-acquired property.<sup>85</sup> The Bill was not passed then due to the opposition of Namboothiris and Kshatriyas. Later, the government made a committee consisting of six leading members with Sir T. Muthu Swami as the Chairman to study the marital traditions in Malabar, mainly under the recommendation of William Logan.<sup>86</sup> The report was submitted in 1891.<sup>87</sup> As per the recommendation of the committee in 1896, the act was passed as the Madras Act IV of 1896 or the Malabar Marriage Act incorporating all the traditional and customary laws related to *sambandham* that had existed in Malabar. The Act stated that the *sambandham* marriages must be registered, and that the wife and the children in this relationship would henceforth have a claim to the man's self-made property.<sup>88</sup>

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Also see K.N.Panikkar, *Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar, 1836- 1921*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1989

<sup>85</sup> *Sambandham* was not a legal marriage for the British. Lewis Moore has stated that, it was absolutely impossible for a man or a woman who followed the Marumakkathayam law to contract a valid marriage, using the word marriage in its ordinary popular signification. Lewis Moore, *Malabar Law and Custom*, Higginbotham and Company, Madras, 1905, p.69

<sup>86</sup> Other members of the committee were Rama Varma Thamburan Mundappa Bangera, Sir C. Sankaran Nair, H. M. Winterbotham and O. Chandu Menon.

<sup>87</sup> The Malabar Marriage Commission took reports from a large number of witnesses. A detailed questionnaire was prepared with the help of officials, representatives from influential *tarawad*, educated class etc. and sent to 474 persons out of which 322 responded. The Commission also held several sittings in different parts of Malabar to gather local opinion regarding the proposed marriage reforms. For details see Answers to Interrogatories, RMMC.

<sup>88</sup> Following this Bill In 1897, Pattom Thanu Pillai presented a Bill in the Travancore Legislative Assembly for reforms in Nair marriages. The traditionalists opposed this. In 1908, the government constituted a committee to study the marital system and law of inheritance in practice. On the basis of this report the First Nair Regulation Act came into force in Travancore in 1912. However, this Act did not agree with the recommendation to change the system of inheritance. Many cases were also filed questioning the rights in *sambandam*. Also see Thalassery Court Records, 28/04/1902, RAK.

The Act did not produce the expected result as evident from the number of marriage registration decreased over the years.<sup>89</sup> Susan Thomas in her study has indicated that majority of the *sambandham* registration was from South Malabar and this could be because of the fact that in South Malabar Nairs was matrilocal while in the North they were patrilocal.<sup>90</sup> The mass of the people continued to regard the Act with aversion and suspicion and even the educated members of the community who supported it, hesitated to come forward in the fear of offending the elder members of their *tarawad* and the all powerful Namboothiri land Iords. Moreover, the *sambandham* had to be registered with registrars who had the local jurisdiction of the place where either of the parties resided and people were reluctant to go to these registrars for registration.<sup>91</sup> Still it was with the Malabar Marriage Act that the change from the *marumakkathayam* system to the nuclear family came into force. The Act made the husband or father the legal guardian of the wife or children and the wife and children were entitled to be maintained by the husband or father.<sup>92</sup> Consequently by the beginning of the twentieth century, society had largely shifted to patriarchal family systems.

This trend towards the demolition of joint families and restitution of conjugal nuclear families was further intensified by the Madras *Marumakkathayam* Act of 1933. In the changed scenario of the twentieth century the newly emergent middle class criticised all the basic tenets of joint family such

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<sup>89</sup> In 1907-08, five *sambandhams* were registered and all of them from South Malabar. In 1908-09, it was one and in 1909-10, it was two and 1910-11, it was four, out of which three were from South Malabar and one was from Madras Go. no. 607, Public Dept., dt. 9. 6.1911, quoted in Susan Thomas, 'Property Relations and Family forms in Kerala', Unpublished PhD thesis, Mahatma Gandhi University, 2004, p.138. Also see C.Karunakara Menon, *Observations on the Malabar Marriage Bill*, Madras, 1890, pp.17-23

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.138-140. Susan Thomas in her study has presented two tables. First show the details of *sambandhams* registered by caste and second the profession of the person. The second table indicates that the majority of the people who registered *sambandham* were government officials and advocates.

<sup>91</sup> G O. no. 1082, Public Dept., dt.18.8.1897, para.3, The Registrars belonged to different castes, Susan Thomas, *op.cit.*, pp.139-140

<sup>92</sup> Section 16 (1), (2) section 17, Malabar Marriage Act, Act IV of 1896

as the restriction of individual identity and property rights, irrational imposition of authority by the *karanavan*, restriction of women within the household etc. The economic independence of the educated Nairs transformed the familial and conjugal relations and relieved them from the dependence on the *karanavan*. They started demanding a share of *tarawad* property and became bold enough to sue the *karanavan* in the court.<sup>93</sup> One of the primary allegations directed against *karanavan* was the misappropriation of *tarawad* property for the benefit of his wife and children.<sup>94</sup> Through print media they made attempts to raise public opinion in favour of partition. Numerous novels, short stories and articles were published to create public opinion.<sup>95</sup>

As a result of the growing litigation arising from the *karanavan*'s mismanagement of *tarawad* property Prabhakaran Thambam introduced the *Tarawad* Management Bill. By restricting the authority of the *karanavan* the bill made him answerable to the junior members of the *tarawad* in the management of *tarawad* property. This bill failed in the legislature due to the insistence of *tarawad* members that they were ready for nothing but partition. Following this K.R.Karant introduced The *Marumakkathayam* and *Aliyasantham* Branch Partition Bill in 1929 which again demanded the partition of *tarawad* property. The same year, K. Madhavan Nair submitted the *Marumakkathayam* Bill, which entirely denied the proposal of individual division of property and proposed the *tavazhi* partition of *tarawads*. Both these bills failed to get enacted into law.

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<sup>93</sup> In many cases the junior members of the *tarawad* started feeling suffocation and humiliation to continue under the command of the *karanavan* and most of the cases in the early years of the twentieth century were those filed against *karanavan*'s authority. C.Vasantha Kumari, *Judiciary and Social Change in British Malabar: 1792- 1940*, IRISH, Thalassery, 2012, p.191

<sup>94</sup> R.P., 'Tarawaduyogham', *Lakshmibai*, book. 17, vol. 4, 1921, pp. 122-127, Also see *Nair Samudaya Parishkari*, book. 2, vol. 4, 1916, pp. 96-99

<sup>95</sup> Almost all the novels published from the late nineteenth century onwards picture the unrestricted authority of *karanavan* over the junior members of the *tarawad*. The then contemporary magazines also contained a large number of articles supporting reforms within *tarawad*.

In 1931 two *marumakkathayam* bills were proposed in the council by V.P.Narayanan Nambiyar and R.M.Palat. The bill legalized all kinds of marriages of *marumakkathayam* women without the option of registration. After taking public opinion both bills were presented to a select committee.<sup>96</sup> The committee redrafted the bill and passed it by the council as The Madras *Marumakkathayam* Act. The Act stipulated terms and conditions for partition, *tarawad* management and regularising marriage. As per the regulations in the Act the term *sambandham* was replaced by marriage, taking the Nair community to follow monogamy.<sup>97</sup> Dissolution of marriage was made possible only with the mediation of the court of justice. The act entrusted the guardianship of wife and children to husband and father respectively. More importantly women were mandated to live with the husband, otherwise she would be denied maintenance.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, the wife and children were entitled to half of the intestate property of the husband/father. The Act allowed for the division and partition of the matrilineal *tarawad*. The *karanavan's* authority over the *tarawad* was recognised by the Act but he was liable to maintain all accounts of the *tarawad*.<sup>99</sup>

The joint family and *marumakkathayam* were incompatible with colonial modernity, and the middle class urged to replace it by patrilineal nuclear families. The collapse of the *marumakkathayam* system empowered the already growing masculine power structure providing women dependent status and framed a new family pattern where the husband became the provider to his wife and children.

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<sup>96</sup> The bill was circulated among classes affected by the bill. Out of 185 people to whom the bill was sent, 114 responded of whom according to R M Palat only 17 opposed the bill. Susan Thomas, *op.cit.*, p.170

<sup>97</sup> The Madras Marumakkathayam Act, chapter II, in G.O. 161- 162, 28/3/1933, Law (Legislative) Department. As per the provisions of the Act certain rules were drafted for the registration of marriage. The Madras Marumakkathayam Act, G.O.2536, 31/07/1933, Law (General) Department.

<sup>98</sup> The Madras Marumakkathayam Act, Chapter III clause 13(1), Law (Legislative) Department.

<sup>99</sup> The Madras Marumakkathayam Act, chapter VI, in G.O. 266-264, 28/3/1933, Law (Legislative) Department

It was in the beginning of the twentieth century that the Namboothiri community, which for long had been the breeding ground of social evils, saw and felt the early stirrings of the renaissance and its after effects. The Namboothiri youth, influenced by the reform movements in the society and the progress in the other communities, felt that they should also enforce these changes in their own community.<sup>100</sup> The Yogakshema Sabha (1908), Namboothiri Yuvajana Sangham (1918) and the Antharjana Samajam (1931) were formed subsequently. These organisations helped to unify the concerns of the Namboothiris who were until then travelling in different directions. The Namboothiri Yogakshema Sabha and Yuvajana Sangham were pioneering associations which advocated reforms among its orthodox section. In order to modernise the community both these organisations advocated education and proposed changes in family, marriage patterns and status of women.<sup>101</sup> V.T. Bhattathiripad used to call the Yogakshema Sabha as moderate and the Yuvajana Sangham as radical. Without doubt, the aim of the moderate was to bring about social change. However, they wanted everything to proceed legally and follow the path of natural justice. They primarily believed in changing the mindset and attitude of the people and not in alienating anyone.

Yogakshema Sabha was formed in Cherumukku Vaidikan's *illam* located on the bank of the Periyar river, in 1908. The meeting was presided over by Desamangalam Valiya Sankaran Namboothiripad.<sup>102</sup> Until 1919 it largely remained under the control of a group of *janmis* and wealthy Namboothiris. Therefore, the main intention of the sabha was to preserve the privileges enjoyed by them so far. But still they realised the significance of education in the changing

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<sup>100</sup> A.Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteers: Trivandrum*, Superintendent of Government Presses, Thiruvananthapuram, 1962, p.273

<sup>101</sup> N.R.Gramaprakash, *Thozhil Kendrathilekku* (Mal.), University of Calicut, 2008, Reprint, pp.60-61

<sup>102</sup> Kurur Unninamboothiripad, Chittoor Narayanan Namboothiripad, Kanippayur Sankaran Namboothiripad Edappaly Sankara Raja, Cherumukku Vaidikan, Kaplingat Vaidikan, Desamangalam Namboothiripad, Poomully Namboothiripad, Azhvancheri Tambrans etc were some of the prominent members of Yogakshema Sabha.

scenario and tried to make the community aware of the need for English education.<sup>103</sup> Consequently the major advancement of Yogakshema Sabha was in the field of education. But very soon important changes were proposed in matters such as marriage, inheritance rights and the use of family property. Though they focused on the emancipation of the plight of *antarjanam*, it was not out of genuine interest. A superstitious belief had existed in the Namboothiri community that unmarried matured girls were a curse on the family and community. This provoked them to raise the issue of marriage.<sup>104</sup>

The Yuvajana Sangham, on the other hand, believed that the superstitions and rituals in society must be removed through social revolution, regardless of whether the legal system was modified through the introduction and implementation of new laws or not. Tremendous changes occurred among the community after the formation of the Yuvajana Sangham. The action plan of the Yuvajana Sangham included the upending of the joint family system, property rights, marriage from the same caste, women's education, boycott of *ghosha*, fight against the practise of untouchability, and call upon Namboothiris to take up any job/work/profession with pride, and so on.<sup>105</sup>

As a part of the general upsurge in communicative and interactive structures, through the activities of the Yuvajana Sangham, women broke their barriers and came to the forefront. Lalithambika Antarjanam has stated in her autobiography, how the radical ideas of Yuvajana Sangham influenced the inner

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<sup>103</sup> To understand the new Revenue settlements, Judicial procedures and more importantly to get a job in colonial administration the knowledge of English became necessary. Consequently the *Namboothiri Vidyalayam* was founded in 1919 at Edakunni, near Thrissur to give modern education to Namboothiri boys and girls. V.T.Bhattathiripad in his autobiography *Kanneerum Kinavum*, has stated that he felt ashamed to realize that even at the age of 18 he could not write. V.T.Bhattathiripad, *Kanneerum Kinavum*, in *V.T.Yude .....*, *op.cit.*, pp.210-212

<sup>104</sup> E.M.S. Namboothiripad, *Atmakatha: E.M.S.* (Mal.), Chinta Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, 1993, p. 32

<sup>105</sup> V.T. Bhattathiripad, *Adukkalayil Ninnu ....*, *op.cit.*, p. 71

quarters of Namboothiri *illams*.<sup>106</sup> The Namboothiri women were prepared to receive modern education alongside the men. *Antarjanams* themselves showed great enthusiasm to enlighten the other women in their community. The active involvement and industrious efforts of the Namboothiri women such as Parvathy Nenminimangalam, Arya Pallam, Lalithambika Antarjanam, Devaki Narikkattiri, Sreedevi, Umadevi, Priya Dutta etc. can be noticed in Namboothiri social reform movements from the 1930's onwards.<sup>107</sup> The Antharjana Samajam formed in the year 1931 can be considered a sister movement of the Namboothiri reform movements initiated by V.T. Bhattathiripad.

Premji opines that it was as a result of the staging of *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk* that the Antharjana Samajam was formed. The depiction of the play began to shed light on the dark confines of the *antarjanams*. In many places, young women undertook a 'sartorial reformation' by having their ears pierced and wearing earrings, by forsaking their brass and copper bangles and wearing bangles of gold, and wearing blouses. Clothes are not just meant to cover one's nakedness. They convey, albeit in a silent way, a message. Thus, a particular dress would act as a statement or a proclamation. That conservative elements opposed such sartorial choices confirm the ideological effect these produced in the society. Before the staging of *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk*, P.M. Manezhi gave up her *ghosha* and greeted the audience wearing a *rouka* and a *mundu*. Following this, under the leadership of Parvathy Nenminimangalam, the Antharjana Samajam was formed at the Nenminimangalam *illam*. Several Namboothiri women like Parvathy Nenminimangalam and Arya Pallom gave up the *ghosha* and took to the forefront in fighting for the awareness of other *antarjanams*, and began wearing the *Mundu* and Blouse instead.<sup>108</sup> Mannath Padmanabhan decided to organize a meeting at

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<sup>106</sup> Lalithambika Antarjanam, *Aatmakathayk* . . . ., *op.cit.*, pp. 43-46

<sup>107</sup> Priyadatha had the credit of the first *antarjanam* who passed S.S.L.C and also first teacher from the Namboothiri community. For details see Ginu George, 'Yogakshema Sabha and Women Empowerment', *International Journal of Applied Research*, vol.3, no.1, 2017, pp. 792-794

<sup>108</sup> *Unninamboothiri*, vol.1,1947, p.64

Mavelikkara to commend Parvathi Nenmenimangalam, Arya Pallom, and the *antarjanams* who gave up their *ghosha*. Upon hearing this news, Lalithambika Antarjanam excused herself from the house saying that she wanted to visit a temple nearby, and attended the meeting after giving up her *ghosha*. She recalls that when she returned from the meeting, even the *aphans* who pretended to be more liberal were unwilling to accept her.<sup>109</sup> Antharjana Samajam advocated monogamy, widow remarriage, the right for teenage girls to study, the right to marry from one's own caste etc. The *Samajam* opened many training centres (*Thozhil Kendrangal*) with the aim of making Namboothiri women self-dependent and free.

As part of the social revolution, marriages to aged men were prevented through direct intervention and this caused an increase in the number of unmarried women. Similarly, the radical reformers urged for divorce and the same caste marriage of the *sapathnis*. The only solution to this crisis was that the *aphans* get married to women in their own community. Under the auspices of Namboothiri Yuvajana Sangham a marriage sub committee was formed to compel the unmarried Namboothiri youngsters to marry from the same caste. Picketing was organised by its members to prevent marriages of young girls with aged Namboothiri men. Though resistance did not make immediate results, it created a feeling among Namboothiris against this type of marriage. Moreover, the fear of picking compelled many Namboothiri families to do away with these marriages.<sup>110</sup> Consequently a proposal was introduced in favour of divorce and remarriage of *sapathnis* at the Edakunni session of Yogakshema Sabha in 1929. Though the radicals supported the initiative, many elder leaders of the Sabha, vehemently opposed remarriage of *sapathnis* as they were wives and their husbands were alive.

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<sup>109</sup> Lalithambika Antarjanam, *Aatmakathayk* ....., *op.cit.*, p.71

<sup>110</sup> S. Manjuladevi, *Women's Movements in Kerala: Challenges and Prospects*, Betsy Institute of Non Violence and Women Studies, Madurai, 2002, pp.102-103. E.M.S. Namboothiripad had participated in some of the picketing aimed at resisting marriage between young girls and old men. See E.M.S. Namboothiripad, *Atmakatha*, *op.cit.*, p. 145. In *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk* judicial interventions sought to prevent such a marriage.



But still the successful interference of the Namboothiri Yoghakshema Sabha and Yuvajana Sangham resulted in several *sajathivivaham*. By marrying Sridevi (I.C.P.Namboothiri's sister), whose marriage had been fixed with an older man on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1930, V.T. became an example for marriage within their own caste.<sup>111</sup>

Following this, there were also widow remarriages. During a speech about the liberation of Namboothiri women in the annual sub-committee meeting of the Yoghakshema Sabha conducted at Alattiyoor in the *illam of C.M.C.* Namboothiripad, Parvathi Nenmenimangalam posed a question to the youngsters in the crowd. The question was how many of the youngsters clamouring for social change would be ready to marry a widow. At that very event, M.R.Bhattathiripad and Premji declared that they were willing. The first widow remarriage was of M.R.Bhattathiripad marrying Uma Antarjanam (V.T. Bhattathiripad's sister-in-law and I.C.P.Namboothiri's sister) at Rasika Sadanam, V.T.'s home.<sup>112</sup> By marrying his sister Parvathi Antarjanam to the Nair youngster Raghava Panikkar, V.T. also kick-started the practice of inter-caste marriages.<sup>113</sup>

Influenced by the radical social reform movements of other castes the younger Namboothiries demanded for family and marriage regulations. Subsequently Madhusodhanan Thanghal submitted a bill in the legislative council which permitted *parivedhanam* and prohibited *adhivedanam*. The bill was submitted to a select committee to make a detailed analysis and to collect public opinion. After introducing numerous amendments, the committee submitted the redrafted bill for legislation. The Madras Namboothiri Act of 1933 was a result of the tireless efforts of the Namboothiri middle class. It enforced monogamy by

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<sup>111</sup> I.C.P Namboothiri, *Viplavathinte Ulthudippukal* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 2019 (First published 2002), p.51

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p.66. Also see B.R.P.Bhaskar, *Pinthirinjodunna Keralam* (Mal.), Haritham Books, Kozhikode, 2002, p.38. There were several attendees in the marriage such as E.M.S.Namboothiripad, Sahodaran Ayyappan, Nalappattu Narayana Menon, Nilamboor Valiya Raja, Mannath Padmanaban, Kutti Krishan Marar, Parvathi Ayyappan, Arya Pallom etc.

<sup>113</sup> Velayudan Panikkassery, *op.cit.*, p.104

abolishing *adhivedanam* and caste endogamy. The Act also legalized *sajathivivaham* of all major Namboothiri males, and prohibited him from entering into *sambandham* alliance.<sup>114</sup> The Madras Marumakkathayam Act was also passed in the same year. As per the provisions of this act *sambandham* was considered as a regular marriage, conferring on the children the same rights of inheritance and property as held by children whose parents were both Namboothiris.<sup>115</sup> These acts became central to the transition of the Namboothiri community to the nuclear family.

Sree Narayana Guru, one of the most prominent social reformers of Kerala, became instrumental in accelerating radical socio-economic cultural changes in the life of the backward classes like the Thiyyas in Northern Kerala and Ezhavas in Southern Kerala.<sup>116</sup> In 1888 by consecrating a Shiva temple at Aruvippuram he challenged the religious supremacy of the Brahmins. Later on many more temples were consecrated, including the one at Kozhikode, Thalassery and Kannur. The formation of SNDP Yogam under the spiritual mentorship of Sree Narayana Guru in Thiruvithamkoor was a turning point in the history of Kerala. The formative period of SNDP from 1903-1919 was marked by the remarkable crusade for social reform by Sree Narayana Guru.<sup>117</sup>

In its early years, the SNDP Yogam concentrated its attention on the removal of the social disabilities in the community like illiteracy, superstition,

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<sup>114</sup> The Madras Namboothiri Act, Act XXI of 1933, chapter III, clause 9 to 13, in G.O.163-164, 28/03/1933, Law (Legislative) department, The Fort St.George Gazette, Madras, 1933

<sup>115</sup> C. Vasantha Kumari, *op.cit.*, pp.150-152

<sup>116</sup> The Thiyyas of Malabar and the Ezhavas of the Travancore Cochin area were the same caste, but there was considerable difference between them. The Malabar Thiyyas received a better deal at the hands of the colonial rulers while their counterparts in the Travancore and Cochin area continued to be suppressed and kept aloof from the main stream of social and political activities.

<sup>117</sup> During this period, Kumaran Asan was the General Secretary, with the exception of one year when N. Krishnan was the acting Secretary.

conservatism and orthodoxy.<sup>118</sup> SNDP Yogam and the Ezhava community were also fortunate enough to secure the assistance of a number of notable young men, including Dr.Palpu, Kumaran Asan, C.V. Kunjiraman, Paravoor Kesavan Asan, Sahodaran Ayyappan, C. Krishnan, Moorkkoth Kumaran etc.<sup>119</sup> They have also initiated the construction of libraries attached to almost all these temples. Gradually SNDP became a pan Kerala movement integrating many other caste associations within its fold. The leaders of the Yogam through the columns of *Vivekodayam*, *Mitavadi*, etc. stressed the importance of education as the first step towards community reforms.<sup>120</sup>

Among the Thiyyas the progress of education, and the growth of a wholesome opinion, made the Thiyya women's position of a European's concubine shameful and this union was looked upon with contempt by the respectable class of people.<sup>121</sup> The English educated younger generation felt ashamed to practise the age old practices and resolved to correct the outdated practices. The marital reforms in the Thiyya community were as strong as the ones in the Nair community. Compared to Travancore, Thiyya caste in Malabar was more advanced socially- both in matters of education as well as in holding official positions. Therefore, a large portion of the emerging middle class in Malabar comprised the Thiyya community. Many are of the opinion that this was made possible by their relationship with the Europeans from the initial period of their settlement in Malabar. C. Kesavan says that he heard many surprising things about

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<sup>118</sup> Kaayyath Damodaran, 'SNDP Yogavum Thiyya Samudayavum', SNDP Yogam Fifty Fourth Anniversary Souvenir, 1957, pp. 53 - 54

<sup>119</sup> Dr Palpu observes: "The activities of the Yogam have been chiefly directed in the religious line. This will be evident from the fact that the number of temples opened in different parts of the land, from Mangalore to South Travancore, is now as many as fifty, and more are in course of construction. The practical advantages to the community from these institutions are numerous. Presidential Address of Dr. Palpu in the 11th Meeting of SNDP, *Vivekodayam*, vol. 11, no. 1- 2, 1914, p.3

<sup>120</sup> *Mitavadi*, book. 11, issue. 4, 1914, p. 69

<sup>121</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes...*, vol. VII, *op.cit.*, pp.36-37. Also see Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *op.cit.*, p.16

the Thiyya community when he travelled to Malabar. He says that there were several distinguished beauties in the caste and that this led to many of them having relations with the British officers. Due to their relationship to the ruling class, they received several benefits like entry to the schools, government jobs etc. and had considerable influence in society.<sup>122</sup> Several Thiyyas were employed in significant official positions under the Madras government.<sup>123</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, several of the Thiyyas were merchants, land owners etc. Moreover, Thiyyas of North Malabar were among the most cultured communities in India.<sup>124</sup>

Colonial modernity inspired the Thiyya community as well to fight to restructure the traditional family and marriage practices. Kumaran Asan stated that one of the important aims of the SNDP Yogam was to introduce and spread the new marriage system among the Ezhavas. In the history of Ezhava marriage 1905 is a prominent year. In that year, a major assembly was constituted under the leadership of Sree Narayana Guru. He advised the community to give up unnecessary and unscientific traditions like *thalikettu* and *thirandukuli*. Guru asked that the practice of the groom's sister giving the bride a *pudava* need to be stopped.<sup>125</sup> He also recommended a new marital tradition. This was published with the title 'Brahmashri Sree Narayana Guru Swami Thripadangalude Parishkrita Vivaha Vidhi' (Translated as 'Reformed Marital Traditions Proposed by Brahmashri Sree Narayana Guru Thrippadangal) in *Mitavadi*: "The bride and groom must tie the knot and exchange garlands in the presence of their parents and relatives. The bride's father or a person with the same esteem must place her hand

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<sup>122</sup> C. Kesavan, *op.cit.*, p. 199

<sup>123</sup> Most important among them were Churayi Kanaran, Uppott Kannan, Cheruvari Krishnan, Muliyl Krishnan, Oyitti Krishnan, Mitavadi Krishnan etc. C. Krishnan says that there was thus a series of Krishnans like this in the Malabar Thiyya community. Cheruvari Krishnan was knighted, enabling him to add the prefix 'Sir' to his name. He was also the first Thiyya judge in the Madras High Court. *Ibid.*, p.19

<sup>124</sup> P. Bhaskaranunni, *op.cit.*, p. 361

<sup>125</sup> R. Prakasam, *C.Kesavan :Jeevacharithram* (Mal.), Department of Cultural Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990, p. 22, 103

on the open hand of the groom” (My Trans.).<sup>126</sup> Sree Narayana Guru was also against an unnecessary crowd being gathered to display wealth. A marriage was to have a gathering of not more than ten people. This included the parents of the couple, their friends, a priest and a people’s representative. This ceremony was to be held in a public space like a *Bhajana Madam*, temple or educational institution. This marriage had to be recorded in a public document. A month before the marriage, the parents are to bring the couple to a public space and allow them the privacy to talk to each other. However, people who fixed their marriage after falling in love can skip this ceremony.<sup>127</sup> The first such marriage was held in C. Kesavan’s house in Thiruvithamkoor. It was the marriage of his sister Gowri Kutti.<sup>128</sup>

The major topic of discussion in the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam was the *thalikettu* marriage. Even though the practice was stopped in several places after Guru’s instruction, it was still carried out by several people. It was mainly conducted by the rich to flaunt their wealth. Therefore, the Yogam decided that this practice had to be stopped completely.<sup>129</sup> Sree Narayana Guru went directly and interrupted the *thalikettu* marriage of the daughter of a prominent Ezhava man in Neyyatinkara because of the luxurious way he planned to conduct it.<sup>130</sup> Like this he had stopped *thalikettu kalyanam* in several places. In accordance with Sree Narayana Guru’s instructions several marriages were conducted at the Thalassery Jagannatha temple and the Kozhikode

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<sup>126</sup> *Mitavadi*, book.3, issue.3, 1915, pp. 12-15

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.* Also see C.R. Kesavan Vaidyar (ed.), *Vivekodayam Special Edition*, 1967, pp.189-190

<sup>128</sup> R. Prakasam, *op.cit.*, p. 22

<sup>129</sup> *Mitavadi*, book. 4, issue. 6, 1916, p. 23

<sup>130</sup> P.K.Gopala Krishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram* (Mal.), The State Institute of Languages, Kerala, 2019, p.516. Also see P.K.Balakrishnan, *Narayanaguru* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 2015 (First published 1954), pp.160-161, Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *Kuttikalude Sree Narayana Guru* (Mal.), Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing, Kozhikode, 1988, p.66

Srikandeswara temple.<sup>131</sup> A separate marriage register was prepared to record the marriages conducted in these temples. Following his ideals of “One Caste, One Religion, One God”, these registers did not note down the caste or religion of the couple. The details included were the names of the couple, the names of their fathers, the names of the witnesses and their address.<sup>132</sup> Between 1934 and 1947, 408 marriages were registered in the Jagannatha temple. Moorkkoth Kumaran’s son Moorkkoth Kunhappa married Edavalath Kakkad Sita Lakshmi on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1936 at this temple in the manner prescribed by Sree Narayana Guru.<sup>133</sup>

Sree Narayana Guru also encouraged inter-caste marriage. Sahithee Sadanam Ponnamma in her article ‘Misra Vivahathinte Arambam’ mentions some of the inter caste marriages conducted by the disciples of Sree Narayana Guru.<sup>134</sup> In his message to the *Sahodara Sangham*, Sree Narayana Guru encouraged inter-caste marriage: “Whatever the religion, clothing, language of men might be, since they all belong to one caste, there is no reason why they cannot inter marry or interdine” (My Trans.).<sup>135</sup> This declaration was made in the All Kerala Sahodara Conference held in Aluva . Following this, several articles were published in support of inter-caste marriages. An article published in *Sahodaran* states that, “from a scientific perspective, mixed marriages are the best option. Science recommends that marriage between compatible people who do not share any blood relation is the most advantageous”. This article instructs the youth: “You should talk for, write about and back up inter-caste marriages. The first cases of such marriages may not be a great experience. You might be verbally abused. You

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<sup>131</sup> Both these temples were established by Sree Narayana Guru.

<sup>132</sup> Jnanodaya Yogam’s Marriage Register, Jagannatha temple, Thalassery, 1933-1947

<sup>133</sup> *Marriage Register*, Jagannatha temple, Thalassery, 1933 Nov 11 to 1944 March 24, pp. 18-19

<sup>134</sup> Sahithee Sadanam Ponnamma, ‘Misra Vivahathinte Arambam’, Antharashta Sree Narayana Guru Varsham Smaraka Pathipp, *Vivekodayam*, 1978, pp.149-151

<sup>135</sup> M.K.Sanu, *op.cit.*, p. 261

might be pestered. You will not be able to make changes after convincing everyone. Your difficulties will be temporary” (My Trans.).<sup>136</sup>

The Ezhava social reform movement sought to unite all sections of their caste through a common law of inheritance. To forge a community identity, Sree Narayana Guru, in a message to SNDP in 1909, stated: ‘where *marumakkathayam* system is followed in the community, legal provision should be made to give wedded wife and children the right to a portion of the man's individual earnings. Otherwise, marriage would be meaningless. Necessary steps in this direction should be taken after careful consideration’.<sup>137</sup>

A similar intellectual movement in Malabar was led by Brahmananda Sivayogi and Vagbhatananda. Brahmananda Sivayogi’s Philosophical and spiritual books in prose and poetry consisted of discourses on individual society and human happiness. In the early decades of the twentieth century he organised the *Siddha Samaj* and propagated a new philosophy of community life where there was no gender distinction. His work *Keralanacharam* written as a discussion among a Brahmin, a Nair, a Thiyya, an elite and a *sanyasin*, projected criticism against the caste practices introduced by the Brahmins in Kerala including their *sambandham* system of marriage.<sup>138</sup> Similarly *Atmavidyasangam* established by Vagbhatananda also campaigned for social reforms among the Thiyyas of Malabar. The *Sangam* was an intellectual and secular movement theoretically based on reason and rational analysis. To popularise his ideas he had also published a journal *Atmavidya Kahalam*.<sup>139</sup> Vagbhatananda along with

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<sup>136</sup> Author not mentioned, ‘Misravivaham’, *Sahodaran*, vol.2, No, 6, 1918, pp.100-106

<sup>137</sup> Meera Velayudhan, ‘Social Reform, Law, Gendered Identity Among an Oppressed Caste: The Ezhavas of Travancore’, *The Indian Historical Review*, vol. XXXV, no. 2, 2008, pp. 125-35

<sup>138</sup> K.K.N Kurup, ‘The intellectual Movements and Anti-Caste Struggles in Kerala’, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 55, 1994, pp.673 - 677

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.* Also see K.Muthulakshmi, ‘Vagbhatanandante Darsanavum Samoohya Paschathalavum’, in V.J. Varghese, N.Vijayamohan Pillai, Scaria Zacharia (ed.), *Anhooru Varshathe Keralam: Chila Arivadayalangal* (Mal.), Current Books, Kottayam, 2011 (First published 1999), p. 210

Brahmananda Sivayogi staunchly opposed all those rituals observed at birth, puberty, marriage and death. They advocated women's education and initiated a struggle in parts of North Malabar for women's right to wear blouses.<sup>140</sup> Vagbhatananda argued that the vanity behind some of the customs prevalent among the Nairs and the Ezhavas like *thirandukuli* and *thalikettukalyanam* economically impoverished people and denied the mental peace. Vagbhatananda tried to break the caste superiority and concept of purity and impurity involved in the caste institution through *preetivivaham* (Inter caste marriage) and *preetibojanam* ( Interdining). Under his initiative, the first *preetivivaham* was celebrated in December 1921,when a Ganaka called Kunhrama married an Ezhava girl.<sup>141</sup> The Arya Samaj which started functioning in Malabar in the twentieth century, recognized all religions and sanctified intercaste unions. According to the Arya Samaj marriage provisions, people of any religion can marry under its rites.

Social reform movements focusing on the institutionalisation of a conjugal family can be considered as an attempt to provide an 'intimate conjugal relationship'. All these organised social movements aimed at the demolition of joint families and restitution of conjugal nuclear families in the early twentieth century. These organisations made use of print as an effective medium to popularise new aspirations for marriage and conjugality. From the late nineteenth century onwards these changing notions of the colonial middle class can be traced from all kinds of literature.

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<sup>140</sup> Divya Kannan, 'Social Religious Reform in Twentieth Century Kerala: Vagbhatananda and the Atmavidya Sangam, 1900-1940', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol.73, 2012, pp.1006 -1011, For details see P.F. Gopakumar (ed.), *Keralathile Navodhana Nayakar* (Mal.), Chintha Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, 2018

<sup>141</sup> Swarna Kumari E.K, 'Social Changes in Malabar with Special Reference to Two Traditional Communities 1881-1933', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Calicut, 2001, p.121, Also see M.S.Nair, *Vagbhatananda Guruvum Samoohika Navodhanavum* (Mal.), Cultural Publications Department,Thiruvananthapuram, 1998



## CHANGING NOTION OF MARRIAGE IN PRINT: NOVELS

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were periods of significant change in Kerala. The social conditions at the beginning of the nineteenth century were hardly conducive to close conjugal relations in almost all the communities of Malabar. The British colonial presence and their increasing power and influence led to the refashioning of traditional social relations, customs, and practices, particularly with regard to family, marriage and women. The model of the modern nuclear family structure was presented as the ideal. According to K. Saradmoni, Kerala aspiring toward modernity and progress, especially in the realm of marriage and family, began to consider matriliney as an abnormality.<sup>142</sup>

It was through print media that the new ideas of family and marriage were conveyed in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Print was seen as an appropriate medium to instruct on family and domesticity. The high literacy which prevailed in the region contributed to the emergence of a 'reading public'. Thus, the printed materials had an audience. Marriage occupied a dominant place in the content of the novels, short stories, poetry, magazines etc. The literature of the period represented marriage as a relationship in which the emotional bond between husband and wife was given priority. As Mytheli Sreenivas observes this developed a conjugal family ideal where the relationship between husband and wife was figured as the central axis of affect and property ownership within families.<sup>143</sup>

The English educated intelligentsia exercised great ideological impact on the people and they began to transmit their notion of a new society, culture, family and womanhood through the print media. They utilised the press to stir up the

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<sup>142</sup> K.Saradmoni, *Matriliney Transformed: Family, Law and Ideology in Twentieth Century Travancore*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 10-15

<sup>143</sup> Mytheli Sreenivas, *Wives, Widows and Concubines: The Conjugal Family Ideal in Colonial India*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2009, p.6

consciousness of the people especially women, to enlighten them with new ideas and to make them fight against the age old customs and traditions especially women. The press was an effective weapon in the hands of social reformers to make serious discussions on family, marriage and a new womanhood. The novel ideas regarding family and marriage that emerged in Kerala in the late nineteenth century are obvious in novels like *Kundalatha* and in magazines like *Keraleeya Sugunabhodini* and others. There are literary and artistic expressions of the internal conflict among the Nair youth regarding their stance on *sambandham* and *marumakkathayam*. The novel *Indulekha* is a prime example. This novel has presented a severe attack on the institution of *sambandham*. Suri Namboothripad was caricatured as a stupid, licentious landlord of social prominence who aspired to engage himself into a *sambandham* relationship with Indulekha, the heroine of the novel. This relationship was desirable for her male family members but the heroine rejected this proposal and finally married her lover.

The novel details the various changes that came about in the Nair community due to the social and cultural impacts of the ‘Kerala Renaissance’. The thematic concerns of *Indulekha* include the selfishness of the elders in Nair family, and the obsession of the Namboothiris to enter into *sambandham* relations and the ways in which the middle class tried to change these traditions. *Indulekha* makes it clear that women who were bound by tradition to obey the elders of the family could be liberated with an English education. The English educated Indulekha questions the *sambandham* of Kalyani Kutty. When Parvathi Amma informs her of the *sambandham*, she asks her if Kalyani Kutty is aware of the arrangement. When she realises that Kalyani Kutty has not been informed, Indulekha remarks: “Terrible! Shouldn’t the girl also be informed of her own *sambandham*?” (My Trans.).<sup>144</sup> This question reveals the strengthening of the concept of individuality in a person educated in the values of the renaissance. *Indulekha* shows the picture of reformation in the Nair community, and the Namboothiri community, resistant

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<sup>144</sup> O.Chandu Menon, *Indulekha* (Mal.), Poorna Publications, Kozhikode, 2016 (First published 1889), p. 211

to change. The characters in the novel as well as in Chandu Menon's subsequent, though incomplete publication *Sarada*, like Suri Namboothiripad, Panchu Menon, Sheenu Pattar, Indulekha, Madhavan, Kalyani Kutty etc. are depicted as engaged in conversation revealing their thoughts on the prevailing social customs. Some of them make scathing criticism of the social customs and traditions, the landlord system, *sambandham*, the malpractices in society surrounding these practices etc. The characterisation of Suri Namboothiripad as a stupid and licentious provoked many Namboothiris, especially the youth, to question traditions and to initiate changes in the community.

In the novel *Meenakshi*, when Kanmana Kuberan Namboothiripad tries to make a *sambandham* alliance with Meenakshi, her uncle Gopala Menon staunchly opposes it.<sup>145</sup> Gopala Menon considered marriage as a form of relationship to be maintained till death. In the novel, it is his financial situation that allows him to oppose the *sambandham* firmly. However, the situation is different in *Lakshmi Kesavam*. Due to his dependence on the Akkarapattu *Prabhu* (landlord), Chattara Menon is unable to oppose the *sambandham* proposed for Lakshmi Kutty. Komattil Padumenon the author, highlights the issues in the Nair marriage system with the character of Akkarapattu *Prabhu*. This character reveals the inhumane behaviour and the rowdiness of the landlords in the nineteenth century. This novel portrays a 50-year-old man lusting for a 17-year-old girl and beginning the preparations to bring her home as his bed partner because she is the daughter of a man dependent on him. The novel strongly criticizes the tradition that led to this situation. Kesavan, the protagonist of the novel points out the need to reform the Nair marital system, and opines that *sambandham* holds no space for familial love to one's wife and kids or love between a husband and wife. Its only purpose was providing physical pleasure.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Cheruvalathu Chathu Nair, *Meenakshi* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Akademy, Thrissur, 1990 (First published 1890), pp.132-170

<sup>146</sup> Komattil Padumenon, *Lakshmeekesavam*, in George Irumbayam (ed.), *Naalu Novalukal* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1985, p.144

M.T.Vasudevan Nairs *Nalukettu* also pictured an opposition to the marital traditions of the Nairs. He portrays the complaints in society against the practice of *sambandham* through his characters. The central character, Appunni's mother and father were married to each other, defying the decisions of the elders and denying the practice of *sambandham*. In this novel, through the marriage of Malu's father, another character in the novel, M.T. highlights the lack of importance given to the ceremony of marriage.<sup>147</sup>

In the early twentieth century the Namboothiri reformers also channelised their new ideas of conjugality through print. When the Namboothiri reformers and activists realized that the speeches delivered in the podiums or the articles printed in the magazines and newspapers were not reaching the Namboothiri women, they began secretly circulating short write ups as pamphlets printed in attractive coloured papers. They even received responses from young girls in response to these pamphlets which were circulated. One such response was titled 'Write up of a young girl: Realities that unninamboothiri's must be aware of'. This was the first indication that the waves of changes in the society were being felt even inside the *nalukettu*" (My Trans.).<sup>148</sup> The reforming Namboothiris then turned to writing stories. This was on the assumption that women cannot resist stories and are always all ears to such narrations. In the introduction to his novel *Indulekha*, Chandu Menon details this importance that women vested in stories.

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<sup>147</sup> M.T. Vasudevan Nair, *op.cit.*, p.80. The following remark is made regarding the marriage of Malu's father: "*karanavan* made the decision. Father complied. He ( Malu's father) was given a *mundu* and sent to her (Malu's mother) home. Four Nair men accompanied him (My Trans.)". *Thalikettukalyanam* between Vijayan and Subhadra was the central theme of the novel *Omana Adhava Punarvivaham*. K.Barathi Amma, *Omana Adhava Punarvivaham* (Mal.), Sreevilsam Book Depot, Alappuzha, 1947

<sup>148</sup> Madambu Kunjukuttan, *Abhivadaye* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur, 1989, p.165. Renaissance in the Namboothiri community primarily refers to the upliftment of the women cloistered in darkness and ignorance inside the homes, denied of basic human rights and necessities. Social activists understood that there cannot be a noticeable change in society without freeing and enlightening these women. Putting the advantages of print technology to use, these activists used their stories, plays and novels to illustrate novel ideologies and challenge.

Social revolutionaries turned to literary creations, to propagate the idea that young couples should get married only after determining if they are mentally compatible, and to spread revolutionary thoughts inside the otherwise secluded *nalukettu*. The foremost among these were V.T. Bhattathiripad. He published the short story *Vishukkettam* in *Pasupatham* to spread these ideas.<sup>149</sup> This particular story details the tediousness of the internal life of most Namboothiri women. When the male lead of the story *Vishukkettam* arrives at an *illam* of which he is a distant relative on the eve of Vishu, the female lead plants a loving kiss on his cheek as if she were giving him a Vishu *kaineettam*.<sup>150</sup> The male and female leads of the story question the marital practice of *veli*, the male domination and the control exerted on women in the community. Following these publications, *Pasupatham* was banned in several *illams*. It was ordered that copies of the *Pasupatham* be set on fire and be touched only with a stick as if it was something truly abject.<sup>151</sup> The ripples of revolutionary thought inside the *nalukettu* are made obvious in these writings. The *Rajaneerangam* stories reveal V.T.'s revolt against Brahmanism. When the short story collection *Rajaneerangam* was first published in 1928, V.T. noted in the preface: "All the stories published in *Rajaneerangam* were published in *Pasupatham* by me under a pseudonym. These publications were started because I felt that the Namboothiri women hiding behind their *marakkuda*<sup>152</sup> were yet to make their debut to the world of literature. I believe that such publications can help bring changes in the marital customs of the Namboothiri community".<sup>153</sup> It is also stated that "through these writings my intention is not to attain fame as a writer. I want the undesirable marriage system among Namboothiris to be

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<sup>149</sup> There was a magazine titled *Sudarshanam* to oppose the ideals of V.T. and his activities. V.T. started the publication of *Pashupatham* to reply to the criticisms levelled against him in *Sudarshanam*, Velayudan Panikkassery, *op.cit.*, p. 95

<sup>150</sup> V.T. Bhattathiripad, *op.cit.*, pp. 45-48 *Kaineettam* is a gift, usually money or new clothes, given to the younger ones in the family on the day of Vishu.

<sup>151</sup> Madambu Kunjukuttan, *Abhivadaye*, *op.cit.*, p.162

<sup>152</sup> An umbrella with which Namboothiri women were always expected to cover their face in the public.

<sup>153</sup> V.T. Bhattathiripad, *Rajaneerangam*, in *V.T yude Sampoorana ...*, *op.cit.*, pp.21-25

thoroughly reformed and I believe that publication of this sort of literature would help in accomplishing such endeavour”.<sup>154</sup> The stories had marriage reform as their only goal, which would perfectly conform to the modern concepts of conjugal alliance and nuclear family. When *Rajaneerangam* was first published, the community leaders said that Namboothiri women should not read these stories” (My Trans.).<sup>155</sup> V.T.’s depiction of the contradictions and ugly aspects of their marital life caused a stir and spread a new light for those stuck inside the homes.

Through his writings Muthiringod Bhavatrathan Namboothiri expressed the idea that the conjugal relations of Namboothiris were totally against the modern family values like individual freedom, love and mutual trust. He argues that the conjugal intimacy was impossible in Namboothiri *illams* because of the enormous number of inmates and consequent internal conflicts. The prevailing joint family system prevented them spending time together and sharing intimacy.<sup>156</sup> Muthiringod Bhavatrathan Namboothiripad’s *Poonkula*, *Pratikara Devatha*, M.R. Bhattatiripad’s *Valkannadi*, etc. show the urge to reform traditional marriage practices.

The greatest shift in Malayalam literature during this period is that communities who were till then marked as untouchables also garnered representation henceforth. The hegemony of the ‘higher’ castes was questioned by Kumaran Asan in his poems. Several literary figures like C.V. Kunjiraman, Kedamangalam Pappukutti, Moorkkoth Kumaran, C. Krishnan etc. emerged from the ‘lower’ castes apart from Kumaran Asan.<sup>157</sup> They utilised the print media to

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<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> E.D. Davis, ‘V.T. Vithacha Navodhanathinte Nadaka Vithukal’, *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021, pp.163-164

<sup>156</sup> Muthiringod Bhavatrathan Namboothiri, ‘Poovacharam Athava Kizhnadapp’, *Unninamboothiri*, vol.7, issue.11, 1926, pp.646-654. Also see K.N.Sanil, *Kattu Vithacha Kalam:Muthiringodinte Jeevacharithram* (Mal.), Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 2011

<sup>157</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, ‘Ezhavarkk Vendiyalla Ezhakalkku Vendiyanu’, *Vivekodayam*, vol.2, issue.1,1968, pp.50-51

restructure the age-old marriage practices in their community. Moorkkoth Kumaran realized that interesting short stories and novels would be more useful than writing long articles on social issues. He says that foreigners further modified novels by enacting plays. In a speech delivered in Sahitya Parishad Sabha Moorkkoth Kumaran stated that the *Malayalis* were not inclined to write novels and short stories with the goal of enacting social change, which demonstrates our lack of concern for reform.<sup>158</sup> Kumaran's message to *Swajana Ranjini*, the mouthpiece of the Varriar Samajam in North Malabar, is noteworthy. He says that, 'it is necessary for each community to have separate associations and separate newspapers, but these associations and newspapers should be operated with the belief and conviction that the unity of different communities is their ultimate objective'.<sup>159</sup> The novel *Vasumathi* by Moorkkoth Kumaran propounded an ideal marriage entirely different from the traditional practices. Almost all his short stories as well visualised a companionate marriage. He tried to implement such innovative ideas about marriage in his own family. His son Moorkkoth Kunhappa's marriage was conducted in the same way as he pictured through his novels. Similarly in Moorkkoth Kumaran's biography by Kunhappa it is stated that, one of the earliest marriages conducted at Jagannatha Temple Thalassery as per the instruction of Sree Narayana Guru was Moorkkoth Kumaran's daughter's.<sup>160</sup> This was the same in the case of C.V. Kunjiraman's daughter's marriage.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, subsequent to the radical social reform movements and legal enactments there was a definite change from *sambandham* to marriage in all communities. *Indulekha* portrays the changes that manifests in a society when the shift from matriarchy to patriarchy, and a switch

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<sup>158</sup> C.K. Moossath, 'Moorkkoth Kumarante Vyakthi Mudra', in Sukumar Azhikode (ed.), *Moorkkoth Kumaran Sathabdi Smaraka Grantham*, 1974, pp.15-21

<sup>159</sup> C.R. Kesavan Vaidyar, 'Moorkkothine Sree Narayana Bhakti', in Sukumar Azhikode, *op.cit.*, pp.75- 76

<sup>160</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, *op.cit.*, p.121

from a joint family to a nuclear family is made. *Indulekha* notes the social changes in a society when the practices of *sambandham* and polyandry were gradually made null by law towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the shift to a different system of marriage was made where a single spouse was sanctioned by law. Indulekha by rejecting the *sambandham* to Suri Namboothiripad takes a stance against the Brahminical hegemony and the existing social norms of the time. With this very fundamental and paradigmatic shift in the constitution of the family, the woman in the relationship changed her status from a *sambandhakari* (the woman in the *sambandham* relationship) to that of a wife. The *sambandhakaran* (the man in the *sambandham*) became a husband. This was not just a change of titles. One can see the beginnings of a nuclear family structure in this shift, where a husband and wife share a roof with their children. The responsibility to meet the needs of the family now fell on the husband. People who had been free from any emotional responsibility jointly felt were tied to the emotional bond that came from having a family. Men who were previously under the control of the *karanavan* were now given the title of the 'head' of their household.<sup>161</sup>

### **CHANGING NOTIONS OF MARRIAGE: MAGAZINES**

The reformers made use of magazines to talk about novel ideas and conduct discourses on marriage and family. An article in *Sarada* questions the existing family structure in Kerala and talks about the system in England. For Englishmen, to be the head of a house is a duty foisted on a person after their marriage. With each marriage, a new family comes to the fore. After his marriage, the first thing an English youth hears would be directions on how to look after the needs of his wife, how to look after his family and his children, how to educate them etc. It was considered wrong to get married before a man has acquired the capability to look

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<sup>161</sup> The Madras Marriage Act of 1896, the Madras Marumakkathayam Act of 1933 and the Madras Namboothiri Act of 1933 imposed on the husbands the legal responsibility for the maintenance of the wife and children. The Hindu Marriage Act which came into force in 1956 has modified the law relating to Hindu marriage and it made monogamy compulsory among all classes of Hindus.



after the family unit.<sup>162</sup> Another article in *Sarada* says this about family life: “A true marriage is when the husband and wife commit to each other. Only these types of couples would enjoy a true marital life. The mind has its own attractions like an iron is attracted to a magnet. Only couples who find each other according to these attractions can be said to have truly united in love. A bride’s heart will rejoice only when she meets a husband suitable to her taste. For this to happen, people must make independent choices regarding their marriage” (My Trans.).<sup>163</sup>

The article ‘Dambathyam’ states that, ‘today’s marriages are largely constituted on the basis of the selfish needs of the men and women. Whether socially sanctioned or not, these marriages are immoral. The man finds a wife to cook for him and to look after his various needs. The woman accepts a husband who earns enough money to meet her demands. In very few instances, the man and woman fall for each other in love and admiration. Wise people with discerning skills would reject a relationship of this nature and youngsters would stop imitating the pre-existing tradition’.<sup>164</sup> It is also stated that, due to the changing culture today, families have begun to live separately now. This new type of family includes the husband, the wife, and the children. These types of families are ten times more comfortable than a joint family. Similarly, T.K. Krishna Varrier says that marriage is not an inconsequential relationship that lasts just an hour or for a few days. All the happiness and grief, losses, and victories in the life of a couple to the end of their life depend on their marriage. Therefore, in matters related to marriage, there must be complete acceptance between the couple. This is something that every community, regardless of their caste, should think about. This is a fundamental requirement to make the future of the next generation comfortable and happy.<sup>165</sup> K.M.’s article in *Vanithakusumam* points out that, only

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<sup>162</sup> Kamala, ‘English Grihajeetivam’, *Sarada*, book. 4, issue. 2, 1909, p. 32

<sup>163</sup> K.S.P (As in the original), ‘Vadhoo Varanmarude Hridayarpanam’, *Sarada*, book. 4, issue. 5, 1909, pp. 130-132

<sup>164</sup> R.Parameswaran Pillai, Dambatyam, *Sarada*, book. 9, issue. 1, 1908, pp. 9-16

<sup>165</sup> T.K. Krishna Varrier, ‘Vivaham’, *Lakshmi Bai*, book. 1, no. 12, 1906, pp. 441-446

a person who can look after his family, educate the kids properly, and take care of his wife deserves to have a family.<sup>166</sup> In his article ‘Vivaham’ published in *Vidyavinodini*, A.V. Krishna Iyer also shared a similar idea and insisted on allowing people who love each other to get married (My Trans.).<sup>167</sup>

Nair community owned magazines like *Nair*, *Nair Samudaya Parishkarini*, *M.N. Nair Masika*, *Malayali*, *Service* etc. were used to highlight the issues in contemporary society. Narayana Gurukkal in his article *Puthiya Niyamavum Nair Samudayavum* talks about the need to bring in a reformed marital system among the Nairs: “Nairs are Hindus and have accepted the precepts of Hinduism. Therefore, they should accept nothing but a marriage ceremony that is sanctioned by the scriptures i.e. a marriage with a promise made in front of the ritual fire. The promise in front of God is important for a pure marital relationship”(My Trans.).<sup>168</sup> Another article states that the primitive concept of marriage among the Nairs has made the position and status of the Nair woman quite vulnerable and pathetic. Due to the *sambandham* system, these women are labelled by others as immoral and as deviant.<sup>169</sup>

The Namboothiris also utilised the print media to spread their ideas in the public. Two magazines, started by them, *Yogakshemam* and *Unninamboothiri* published numerous articles to change the system of *sambandham*. It was declared that as long as Nair men were forbidden from marrying Namboothiri girls, Namboothiri boys should not marry Nair girls either.<sup>170</sup> In his article ‘Yuva Jana Chaitanyam’, Pathirisseri Narayanan Namboothiri opposed *sambandham* and the approach of the youth towards it: “Every Namboothiri must do a *veli* marriage.

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<sup>166</sup> K.M., ‘Njan Vivaham Cheyyathath Enth Kond’, *Vanithakusumam*, book. 2, issue.1,1928, pp. 26-28

<sup>167</sup> A.V. Krishna Iyer, ‘Vivaham’, *Vidyavinodini*, book. 7, no. 1, 1921, pp. 3-8

<sup>168</sup> Narayana Gurukkal, ‘Putiya Niyamavum Nair Samudayavum’, *Mahila*, book. 6, issue. 1, 1926, p. 428

<sup>169</sup> Oru Nair, ‘Oru Nair Samudaya Sanghatanam’, *Mahila*, book. 3, issue.1, 1923, pp.18-21

<sup>170</sup> *Yogakshemam*, 1911, pp. 23-24

*Sambandham* is insulting. Even though Yogakshema Sabha has been calling for these changes for ages, they have not come into force due to social opposition” (My Trans.).<sup>171</sup>

M. Rama Varma Thampan in his article, ‘Samudaya Parishkaranam’ stated that organizations like the Yogakshema Sabha should try hard for making people of different castes to share food with each other and following this inter-caste marriages would occur naturally. According to him, the atmosphere for inter-caste marriage would be created after people love and interact with each other irrespective of differences.<sup>172</sup> He insisted that to implement same caste marriage and equal division of property, Namboothiri youth must acquire a job and an English education. *Unninamboothiri* notes that the Namboothiri youth must be able to make a living by their own work if these changes are to come into force in the society.<sup>173</sup> In his article ‘Purvacharam Athava Kizhnadapp’, Bhavatrathan Namboothiri wrote in criticism of Namboothiri marriages: “There is no other system of marriage in the whole world as low and contemptuous as that the Namboothiris follow. While the rest of the world calls matrimony a heavenly and beautiful experience, Namboothiris do not get any of this comfort. Namboothiris today lead a ‘half-hour marriage” (My Trans.).<sup>174</sup>

A major decision made in the 7<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the *Namboothiri Yuvajana Sangham* was to give up the practice of polygamy that made their community a butt of others’ jokes and one that treated their women like animals and objects to be confined to the home. For this, the organisation received no support from any quarters. They wanted to implement monogamy where the wife

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<sup>171</sup> Pathirisseri Narayanan Namboothiri, ‘Yuva Jana Chaitanyam’, *Unninamboothiri*, vol. 6, issue.12, 1926, pp. 655-664

<sup>172</sup> M. Rama Varma Thampan, ‘Samudaya Parishkaranam’, *Unninamboothiri*, vol.9, issue. 11, 1933, p. 648

<sup>173</sup> *Unninamboothiri*, vol. 7, issue. 3, 1926, p.184

<sup>174</sup> Bhavatrathan Namboothiri, ‘Purvacharam Athava Kizhnadapp’, *Unninamboothiri*, vol.1, issue. 11, 1926, pp.677-681

would be granted an esteemed position next to her husband. For this, inter-caste marriages should be given up and alliances should be formed from one's own caste. The practice of marrying from a different caste when so many young girls from one's own caste could not get married was questioned. Traditionalists of the community were ruffled by these decisions.<sup>175</sup>

In the reply given to the Select Committee of the Namboothiri Kudumba Regulation, *adivedhanam* was mentioned as the reason for the wide age gap between couples, more than one widow being left behind after the husband's death, conflict between co-wives in a marriage and children being denied the love of parents" (My Trans.).<sup>176</sup> Kanipayyur Parameswaran Namboothiripad's opinions regarding same-caste marriage are different from the others. In his opinion, the time for same-caste marriage has not arrived yet. When the members of a family increase, it would be impossible to look after the family without a job. Therefore, same-caste marriages should be conducted only if the person is educated and self earning.<sup>177</sup>

Due to the cultural, social and economic advance that the Thiyyas achieved through colonial modernity, several of them reconsidered their marriage traditions. The Thiyya youth raised opposition against *thalikettu* marriage, *pulikudi*, polygamy etc. They too used the medium of print to spread these ideas in society. Through *Mitavadi* and *Vivekodayam* innumerable articles and speeches have been published emphasising the need for reforms among the Thiyyas. The influence of Sree Narayana Guru's ideas is explicit in *Mitavadi*. Even though the first page of *Mitavadi* declared that the magazine referred to the issues of Thiyyas, it dealt with

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<sup>175</sup> M. Rama Varma Thampuran, 'Namboothiri Yuvajana Sangham', *Unninamboothiri*, vol. 7, issue. 8, 1926, pp.475-479, also see vol. 10, issue. 4, 1926, p. 242

<sup>176</sup> *Unninamboothiri* , vol. 7, issue.12, 1927, pp. 665-670

<sup>177</sup> Kanipayyur Parameswaran Namboothiripad, 'Jeeva Chaitram', *Unninamboothiri* , vol. 4, issue. 8, 1923, pp. 141-143

other issues as well.<sup>178</sup> C. Krishan tried to eliminate the injustices and evil practices within the Thiyya community through *Mitavadi*. He painstakingly searched out and selected articles that would enable free thinking and rationalism in the readers, and published them in each issue of the *Mitavadi*.<sup>179</sup> Moorkkoth Kumaran and Muliyl Keshavan wrote numerous articles for the social upliftment of Thiyyas in this magazine.

Moorkkoth Kunhappa in his article 'Misravivaham' published in *Vivekodayam* stressed the changes to be made in the marriage system of the Thiyyas and says that inter caste marriage is essential. He further stated that 'even though we know about inter-caste marriage, we do not have the courage to act accordingly. Such marriages are the best remedy for unity among different castes. This will restructure the marriage tradition of the Thiyyas in modern lines'.<sup>180</sup> In this article, Kunhappa recollected the words of C.Krishnan following the marriage of a Brahmin youth to a Thiyya woman: "Even now, marriages are based on the outdated concepts of caste, resulting in total incompatibility with regards to age, education, work and culture. Instead of this, when marriages are held between two compatible people, a good marital life can be achieved".<sup>181</sup> A speech given by C.V. Kunjiraman in 1905 was published in *Vivekodayam* titled 'Samudaya Parishkaranam' in which, he vehemently criticised the traditional marriage practices of the Thiyyas. He pointed out the need to reform these practices and

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<sup>178</sup> Contemporary issues like Nair and Namboothiri reforms, *marumakkathayam* etc. became the topic of discussion in the magazine. For details see *Mitavadi*, book.4, issue.3, 1916, Also see *Mitavadi*, vol.4, no.6, 1915

<sup>179</sup> V.R. Parameswaran Pillai, 'Sevana Thrishna Thikanja C Krishnan', C.Krishnan Birth Centenary Supplement, *Vivekodayam*, vol.1, no.6, 1967, pp.19-20. C. Krishan believed that the root cause of the pathetic condition of the Ezhavas was that they were trapped within the confines of Hindu tradition. He exhorted them to convert to Buddhism, and invited Buddhist monks from Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and established a Buddhist Vihaara (temple). N.R. Krishnan, 'Mitavadi C.Krishnan', *Vivekodayam*, vol.1,no.6, 1967, pp.73-75

<sup>180</sup> Moorkkoth Kunhappa, 'Misravivaham', *Vivekodayam*, vol.1, no.6, 1967, pp.13-16

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

introduced a new form of marriage based on mutual understanding of the couples.<sup>182</sup>

Almost all the magazines of the period projected the need for reforming traditional marriage practices and popularised the idea of companionate marriage based on mutual love and affection. All these writings and speeches helped to a great extent in spreading a new ideal of marriage in the society. Subsequently people started imagining and discussing the concept of love marriages as is evident from contemporary literature.

### **MARRIAGE REFORMS: THEATRE**

From the early decades of the twentieth century onwards theatre has also played a powerful role in highlighting social evils prevailing in the society, to raise the spirit of nationalism and to popularise new ideals of marriage. The drama of this period can be broadly categorised and classified within the realm of social or community theatre, which 'may be defined as theatre with specific social agendas where aesthetics is not the dominant objective and stands outside the realm of commerce.'<sup>183</sup> Drama, a specific mode of fiction represented in performance, was considered more effective than novels by some of the reformers. *Mariyamma*, one of the earliest social novels written by Kocheppan Tharakan, projected many social evils that prevailed among the Christian family. Similarly *Puthu Pattabhishekam* and *Pakkanar Charitham* by Vidwan P. Kelu Nair, the historical plays from Thiruvithamkoor like the *Seethalakshmi*, and the *Raja Kesavadas* by E.V. Krishna Pillai and *Veluthambi Dalwa* by Kainikkara Padmanabha Pillai aroused patriotic sentiments among the colonial subjects.<sup>184</sup> In North Kerala the plays of Mahakavi Kuttamath like *Vidya Samkhadwani* and *Chithrantharagal*

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<sup>182</sup> C.V., 'Samudaya Parishkaranam', *Vivekodayam*, vol.1, no.7, 1967, pp.9-16

<sup>183</sup> N. Divya, 'Drama of the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century: The Kerala Reform Movement and Namboothiri Women', *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, vol.24, no.2, 2017, pp. 217–230

<sup>184</sup> K. K. N. Kurup, *Nationalism and Social Change: The Role of Malayalam Literature*, Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1998, pp.101 -102

criticised the institution of caste and its divisions of society.<sup>185</sup> In 1930's V.T. also realised that the medium of theatre was more powerful in the propagation of ideas than articles. Subsequently he used dramas to reform marriage practices and transform the social conditions of women.<sup>186</sup> In his work *Nadakathinu Pinnale Nadakam*, V.T. says that he turned to theatre as a remedy during a critical period of the reformations in the Namboothiri community, when the Yogakshema Sabha experienced a lurch in its activities. "A Namboothiri Bill was passed in the Kochi Legislation due to the tireless striving of the Yogakshema Sabha and the Yuvajana Sangham. Due to the pressure exerted by the traditionalist Namboothiris, the king dismissed it summarily. Everybody felt that no other social revolution would be possible for ages. Many people who had come forward previously withdrew themselves from the public. It was in this situation that theatre emerged as a solution" (My Trans.).<sup>187</sup>

The major premise of the drama *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk*, is that of an old Namboothiri with several wives trying to marry the young Devaki, also called Theti, and a group of progressive youngsters preventing the attempt. *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk* is not just a play that shows the love story of Theti and Madhavan. This is also a literary creation that critiques the issues prevalent in contemporary society. The play included the themes of women's freedom, right to property, access to modern education, protest against aged men marrying young girls, banning the *ghosha* etc. Towards the end of the play, Madhavan invites his wife into a council where several other men are present and boycott the *ghosha* even though the play was set and written in an era when the women were expected to be a man's slave and nothing else.<sup>188</sup> In the same play, the servant girl Cheeru

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, p.102

<sup>186</sup> Thikkodiyam also mentions the use of drama for social progress and for effecting changes in the population. Thikkodiyam, *op.cit.*, pp.39-40

<sup>187</sup> V.T. Bhattathiripad, 'Nadakathinu Pinnale Nadakam', in *V.T. Yude Sampooram....*, *op.cit.*, pp.278-280

<sup>188</sup> V.T Bhattathiripad, *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk*, *op.cit.*, pp.434-435

remarks upon seeing the aged Namboothiri who is trying to marry Theti: “If this demon attempts to set foot in my house, I would drive him away by beating him up with a broom” (My Trans.).<sup>189</sup> Through the pluck displayed by Cheeru despite being from a lower caste, V.T. illustrates and contrasts the freedom enjoyed by her, and the restrictions imposed on the Namboothiri women who are from the highest caste. The play, it was reported, produced more impact with a single night’s performance than the combined efforts of the Yogakshema Sabha in its 22 years of activity.<sup>190</sup>

Within three to four months of the opening performance, the play was performed again in more than a dozen places. These performances were in Namboothiri *illams* so that women inside them could also watch the play. *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk* took its core message to women who could neither attend the assemblies nor listen to the speeches delivered outside. Women of all ages and categories - whether they were married women or unmarried young girls, elderly women or widows- all started to watch the play peeping from the inside of the *illam*. These plays spread ideas encouraging love marriage and opposing polygamy as well as the practice of aged men marrying young girls.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51

<sup>190</sup> V.T. intended *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk* to be a strong protest against the miserable conditions of the Namboothiri women when he wrote the play for its performance on the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Yogakshema Sabha. This play was a clarion call for women to break the traditions. The first performance of the play was on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1929 at the Vadakkiniyedath *illam*, the maternal home of E.M.S Namboothiripad. Regarding the production of the drama, V.T. recalls, “Despite being a progressive institution, there were several oppositions to the play from Yogakshema Sabha. The traditionalists of the institution insisted that the play cannot be staged on the anniversary of the *Yogakshema Sabha*. Finally, they relented after the activists of the *Yuvajana Sangham* protested strongly and threatened to boycott the anniversary function. The performance started around 10 o'clock. Admission was through tickets. The entire hall was crowded with people. Several people who had come in with the intention of staying a few minutes found themselves watching the play in complete attention, without moving from their seat even once”.

<sup>191</sup> E.M.S. Namboothiripad, *Atmakatha, op.cit.*, p.110



This play, on its own, was able to spread the ideas of change that had been discussed among men for over a decade through assemblies and newspapers. E.M.S. Namboothiripad in his autobiography notes the changes in his mother after watching a performance of *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk*: “Before watching the play, even though some area meetings were conducted at the house, they produced no noticeable change in my mother. However, it was obvious after watching the play that, its core message on the need to induce changes in the marital traditions made a deep impact on her. She became open to the idea that her other children, not just the eldest son, might marry from their own caste and that the family property might end up getting divided later” (My Trans.).<sup>192</sup> E.M.S. Namboothiripad said that several grandmothers, mothers and sisters from thousands of families have changed their opinions similarly. I.C.P.’s wife Ittipapti remarked to him while they were returning home after the performance: “I won’t be taking off my blouse, no matter where I go”.<sup>193</sup> This was an indication of the changes this play brought about in society and among the women.

When Yuvajana Sangham published *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk*, all copies were sold out within 2 months.<sup>194</sup> Later, taking inspiration from V.T., M.R. Bhattathiripad and M.P. Bhattathiripad wrote a play each, *Marakkudakkullile Mahanarakam* (1934) and *Rithumathi* (1938). *Marakkudakkullile Mahanarakam* was written in the revolutionary spur to affect change in the Namboothiri community. In this play M.R.Bhattathiripad portrayed internal quarrels and dowry system in the community. This play protested against several injustices that women had to suffer under the traditional lifestyle and garnered much attention

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<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p.111

<sup>193</sup> I.C.P. Namboothiri, *op.cit.*, p.47

<sup>194</sup> Madambu Kunjukuttan says that several staunch traditionalists even attempted to kill V.T. following the staging of the play. The plan was to roll a huge stone from the *gopuram* of the temple and cause a head injury while he was returning after a bath. However, the stone was rolled over only after V.T. walked past because the one who was tasked with the murder got cold feet at the last moment. Madambu Kunjukuttan, *op.cit.*, p.178. Since its very first performance at Edakunni, the socially relevant drama created several changes in Kerala.

during the time. The drama centres around a girl, Ittipapti who was given in marriage as the third wife of Pootanappalli Moos. There she was put to most difficulty by cowives and her husband and finally she committed suicide. The author made it clear that the parents who had at least one daughter to give in marriage should read this drama. This drama raised awareness in the society of the entrenched systems that gave husbands the rights to beat and even murder *antarjanams*.

The very first scene of the play *Rithumathi* portrays the images of change - the social revolutions taking place in the country, the state of education, a suitable environment for reading, shift to sensible dressing etc. This play received more popularity than was expected.<sup>195</sup> When this play was staged on the anniversary of the *Namboothiri Vidyalayam*, the parents were found enjoying it. Later, the practice of girls halting their education once they start menstruating slowly came to an end.<sup>196</sup> Devaki in *Rithumathi* is a strong woman capable of fighting for her education, for freedom in dressing as she chose, and for making her own decisions regarding her marriage. She proclaims: "I will listen to anyone, if what they say makes sense. If they say something unacceptable, I won't listen to him even if it is Lord Indra himself" (My Trans.).<sup>197</sup> When the twenty-seventh conference of the Yogakshema Sabha was held in Kochi in 1935, the play *Punarjanmam Adhava Ittichiriyude Randam Veli* was performed. This was the first play of Lalitambika Antarjanam.<sup>198</sup> It was the heartrending story of a young woman who became a widow on the third day of her marriage without getting to see her husband even

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<sup>195</sup> There was an incident in an *illam* near Trippunithura, where a young girl was about to be married to a Namboothiri man with whom she had a huge age gap. In protest, she shut herself in her room the day before her marriage. In the end, when her uncle tried to persuade her from near the window, she said: 'If you promise me that I will not be married to him, I will open the door'. This is an instance that shows that women had begun to protest for their freedom and for their right to make decisions regarding their marriage. M.P. Bhattathiripad wrote *Rithumathi* drawing inspiration from this incident.

<sup>196</sup> M.P. Bhattathiripad, *Rithumathi* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur, 1944, p.8

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54

<sup>198</sup> Madambu Kunjukuttan, *Brashtu*, *op.cit.*, pp.201-222

once and her efforts to get liberated from the clutches of tradition and go beyond the presumptions around her gender identity.<sup>199</sup> Lalithabika Anthrjanam's another play *Savitri* and K. Saraswathi Amma's play *Devoothi* were staged in 1935 and 1944 respectively.

Literature became one of the dominant cultural resources which helped the middle class in refashioning family and marriage. In Malabar, this new monogamous marriage and nuclear family made its biggest impact in the Nair, Namboothiri and Thiyya communities. Along with the conceptualisation of a new family and conjugality, there were attempts to bring progressive changes in the lives of women in the domestic sphere as well. With the popularisation of familial and marital changes the colonial middle class idealised a 'new women' suitable for companionate marriage and in the twentieth century they even dreamt of romantic love leading to marriage.

## **RESTRUCTURING WOMANHOOD : EDUCATION**

In the second half of the nineteenth century the emergence of a dynamic public sphere coinciding with a flourishing print culture had profound implications for women as well. They became subjects and objects of the vernacular print culture. Women's emancipation was one of the major concerns of the middle class. As discussed above, various caste associations instructed their women for reforms in multiple ways which were often reflected in print. By the eighteenth century in England, the concept of family and marriage thereby the status of women had begun to undergo significant changes. Conjugal family life, companionate marriage, etc. were some of the new ideas born among the European middle-class. The English conception of a conjugal relationship was one in which woman was her husband's intelligent companion, offering him consolation and relaxation, support and encouragement, and guidance.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Lalithambika Antharjanam, *Aatmakathayk...*, *op.cit.*, p. 75

<sup>200</sup> Dating from the eighteenth century, English woman-centered periodicals were an extension of conduct manuals, material written primarily by men (sometimes in the guise

Colonial modernity and the influence of Western culture spread such ideas among the Indian middle-class in the nineteenth century, and the concept of a new family began to grow among them. As part of this, they realized that the traditional family system was uncivilised and tried to change and reform it. They chose print as a medium to convey new ideas about the family to society and to convince people about the necessity of reforms. To this end, various publications were created focusing on communities. The middle-class attitudes towards the family system and marriage practices are very evident in the novels, plays and magazines of the time. 'Here Comes Papa,' the title of a Ravi Varma painting done in the late nineteenth century is seen as representing the emergence of new conjugal and familial relationships for those following matrilineal kinship.<sup>201</sup>

Various castes and communities in Malabar towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, like elsewhere in India, were in the process of self-transformation. The place of women became the most debated issue in the social sphere that changed as part of colonial modernity. This gave rise to lively discussions in print as well. The educated middle class felt that their women were not worthy of living together with them. The position of women was not the same among all the communities in Malabar and therefore different communities formulated different agendas for the upliftment of their women and their main aim was to create a new woman according to the new times. A closer look at the novels and magazines published during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century reveals that education was seen as the first step toward the rise of women. The colonial middle class realized that education was essential to the construction of a new female identity. The gap between

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of a female voice) to instruct privileged-class females on appropriate social decorum, and thus intended to cement and preserve the gendered status quo. See Deborah Anna Logan, *The Indian Ladies' Magazine, 1901–1938: From Raj to Swaraj*, Lehigh University Press, London, 2017, p.4

<sup>201</sup> Janaki Abraham, 'Why Did You Send Me Like This?': Marriage, Matriliney and the 'Providing Husband' in North Kerala, India', *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 17, no.2, 2011, pp. 32-65

educated husbands and uneducated wives created difficulties in the social and family structures, leaving educated and bureaucratic husbands unable to have a satisfactory relationship with their wives.<sup>202</sup> This thought extended education, till then a monopoly of men, to women as well. But still the educated men wanted to restructure women's education in such a way that benefited men and the new family. So, the parameters of this education were clearly demarcated. Meera Kosambi argues that, a new vested male interest in women's education had been created by the demand made by English educated young men, imbued with the idea of companionate marriage for educated wives.<sup>203</sup>

The Christian missionaries and the newly emergent educated middle class made early attempts to educate women. Initially the discussion on female education was focused on whether it is permissible to provide Western education for women. The then print media was flooded with pros and cons of female education. Earlier it was argued that English education was not essential in the domestic realm as it was in the public. It was argued that women should be given such an education which would help them to perform their natural roles better. In response to this, women writers such as T.B. Kalyani Amma, B. Chinnamma, Taravath Ammalu Amma etc. are seen expressing different opinions. Women had to face stiff opposition from the orthodoxy to get educated. Despite the traditionalist opposition, the rising middle class imbued with Western ideology supported it. But when women began to move out from their domestic duties and responsibilities, blind imitation of Western culture was seen as responsible for this state of affairs. Then the debates and contestations shifted to the desirable nature of female education to bring back them to the domestic realm. Whether boys and girls could share the same curriculum or whether girls needed a specialised one,

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<sup>202</sup> Vir Bharati Talwar, *Feminist Consciousness in Women's Journals in Hindi, 1910-1920*, in Kumkum Sangari, and Sudesh Vaid, (ed.), *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1993, p.220

<sup>203</sup> Meera Kosambi, *Crossing Threshold: Feminist Essays in Social History*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2007, p.156

that fostered feminine qualities. They made attempts to control female education and proposed that women's education should be revamped to instil 'womanly' qualities.

The real motivation behind educating women was not to develop her personality or intelligence but only to maintain a middle-class family. As part of this, the main aim of women's education was to make the woman the centre of the family. Smoothing out and polishing the natural tendencies and attitudes of the woman to create an ideal woman became the central purpose of women's education.<sup>204</sup> The middle class also thought that they wanted to give education to their women to create the ideal of the 'Western conjugal couple'. In Bengal too by the late nineteenth century boys wanted wives who could read and write, at least in Bengali if not in English and literacy was increasingly mentioned as a necessary requirement in marriage negotiations.<sup>205</sup> However, they expressed profound anxiety that the Western educated women might be less interested in their domestic duties. Thus, a novel education system was formed for women. Print media was used widely to popularize the arguments for and against women's education.

Women's education was a major point of discussion in the early Malayalam novels. All the heroes and heroines were educated people in these novels. Education, especially women's education is discussed thoroughly in novels from *Indulekha* onwards. Chandhu Menon depicts the characters in *Indulekha* with an emphasis on the need for education in contemporary society. In *Indulekha* we see a woman who is educated, wealthy, and therefore capable of making decisions on her own. *Indulekha* is a woman who is deeply rooted in tradition. But, at the same

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<sup>204</sup> P.Ummer Kutty, 'Sthree Swathanthryam' in O.V. Abdulla, O.V.Aboobacker, O.V.Ummer Kutty, O.V. Abdul Khader (ed.) *Viswabhanu* (Mal.), 1936, pp.97-103

<sup>205</sup> Judith E.Walsh, 'The Virtuous Wife and the Well-ordered Home: The Re-conceptualization of Bengali Women and their Worlds', in Rajat Kanta Ray (ed.), *Mind Body and Society: Life and Mentality in Colonial Bengal*, Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1995, p.340. As early as 1870 the deputy inspector of education in Dacca reported that the unmarried in their selection of brides have come to consider beauty without education defective. Quoted in Meredith Borthwick, *The Changing Role of Women in Bengal 1849-1905*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1984, p.103

time, she shows her taste in the Western cultural ethos. It is her education that empowers Indulekha to protest against the decisions of the family patriarch.<sup>206</sup> English surrounds Indulekha's nature like a mysterious aura. Even Panchu Menon, who terrifies everyone else, is scared of her and he admits his fear. "I am not afraid of anyone in the world. But for some reason, I am petrified of Indulekha. I cannot bear it when she gets angry" (My Trans.).<sup>207</sup> English was the only thing that distinguished Indulekha from other Nair girls, so the knowledge of English may be the reason for Panchu Menon's irrational fear.<sup>208</sup> While education enables the heroine to thwart the decrees of the patriarch in *Indulekha*, it is the lack of education that forces Kalyani Kutty, another character of the novel, to abide by the rules of tradition.

The merits of women's education are highlighted in the novel *Meenakshi* by Cheruvalath Chathu Nair as well. Puruthan Namboothiripad, a character in the novel, is a strong opponent of women's education. Besides, he is of the opinion that women's education is merely a waste of money. Meanwhile, Gopala Menon, Meenakshi's uncle in the same novel, supports education and expresses his opinion that education is essential for women to bring them out of ignorance, to develop better character, and to lead respectable married life.

The novel *Lakshmeekeshavam* also portrays the then contemporary anxieties on women's education. There is an elaborate dialogue in the novel on the merits and demerits of education between Kanmaran Nair and Keshavanunni Nair. When Kanmaran asks if there is such a necessity for women's education, Keshavan replies: "It is necessary. They should not be just machines for progeny, like most women today. As their organs are decorated with ornaments, their mind should

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<sup>206</sup> G. Arunima, 'Glimpses from a Writer's World: O. Chandu Menon, His Contemporaries, and Their Times', *Studies in History*, vol.20, no.2, 2004, pp.189–214

<sup>207</sup> O.Chandu Menon, *op.cit.*, p.92

<sup>208</sup> V.C. Sreejan, 'Sanskrit, Indulekha, and English', in E.P Rajagopalan (ed.), *Indulekha Vayanayude Disakal* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 2001, p. 25

also be decorated with education” (My Trans.).<sup>209</sup> Keshavan also opines that an educated woman will do much better than an uneducated one in housekeeping, cooking, maintaining peace and good rules in the house, spending moderately etc. In this novel, Lakshmikutty who studied English from Madras defies the lord and the patriarch of the family and because of her education dares to leave the country.

In the same novel, Ittivasu Namboothiri while advising Chathara Menon observes certain things about English language: “You need courage, you need freedom, you don’t obey anyone, these are the things that are first taught in English” (My Trans.).<sup>210</sup> George Irumbayam opines that it exemplifies the public attitude of Namboothiris at that time. Modern education which deprived Namboothiris of their ‘liberties’ was a problem for them.<sup>211</sup>

*Saraswatheevijayam* is another major novel that came out focusing on education. The very title *Saraswatheevijayam* is given in the sense of the victory of education. In this novel, education enabled Marathan, a lower caste, to rise to the position of a judge pushing back the barriers of caste. Besides, Subhadra, who was subjected to *Smarthavicharam*, and her daughter find the confidence to live through the education she has received since then. The story says that Subhadra who had learned to read, write, and speak English got appointed in a new school for girls set up by European Missionaries in Kannur for a salary of twenty rupees. Education gives Subhadra her self-identity in the society that rejected her.<sup>212</sup> It also mentions that the prosperity, fame, and progress of a place will depend on its educational achievement.

In the novel *Sukumari* also education is a topic of debate. The novel revolves around Sathyarthi, a Thiyya youth, leaving the country after converting to Christianity and her daughter Sukumari getting educated with the help of the

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<sup>209</sup> Komattil Padumenon, *op.cit.*, p.145

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p.178

<sup>211</sup> George Irumbayam, *op.cit.*, p.26

<sup>212</sup> Potheri Kunhambu, *Saraswatheevijayam* (Mal.), in George Irumbayam, *op.cit.*, p.97



Basel Mission. But, *Parangodeeparinayam* is a novel that takes a different stance on English education from the above-discussed texts. The tenth chapter of this novel is entirely a debate on English education between Ittichiriyamma and Pangasa Menon. This chapter titled “*Oru Sambhashanam Allengil Pathinettam Adhyayam*” [A Dialogue or Chapter Eighteen] provides a comic relief to the serious debate in *Indulekha* (in the eighteenth chapter) and voices dissent against modern education. In *Indulekha* those who do not know English are represented badly, while in *Parangodeeparinayam*, those who know English are portrayed ignorant. Parangodan and Parangodi who learned English are pictured mockingly, but Pangasa Menon and Kandappa Menon who do not have English education are portrayed respectfully. George Irumbayam suggests that *Parangodeeparinayam* is a desperate attempt to stop the onward march of the Kerala Renaissance.<sup>213</sup>

Apart from this, *Aphante Makal* (Aphan’s Daughter) by Muthiringod Bhavatrathan Namboothiripad, *Rithumathi* by M.P Bhattathirippad, stories of Lalithambika Antarjanam, etc. accentuate the importance of education of Namboothiri girls. The same was emphasised in the works of famous contemporary writers like Moorkkoth Kumaran and Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar. All the women characters portrayed in such novels were surely committed to tradition. Befitting the domestic sphere, they were skilled in cooking, knitting, and painting. Indumathi from *Indumathee Swayamvaram* is a character who is one step ahead of Indulekha. Indumathi, who was knowledgeable even in scientific subjects, used to hold discussions related to science with her father, and at the same time, was skilled in all the household chores.<sup>214</sup>

The assortment of writings on the topic of education that were published in the magazines towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century embodied suggestions and advice regarding what constituted

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<sup>213</sup> George Irumbayam, *op.cit.*, p.34

<sup>214</sup> Padinjare Kovilakath Ammaman Raja, *Indumathee Swayamvaram* (Mal.), D.C. Books, Kottayam, 1979 (First published 1890), pp.18-21

good and bad for women in all facets of life. Men who were educated in the modern system wanted their partners to be educated as well. During this period several questions and discussions regarding women's education were raised in the public space. The most important among these was what kind of education should be given to women. There were several articles published during this time, both supportive of and against the notion of women's education. Articles of this sort were mostly published in women's magazines such as the *Sarada*, *Lakshmbai*, *Mahila* etc.

A few educated men sincerely tried to ameliorate the condition of women. Mannath Narayanan Nair wrote in *Sarada* encouraging women's education: "even today several people among us believe that women do not require an education at all. Their ideology is that women need not know anything except kitchen chores, and that education is not necessary for this. It is the lack of education that, forced and doomed our woman to be born, live and to die in superstitious and blind faith" (My Trans.).<sup>215</sup> An article in *Mahila* says that: "Men have now come to the realisation that women's issues are their issues as well. More than providing consolation, this instills a certain sense of courage" (My Trans.).<sup>216</sup> R. Iswara Pilla's article 'Keraleeya Sthreekalude Uyarcha' [Advancement of Kerala Women] makes the state of women's education during that time apparent: "The arguments that women do not inherently deserve freedom or that they do not need good quality education are now outdated. Women have begun to break the restrictions placed on their freedom. There are now several Kerala women who have received good quality higher education. Most of the students in the Madras Queen Mary College are from Kerala" (My Trans.).<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Mannath Narayanan Nair, 'Sthree Samudayam' *Sarada*, book.2, issue. 1,1906, pp.109-111

<sup>216</sup> *Mahila*, book.I, issue.1, 1921, pp. 15-16

<sup>217</sup> R. Iswara Pilla, 'Keraleeya Sthreekalude Uyarcha', *Mahila*, book.1, issue. 1, 1921, pp. 3-4

An article published in *Unninamboothiri* favouring women's education argued: "When a man travels to other places for work like Bombay or Madras, and the wife just works in the kitchen, how can she become his other half and companion? Therefore, it is imperative that women's lives are reframed to suit today's needs. Education is the most basic requirement for the same and women need the same education that men receive today" (My Trans.).<sup>218</sup> He further stated that the idea *Nastri Swathantramarhati* [women do not deserve freedom] is just a line of poetry that was composed by some with a jealous heart. The only solution to this was to tear out such pages from the books that propagated these ideas.

There were several women as well who wrote in support of education. K. Padmavati writes that 'education is the training of the mind to discriminate between right and wrong, develop positive qualities like faith in God, truth, revulsion towards waywardness, and so on. Education removes the darkness in a man's mind just like light entering a dark space' (My Trans.).<sup>219</sup> This article also points out that women in Europe, America etc. acquire education just like men. Deenamma Matthew's article in *Vanithakusumam* also raised the need for gender equality: 'Women should be a companion who can help man in every sense. To carry out this task most successfully, they should learn and experience the world like men do. Moreover, for a married life to be harmonious, the husband and wife must have some common ground and enjoy and appreciate the same things. Therefore, it is necessary that baseless superstitions are set aside and our women are properly educated'.<sup>220</sup> B. Kalyani Amma, in her article 'Sthree Vidyabhyasa Mathruka', required that marital science be included as a compulsory subject of study while the syllabus for women's education was being formulated. According

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<sup>218</sup> Muthiringod Bhavatrada Namboothiripad, 'Sthree Vidhyabhasam', *Unninamboothiri*, vol.9, issue. 1, 1928, pp. 150- 157

<sup>219</sup> K. Padmavati Amma, 'Malayalikalum Sthreevidhyabhyasavum', *Sarada*, book. 1, issue. 7, 1905, pp. 5-9

<sup>220</sup> Deenamma Mathew, 'Sthreekalum Vidyabhyasavaum', *Vanithakusumam*, book.2, issue. 5-6, 1929, pp.176-177

to her, this training was imperative in order to enable the wife to live in peaceful coexistence with a highly educated husband.<sup>221</sup>

People held differing opinions regarding the education of women. Some believed that women should be taught English. Others wanted women to learn just some basic skills like cooking and household management. Still others believed that women should learn tailoring and art. For instance in *Lakshmibai*, D. Padmanabhan Unni says this about the changes in women's education, and also recommends this method as quite effective in its implementation: "Primary education till four years old can be retained as such. In the years following that, English should not be the medium of instruction for other subjects but be required only as a second language. Subjects like household management, financial management, agriculture, medicine, child care, cooking, art, tailoring, embroidery, weaving etc. should be made compulsory subjects. Unnecessary subjects that are taught these days should also be removed from the curriculum" (My Trans.).<sup>222</sup> Kanipayyur's article calls for the constitution of women's education according to the discretion of the man. He does not refuse reformation of women's issues. However, they must be as per the approval of and respecting the authority of the husband. The basis of matrimony is the attraction between men and women. However, if women were to act according to their wishes, men will gradually lose their attraction to women. He says that if women here keep talking about the differences in the marital traditions of America, England, France, Turkey, and so

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<sup>221</sup> B. Kalyani Amma, 'Sthree Vidyabhyasa Mathruka', *Malayala Masika*, vol. I, no. 3, 1930, pp. 68-75

<sup>222</sup> D. Padmanabhan Unni, *Lakshmibai*, book. 28, no. 1, 1932, pp. 22- 23. In an article about the education of Namboothiri women, Kanipayyur Sankaran Namboothiripad talks about the background in which a woman's character is formed and moulded. Regarding Namboothiri women's education, he says that they must be educated in schools where Namboothiris form the majority of students. This is because, if they mix with women from other castes, they might imbibe the ideals of revolution and thus lose feminine qualities. 'This is like mixing pure water with salt water'. Kanipayyur Shankaran Namboothiripad, 'Sthreevidhyabyasam', *Unninamboothiri*, vol. 9, issue. 12, 1929, pp.718-726

on, and roam around wishing for freedom, they would be hard pressed to find a groom.<sup>223</sup>

Women also held conflicting views regarding this issue. Padmavati Amma's response to Narayani Amma's article in *Sarada* on the methodology of women's education highlights how the education of men and women had to be equal. With regards to Narayani Amma's advocacy for women's education, she instructs that the learner should, "know Malayalam very well, be able to read and write in English, have a basic awareness of Mathematics, Music, Tailoring, and the essentials of Medicine. History and Geography must be avoided as they have no practical utility" (My Trans.).<sup>224</sup> However, Padmavati Amma criticises these ideas regarding education, and goes on to say: "Having merely a basic knowledge of these subjects is of no utility. The situation that results due to this is the impression of knowing everything while actually knowing nothing. Therefore, women must acquire an education that is equal to what men would usually acquire" (My Trans.).<sup>225</sup>

C. Rugmini Amma advances similar opinions regarding women's education: "The major roadblock to the spread of women's education is the fear that women would neglect the household chores and develop an excessive interest and pride in other material concerns. Education is never an obstacle to fulfilling household matters. On the other hand, it actually makes one more skillful and enables a better execution of household duties. Children would learn the values of discipline, faith in God, kindness, obedience etc. from an educated mother. As long as our women are not on an equal footing with men, there will not be any

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<sup>223</sup> Kanipayyur Shankaran Namboothiripad, 'Dambathyabandham', *Unninamboothiri*, vol. 7, issue.11, 1926, pp.647-654

<sup>224</sup> Narayani Amma, 'Sthree Vidyabhyasam, *Sarada*, book. 1, issue. 7, 1905, p.28

<sup>225</sup> K. Padmavati Amma, 'Sthreekalkk Venda Vidyabhyasam, *Sarada*, book. 2, issue. 8, 1905, pp. 176-179

considerable transformation in the country of India. Efficient men are created only in a society which showcases equally efficient women” (My Trans.).<sup>226</sup>

However, when women’s education led to women’s freedom, it raised anxieties in the society on when and where to curb and limit it. A majority of the contemporary writings reveal that this was in order to limit the freedom of women and thereby to create an ideal family of their conception. Other than the women’s individual rights, privileges and restrictions, the patriarchal society of the time did not want to explore the greater possibilities for freedom, rights, social life, and contemporary living for women. The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century sees the emergence of the ‘image’ of a new woman. Early Malayalam literature and magazines show the emergence of this new woman. Colonial modernity and the newly emerging middle class wrought noticeable changes in the roles and responsibilities held by women. This woman was restricted to the household. Even the education given to women was not enough to help them forge an identity that was separate from domestic life or helpful in the creation of an independent identity. With the rise and propagation of the idea that the biggest responsibility of women is the rearing of children and the household work she is entrusted with, the scope of a woman’s activity became restricted to the innards of the household.

### **REFASHIONING PRIVATE SPHERE: ‘HELPMATES’**

The socio-economic and political transformations that took place in Kerala as part of the colonial modernity strongly influenced family relations, marriage patterns, progeniture, and thereby women. Women's education seems to be closely related with the notion of middle-class women’s education in England of the nineteenth century - to make women able and refined individuals equipped with the necessary skills to effectively manage the home and children and to remain as helpmates to her husband. Gail Minault argues that the idea of the middle class

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<sup>226</sup> C. Rugmini Amma, ‘Sthree Vidyabhyasam’, *Sarada*, book. 2, issue. 8, 1906, pp.180-182

concerning enlightened domesticity and middle class rectitude owed much to similar bourgeois values that had emerged in Victorian society, but Indian reformers naturalised their model of the ideal woman.<sup>227</sup> Generally a woman's identity tends to be defined by her familial roles, particularly in relation to men, as a daughter, a wife, or a mother. This characterisation was similar to women in Europe in the nineteenth century.<sup>228</sup> Meredith Borthwick argues that 'the British model that provided some of the inspiration for the change in marriage customs, was not one that itself encouraged a great deal of female independence. The nineteenth century English woman may have seemed advanced to the Bengali *bhadralok*, but she too played a primarily domestic and supportive role in the family'.<sup>229</sup> In Bengal the colonial encounter gave birth to a sort of refracted Victorian ideology that stirred the rigidly conservative patriarchal society around the middle of the nineteenth century. The new influence worked through the medium of Western education. One aspect of that ideology was the constant review of the relationship between men and women.<sup>230</sup> It appears that conjugal love in a new sense gained momentum among the middle class families of the nineteenth century and the mutual interdependence between a man and his wife appeared to be most important. From the middle of the nineteenth century the middle class started thinking seriously about the nature of conjugal relations. Gradually the new trend of thought penetrated into creative literature.

The vernacular print culture of the period highlights the significant contestation in society with regard to family and marriage and illustrates the process by which the colonial culture penetrated to Indian social and domestic life.

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<sup>227</sup> Gail Minault, *Gender, Language and Learning: Essays in Indo Muslim Cultural History*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2009, p.100

<sup>228</sup> The English ideal of the correct relationship between husband and wife was that in which the wife was the intelligent companion of her husband's daily life, giving him sympathy and encouragement, counsel and advice, solace and relaxation. Meredith Borthwick, *op.cit.*, p.114

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, p.148

<sup>230</sup> Sambuddha Chakrabarti, 'Changing Notions of Conjugal Relations in Nineteenth Century Bengal', in Rajat Kanta Ray, *op.cit.*, p. 298

As discussed above the colonial reform discourses in Kerala were primarily connected with setting up a 'new domesticity' and 'new womanhood' that suits with the demands of an emerging modernity. As J. Devika observes during the modernisation of Kerala society, women were predominantly integrated into it as embodiments of a certain womanliness and modernity did not abolish female domesticity. If it did away with traditional family dynamics, it also introduced new familial structures that reinforced female domesticity.<sup>231</sup>

The picture of an ideal housewife was presented in almost all sorts of literature. Several articles were published comparing *Malayali* women to women in Western countries like Germany, France, England, Italy, USA etc. There were also comparisons with women in other Asian countries like China, Japan, Burma etc. Japanese women were prominently represented in many of these articles. It was stated that the women in Japan were much more obedient than those from Western cultures. Reference was made to a book in circulation among Japanese women that instructed them on how to be a good and obedient woman.<sup>232</sup> The wives were increasingly assuming a place of importance in their husbands lives and this was acknowledged by women themselves.

Throughout India during this period, the nuclear family was idealised in literature. The ideal of a nuclear family elevated the status of the husband with new power.<sup>233</sup> This created a new family structure with distinct public and private spheres for men and women, respectively, exercising different sorts of authority and power.<sup>234</sup> Partha Chatterjee says that 'applying the inner outer distinction to

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<sup>231</sup> J. Devika, *En-Gendering Individuals: The Language of Reforming in Twentieth Century Keralam*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2007, pp.17 -19. Also see Praveena Kodoth 'Vivahavum Sthree Padaviyum', *Janapadham*, Information and Public Relations Department, March 2008, pp.18-20

<sup>232</sup> K.Padmavathi Amma, "Vividha Rajya Sthreekal", *Lakshmibai*, book.6, no. 1, 1910, pp.73-78, 125-129

<sup>233</sup> K.N.Ganesh, *Malayaliyude Desakalangal* (Mal.), Raspberry Books, Calicut, 2016, p.120

<sup>234</sup> In Bengali context Meredith Borthwick pointed out that, the houses they built gave architectural expression to the division between public and private space. Women carried out the daily domestic routine within the *antahpur*, an inner courtyard surrounded by a kitchen and living apartments. The male recreation and reception area was located beyond



the day today living separates the social space into the home (Ghar) and the world (Bahir). The world is the external, treacherous terrain of the pursuit of material interests, and this is typically the domain of male. The home in its essence must remain unaffected by the profane activities of the material world and woman is its representation. Thus women get an identification of social roles by gender to correspond with the separation of the social space into private and public'.<sup>235</sup> It was demonstrated that, it was possible for a woman to acquire the cultural refinements afforded by modern education without jeopardising her place at home. It created the identity of a 'new woman' and a 'new patriarchy'.<sup>236</sup> The new patriarchy bestowed upon women the honour of a new social responsibility and bound them to a new and yet entirely legitimate form of subordination. This 'new woman' forged by colonialism was also bestowed with the title of the 'perfect woman' during those times. The perfect contestant for this title was a woman who would look after the household and support the man who works in the public sphere.

As J. Devika observes the relationship between man and woman seem to be of a contractual basis in which women must take charge of domestic affairs, familial relationships and the associated emotional environment, while man must engage himself in competitive activities within the public sphere.<sup>237</sup> To defend this it was stated that, there should be a division of labour. There are two kinds of

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this, around an outer courtyard from which there was access to the public street. Meredith Borthwick, *op.cit.*, p.7, In Kerala the Namboothiri *illams* were constructed in a typical architectural pattern ensuring mutually segregated spaces for men and women. The construction was so particular that women could not meet male members of the family except their husband and father. They were to remain confined to the kitchen, dining hall and bedroom. Mayadevi.M, 'Fashioning Body: Social Reforms and Namboothiri Women', *Ishal Paithrkam*, vol.32, 2023, pp.133-145

<sup>235</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*, in *The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999, p.120

<sup>236</sup> The new woman was the reverse of the common women, who was coarse, vulgar, loud quarrelsome, devoid of superior moral sense, and sexually promiscuous. This other construct of modern women is repeatedly emphasised in the literature of the nineteenth century. *Ibid.*, p.127

<sup>237</sup> J. Devika, *op.cit.*, p.50

responsibilities in every family, that is earning wealth and managing household chores. Man should handle the former as it entails staying far away from home for a long time. Due to issues such as menstruation, pregnancy, child care and so on women cannot do that. Instead they should concentrate on running the household.<sup>238</sup> This altogether restructured the family ties and conjugality and invented a new cult of domesticity. As Mythili Sreenivas observes, this created a conjugal family ideal, where priority was given to the relationship between husband and wife.<sup>239</sup> Along with this the ideal of a perfect wife, and perfect mother evolved and the contestation among the middle class redefined women's identity as 'helpmates'.

In reality, only that instruction which would be instrumental in creating the perfect housewife was considered as the 'proper' women's education.<sup>240</sup> Even those who were relatively liberal declined to accept the wife's independent status beyond a certain point. So, the middle class emphasized certain elements of tradition in the sphere of conjugal relations. Thus, there was a redefining of *streedharmam* (The duties of women). The magazines became spaces to popularise *streedharmam* and to express different perspectives on marriage and domesticity by both men and women. These magazines also reveal the tensions and cultural anxieties around the question of women's rights and extent of freedom during this time.

K.N. Kesavan Namboothirpad's 'Bharateeya Vivahadarshanam' [Indian Vision of Marriage] is an example: "It is indeed necessary that women reclaim

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<sup>238</sup> Kanippayyur Sankaran Namboothiripad, 'Sthree Swathantriyam', *Unninamboothiri*, vol.7, issue.4, 1926, p.288

<sup>239</sup> Mytheli Sreenivas, *op.cit.*, p.6

<sup>240</sup> In the words of Bal Gangadhar Tilak every educated middle class man wants his wife to be literate and well trained in household duties to spend her leisure hours reading religious texts in order to improve her mind and to help him in domestic duties. Education was thus to anchor women more securely to the home and to domestic tasks rather than to liberate them. This ultimately reinforced existing patriarchal domestic alignments. Quoted in Meera Kosambi, *op.cit.*, p.156

their freedom. However, this is not to be achieved by venturing outside the house. It is when women can explore their creative potential without losing focus on the work inside their home that gender equality is achieved. Only a society that can provide this opportunity to women, can realize the true unity of a man and a woman” (My Trans.).<sup>241</sup> S.V.R. wrote an article titled ‘Bharyamarude Chila Avakashangal’ [Certain Rights of Wives] in the *Rasikaranjini* regarding the rights of women. This article mentions three rights accorded to women: women should be given a specific amount of money that they can spend according to their wishes; a husband should not be under the misconception that he is the center of his wife’s happiness and thoughts; husbands should not stop their wives from pursuing matters of their own interest or go against their interests” (My Trans.).<sup>242</sup> However, none of these rights accorded women the freedom to partake in the social activities outside their home.

The educated women keenly propagated the middle class idea of the new woman tied up with domesticity. They themselves tried to justify the so-called feminine qualities such as chastity, kindness, patience and love. Several articles came out about the duties women had to their household and the capability of such women who carry out these duties. The article ‘Nammude Sthreekal Padikkendath’ [What Our Women Should Learn] published in *Lakshmibai* is an example.

“The home is a place where women can exercise their freedom. Men should enter this space with a sense of humility. Home is the purest space on earth. Our women must first focus on looking after this home well. However, it is not that easy to lead a small kingdom that is a family. This is where the characteristics of the ideal woman as told by Wordsworth become important: even temperament, emotional stability, tolerance,

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<sup>241</sup> K.N. Kesavan Namboothirpad’s ‘Bharateeya Vivahadarshanam’, *Unninamboothiri*, vol. 7, issue. 8, 1926, pp.130-135

<sup>242</sup> S.V.R. (As in the original), ‘Bharyamarude Chila Avakashangal’, *Rasikaranjini*, book.8, 1903, p.24

wisdom, smartness, strength- these are the faculties a woman must possess. A housewife knows how to use these qualities, and in this, she becomes perfect” (My Trans.).<sup>243</sup>

Thachatt Devaki Amma’s opinion that even if women are not employed, their education would help them to raise good children and that in itself would be a huge contribution to the society, reflected the opinion of the society at large during that time. This opinion that women should receive an education that enabled them to look after their households was an opinion echoed by several women as well in magazines. T. Ammukutty Amma’s article ‘Sthree Vidyabhyasam’ is an example: “A woman’s duties are looking after the household and caring for her husband and children. It is clear that without education, they cannot carry out these responsibilities. Education boosts the qualities of humility, love and generosity in women. It is obvious that the foolishness and ignorance of a wife disturbs her husband’s peace. If a man’s wife, who is to be his companion till the end of life, is a clown, no matter how huge his scholarship is, there will not be any peace of mind or happiness in that house” (My trans.).<sup>244</sup>

Most women writers in the cultural sphere of those days backed this concept of education. K. Chinnamma’s ‘Vidhyabyasathil Sthreekalude Sthanam’ [The Role of Women in Education] raises this point: “Wrapping a woman with ‘reforms’ is not education. Education enables women to learn good, upright character and to learn how to shine in their roles as a wife, friend and companion. Women should never attempt to take on masculine roles in the name of freedom. If women try to upend their natural duties, men will lose their respect and esteem for them. Thus, they may lose their power of influence over men” (My Trans.).<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Author not mentioned, ‘Nammude Sthreekal Padikkendath’, *Lakshmibai*, book. 7, no. 12, 1912, pp. 403-408

<sup>244</sup> T. Ammukutty Amma, ‘Sthree Vidyabhyasam’, *Sarada*, book. 1, issue. 5, 1905, pp. 14-15

<sup>245</sup> K. Chinnamma’s “Vidhyabyasathil Sthreekalude Sthanam”, *Lakshmibai*, book.7, no. 6, 1913, p. 42

T.B. Kalyani Amma's article regarding womanly duties advances similar views: "Women have to do two things in this world. The first and foremost is their duties at their own home. The second is their duties as a member of the society" (My Trans.).<sup>246</sup> Being a mother is seen as foremost among the womanly duties. Usually, it is women who look after children in the house. Everything related to children is under the purview of the mother. If children are to grow up healthy, well behaved and scholarly, their mothers have to be educated (My Trans.).<sup>247</sup> Here the emphasis is on the expertise needed to organise the house and perform the household tasks and on the necessity of education to achieve these skills.

K.Chinnamma's speech at the 5<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Kerala Nair Society too highlights household management, child care and caring for the husband as the primary duties of a woman.<sup>248</sup> "It is the mother's responsibility to instill in their children moral values such as belief in God, obedience, truthfulness, righteousness etc. Bringing up children is a major duty of women. The food and dressing of the children must be regulated in a way that makes them healthy. It is the mother who should impart primary education to the child. Therefore, women are the protectors of their children and thus, their community" (My Trans.).<sup>249</sup> Even in cases of illness, the magazine suggests, women should learn medicine in order to spare their families the expense of consulting English doctors. The best example for this is the advertisements for medicine during that time. They use dialogues like "For women to sleep with peace of mind", "Reassurance for women", "A huge relief for women" and so on. These articles bestow the full responsibility of the child's health on the mother. In Vallathol Narayan Menon's statement that women should be educated for their tasks of child care, cooking etc.,

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<sup>246</sup> T.B. Kalyani Amma, 'Sthree Dharmam', *Sarada*, book. I, issue.3, 1905, p. 1

<sup>247</sup> Ammukutty Amma, 'Sthree Vidyabhyasam', *Sarada*, book. 1, issue.1, 1905, pp. 3-5

<sup>248</sup> K.Chinnamma's speech at the 5<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Kerala Nair Society, quoted in *Lakshmibai*, book. 6, no. 9, 1905, pp. 353-360

<sup>249</sup> K. Chinnamma, *Lakshmibai*, book. 7, no. 6, 1913, pp. 45-46

the viewpoint of looking at women's education solely as a preparation for household management is repeated.<sup>250</sup>

The advantages of educating women were also stated as 'If women are educated they attain great discretion of mind and are enabled to advise their men in times of need like ministers. They will be able to keep household accounts like managers. Then the husband would be released from these tasks. They are made capable of caring for men, like mothers. They would keep good watch upon money and other valuables and they would be able to nurse and care for the sick'.<sup>251</sup> Education will enable the wife to have a different, more intimate and exclusive relationship with her husband. Literacy will make the wife more her husband's friend and it will enable husband and wife to communicate in a more intimate manner. The wife's obligation is not only to fulfill her own familial obligations but to help the husband to do the same.<sup>252</sup> Another article in the *Sarada* says this about women's education: "There is no difference of opinion that men and women should be provided with English education, so that the children in the household will learn the language so easily. Additionally, women who have adequate education would be able to assist men in their work. This will lead to greater unity, trust, and love between them. This is the major and evident aspect that differentiates a Hindu family from an English family. Many of the tasks that are traditionally undertaken by men in our families are carried out by the women in English families" (My Trans.).<sup>253</sup> This would help women to become man's helpmate in the struggle of life as well as easing his toil. Thus, education was regarded as necessary to enable women to better serve their husband.

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<sup>250</sup> Vallathol Narayana Menon, 'Griha Bharanam', *Rasikaranjini*, 1903, book. 1, issue 11, pp. 18-21

<sup>251</sup> Quoted in J. Devika, *op.cit.*, p.67

<sup>252</sup> Many middle class men educate their wives after marriage. For instance, following their marriage, Choorai Cheruvari Vasudevan sent his wife Bharathi to school. For details see Choorai Cheruvari Vasudevan, *Ente Atmakatha* (Mal.), Ernakulam, 1982, pp.56-57

<sup>253</sup> Author not mentioned, 'Nammude Sthreekalum Vidyabhyasavaum', *Sarada*, book.2, issue.1, 1905, pp. 51-52

There are numerous writings in contemporary magazines focused on training women to run the family efficiently with a limited budget. She needs to be aware of management of domestic expenditure as well as the occasions in which special expenses are incurred and the means by which they may be met. She must achieve victory through compassionate words and deeds, not through competitions.<sup>254</sup> Thus it became the responsibility of the woman to maintain the family with limited financial resources. There was a proliferation of manuals providing guidelines to women on managing the household. The ideal woman portrayed in literature was someone who was educated enough to be a friend to the enlightened middle class husband, yet remaining at home and fulfilling her duties as wife and mother. In her memoirs, B. Kalyani Amma recalls Ramakrishna Pillai asking her opinion when he embarked on new endeavours. In such occasions, she used to give only such replies that he found agreeable.<sup>255</sup> Similarly Lalithambika Antarjanam agrees that she was within an ideal domestic setting, though she was a prolific writer she never moved out of her world of domesticity.<sup>256</sup> It was argued that an educated wife, rather than neglecting her duties, would make a much better housewife than her uneducated counterpart.<sup>257</sup> The argument that education was necessary for the creation of an enlightened mother, and thence of an enlightened race, continued to be advanced throughout the century.<sup>258</sup> Chinnamma has written an article called 'Sthree Dharmam'. Caring for one's husband is seen as one of the foremost qualities to look for in a woman. It is opined that women who understand the significance of this responsibility and act accordingly can be considered as a jewel among women. Chinnamma asserted this on the basis of the depiction of women characters like Sita and Damayanti in the epics.

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<sup>254</sup> J.Devika, *op.cit.*, p.47, Also see J.Devika, 'Negotiating Women's Social Space: Public Debates on Gender in Early Modern Kerala, India, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, vol.7, no.1, 2006, pp. 43-61

<sup>255</sup> B.Kalyani Amma, *Vyazhavatta Smaranakal*, D.C. Books, Kottayam, 1982, p.57

<sup>256</sup> Lalithambika Antarjanam, *Atmakathayk....*, *op.cit.*, pp.88-89

<sup>257</sup> Meredith Borthwick, *op.cit.*, p.64

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

Taking a job and becoming an earning member was not interpreted as a travesty of true womanliness. But the types of jobs that were suggested as being good for women were those that developed their womanly qualities and kept them connected to their *streedharmam*. Therefore, they were mainly employed in schools and health care institutions where women's attributes of kindness and goodwill came in handy. Some articles opined that education and jobs were indeed necessary for women, and that they could work alongside men while also maintaining their feminine character. However, this permission to work was with the caveat that the women would be under the constraints of being compelled to retain the so-called archetypical characteristics of being 'a woman'. In an article 'Streekalum Vaidyavum' the medical profession was recommended for women claiming that it suits their natural qualities.<sup>259</sup> Therefore women were required to retain certain womanly qualities even when they were allowed to work outside.

Several women tried to overcome the boundaries of patriarchy and carve out a space of their own. Many of the women writers were those with social sensibilities and exercised their freedom of expression without renouncing tradition. The curious fact is that many of the educated women became representative of two different kinds of life. one would be the dutiful and family-oriented woman while the other would be the free and brave woman. Even when women attempted hard to create their own spaces, the male dominated public space would always place women in a lower strand of the hierarchy and consider them as lesser equals.<sup>260</sup> The late nineteenth and early twentieth century literature and magazines in Kerala emphasized and established the domestic space as the natural space for woman. The 'natural instincts' of a woman- her maternal instinct, kindness, love, sacrifice etc. were used to confine her to the house. Later,

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<sup>259</sup> Sarada, 'Sthreekalum Vidyavum', *Sarada*, book.2, issue.9,1904, pp.12-15

<sup>260</sup> The very concept of women taking care of themselves was seen as against the Indian tradition. Indian thought was based on Manu's doctrines. According to Manu a woman before her marriage was to be protected by her father, after marriage by her husband and in her old age by her sons—she was never worthy of attaining independence. This injunction of Manu was freely used in the writings of the nineteenth century as an argument against female emancipation. Sambuddha Chakrabarti, *op.cit.*, p.304



institutions that functioned on a lenient and mild-power structure like hospitals, educational institutions etc. came to be seen as the perfect spaces for women to work. These workspaces were seen as the most fitting places for women because it did not require women to sacrifice their femininity, while at the same time, allowed them access to the public space.

During the colonial period with the refashioning of family and conjugality there was a visible change in the role of women from domestic womanhood to helpmates. Modern Education was important as the major instrument in shaping modern public oriented male subjects and modern domestic oriented female subjects who were thereby implicated in shaping new hierarchies.<sup>261</sup> Within modern domesticity women were given an image of helpmates. This did not mean that the women had been given the choice of distancing herself completely from her domestic duties, rather modernity instituted new forms of family and female domesticity. The middle class men made women the focal point of home and the guiding light of the family giving them entire supervisory responsibility within the home. Though the modern educated women were desirable wives, their education helped men to create newer forms of control over women. Modern education was provided to make them a perfect homemaker with necessary skills to fulfil their important social roles as companions to their husbands and educators of their children. Education was used as a tool to construct a new womanhood and to confine them to a 'reconceptualised domesticity'. The nineteenth century view of women's domestic roles rooted in the contractual model of family relationship, where women were granted authority within the natural realm of the family, also restricted women within. In the Bengali context it was argued that, women were not to be given an opportunity to participate in a male world, but to be released from representing traditional values to become instead repositories of 'modern'

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<sup>261</sup> J. Devika and Avanti Mukherjee, 'Reforming Women in Malayalee Modernity: A Historical Overview', in Swapna Mukhopadhyay(ed.), *The Enigma of the Kerala Women: A Failed Promise of Literacy*, Social Science Press, New Delhi, 2007, p.103

virtues, to be of benefit to future generations.<sup>262</sup> Among women, knowledge could not serve as a means for external advancement, because there was no place for them in the public domain. An educated wife may have enhanced her husband's status, but she did not necessarily boost her own standing in the household.<sup>263</sup> As Partha Chatterjee observes the new woman was to be modern, but she would also have to display the signs of national tradition and therefore would be essentially different from the Western woman.<sup>264</sup>

On the one hand middle class men focused on the emancipation of women and on the other they emphasised the need to prepare women for their family life. The model was an attempt to synthesize the virtues of new and old, based on traditional Hindu womanly qualities mixed with modern features derived from the Victorian image of the 'perfect lady'.<sup>265</sup> Men intended to create a 'new women' with the necessary skills to remain as helpmates. But still the recognition of the wife as a 'companion' throughout life reflected the emergence of a new value in the nineteenth century. The mutual interdependence between a man and his wife appeared to be most important in conjugality. In the changed scenario of the late nineteenth century the middle class got attracted to the idea of 'marrying for love' and they made use of the newly emergent print technology to spread new ideals of romantic love and marriage. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>262</sup> Meredith Borthwick, *op.cit.*, p.42

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, p.44

<sup>264</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *op.cit.*, p.9

<sup>265</sup> Meredith Borthwick, *op.cit.*, p.56

## CHAPTER IV

# CHANGING NOTIONS OF FAMILY, MARRIAGE AND LOVE

During the twentieth century an efficacious turn in the aspiration of marriage from traditional to companionate became noticeable. The ideal of passionate romantic love, followed by a warm companionate marriage became deeply ingrained among the middle class. Companionate marriage is based more on emotional connection than economic or reproductive considerations. The recognition of the wife as a ‘companion’ throughout life reflected the emergence of a new value and outlook in the nineteenth century. With this, the ideas regarding love and marriage were slowly undergoing a change. In a society where child-marriage, polygamy, and mismatched couples meeting only very occasionally were prevalent, a man desiring to have a woman as his companion in life and love was by itself a very significant turn of events.<sup>1</sup>

The waves of renaissance that spread across Kerala towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as the revolutionary social changes that occurred during this period, created circumstances that allowed for the individuals to mingle more closely with each other than earlier. This situation resulted in the formation of an environment that was conducive for love and love marriages to blossom. When women who had been sequestered within their homes received the chance to go out freely, acquire education, and take part in revolutionary social movements, the gates were opened

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<sup>1</sup> In the Bengali context, Sambuddha Chakrabarti says that this consciousness was obviously derived from the West, for the traditional Bengali society was quite unaware of the notion. The new sensibility not only influenced Bengali literature, it had its mark on individual lives as well. Sambuddha Chakrabarti, ‘Changing Notions of Conjugal Relations in Nineteenth Century Bengal’, in Rajat Kanta Ray (ed.), *Mind Body and Society: Life and Mentality in Colonial Bengal*, Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1995, p.301

for women and men to get attracted to each other easily. The concept of the 'family' that was conceived as a result of the nineteenth century colonial modernity levied much importance on the courtship between men and women. Progressive thinkers began to argue that the cornerstone of marriage is the love between a man and a woman. The novels, stories, dramas, and poems that came out during this period also propagated this idea.

The fundamental principle of love marriage lies in the decision making process, where couples choose their partners independently based on love and companionship. In arranged marriages, parents often emphasise religious identity, caste background, social and economic status over individual temperament and compatibility. Couples are neither permitted nor encouraged to establish relationships before marriage, but such connections are anticipated to develop afterwards. Arranged marriages support the caste system by ensuring that spouses belong to the same caste, thereby reinforcing the kinship system by prioritising broader kinship ties of the older generation over those of the marital couple.<sup>2</sup> In the changed social scenario young people came to view romantic love as a source of empowerment in various aspects of their lives - an emotion to be proud of and celebrated as it was linked with modernity, progress and success. Romantic love is often associated not only with progress in the society but with success and autonomy in decision-making ability. When English educated young men yearned for romantic love that yearning was a part of a new construction of self that included a knowledge of English, work in Western style jobs, daily habits of eating and dressing reshaped by colonial style and a domestic world and family relations appropriately reformed for a colonially modern present.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Keera Allendorf, 'Schemas of Marital Change: From Arranged Marriages to Eloping for Love', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol.75, no.2, 2013, pp.453-469. Also see George Kurian, 'Modern Trends in Mate Selection and Marriage with Special Reference to Kerala', *The Family in India*, 1974, pp.351-368

<sup>3</sup> Judith E. Walsh, *Domesticity in Colonial India: What Women Learned When Men Gave Them Advice*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2004, p.90

From the late nineteenth century onwards, an ideological shift took place in the middle class notion of marriage which served as markers of middle-class lifestyles and sensibilities.<sup>4</sup> An unprecedented emphasis on love began to develop during this period and it resulted in setting a dominant ‘emotionology’, (sometimes called emotional culture or emotional standards) that is some specific attitudes and standards towards love.<sup>5</sup> In other words emotionology denotes “the collective emotional standards of a society” and to distinguish those standards from emotional experience.<sup>6</sup> In the nineteenth century there was great disparity between those emotional standards established and maintained by the middle class through the print media and the lived experience of men and women. The prescribed emotional standards often have to serve important social, cultural and political functions in the changed colonial climate.

#### **DEFINING ‘LOVE’ AND ‘MARRYING FOR LOVE’**

The notion of love could be defined in a plethora of ways. It is difficult, if not impossible to define the term love because the definition of the term love differs according to the period, the persons, the place and in particular the functions that romantic love serves there.<sup>7</sup> Love is a multifaceted emotion and has many dimensions. It can be romantic, exciting, obsessive and irrational. It can also be

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<sup>4</sup> Henrike Donner, ‘Doing it our Way: Love and Marriage in Kolkata Middle-Class Families’, *Modern Asian Studies*, vol.50, no.4, 2016, p.1151. Also see Rochona Majumdar, *Marriage and Modernity: Family Values in Colonial Bengal*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2009

<sup>5</sup> Peter N. Stearns and Jan Lewis (ed.), *An Emotional History of the United States*, New York University Press, New York, 1998, p.5

<sup>6</sup> Peter N Stearns and Carol Z Stearns, ‘Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotion and Emotional Standards’, *The American Historical Review*, vol.90, no.4, 1985, pp.813-836

<sup>7</sup> Anne E. Beall and Robert J. Sternberg, ‘The Social Construction of Love’, *Journal of Social and Personal Relationship*, vol.12, no.3,1995, pp.417- 438. In some modern cultures, love is viewed as an emotion that can overcome any difficulties in a relationship whereas in other cultures it is viewed as an experience that needs to be controlled. Also see Carolyn H. Simmons, Alexander Vom Kolke, and Hideko Shimizu , ‘Attitudes Toward Romantic Love Among the American, German and Japanese Students’, *The Journal of Social Psychology*, vol.126, no.3, 1986, pp.327-336

platonic, passionate, companionate, calming, altruistic and sensible.<sup>8</sup> Love defies a single definition because it varies in degree and intensity and in different social contexts.<sup>9</sup> It appears to include a large set of behaviour, attitude and feelings. According to the triangular theory of love, 'love has three components: intimacy, passion and decision/commitment. Intimacy is the feeling of being close and connected to another person. Passion refers to the feelings of physical attraction and sexual consummation that people have to one another. Decision/commitment, which encompasses, in the short term, the decision that one loves another, and in the long term, the commitment to maintain that love'.<sup>10</sup> Purnima Mankekar conceives of love as an emotion that is experienced and expressed through

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<sup>8</sup> Classical Greek used at least sixteen different terms to designate love in all its forms - eros for physical love, agape for altruistic love, philia for tender or erotic feelings etc. Denis De Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*, (Trans.) by Montgomery Belgion, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1983, p.5. Also see David Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1994

<sup>9</sup> Nijole V. Benokrai, *Marriage and Families: Changes Choices and Constraints*, PHI Learning, New Delhi, 2012, p.138. C.S. Lewis spoke of four loves: affection among familiar persons such as family members; friendship, or love between individuals as individuals, which was in his view the most noble and hence rare form of love; eros, or sexual love between lovers; and charity, love for one's neighbours. Strictly speaking, however, all four loves are about relationships and the self's engagement with them, rather than being an autochthonous ontology of the self as such. Sonia Ryang, *Love in Modern Japan: Its Estrangement from Self, Sex, and Society*, Routledge, London, 2006, p.1. Three separable types or phases of love have been differentiated by Atlee C. Stroup, infatuation, romantic love and mature or conjugal love. Atlee C. Stroup, *Marriage and Family: A Developmental Approach*, Appleton Century Crofts, New York, 1966, p.120

<sup>10</sup> Robert J. Steinberg, 'A Triangular Theory of Love', *Psychological Review*, vol.93, no.2, 1986, pp.119-135. Also see Anne E Beall and Robert J. Sternberg, *op.cit.*, pp.417- 438. Andreas Capellanus wrote in his treatise on love that "love is a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex. Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, (ed.) by F. W. Locke, (Trans.) by John Jay Perry, Frederick Ungar, New York, 1957, p. 2 quoted in Alan Soble, *The Structure of Love*, Yale University Press, New Haven, USA, 1990, p.1 Something not very different was expressed by Rene Descartes. Descartes observed that "Love is an emotion of the soul caused by motion of the spirit, which impels the soul to join itself willingly with to objects that appear agreeable to it" This characterisation of the lover as a body and soul flowing towards another is to be found in the styling of any number of philosophical texts including Roland Barthes's *A Lover's Discourse*, Luce Irigaray's *I Love to You*, and Jean Luc Nancy's observation that "love is the extreme movement, beyond the self, of a being reaching completion". Quoted in Ann Brooks (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Romantic Love*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, New York, 2022, p.69

conventions, attitudes, figures of speech, and behaviours.<sup>11</sup> Wendy Langford portrayed love as a rebellious, spiritualised, erotic passion which enables the individual to transcend the limitations of mundane existence and gain a happier and more meaningful life; love, in short, is the expression of freedom itself.<sup>12</sup>

Romantic love has been identified in male-female relationships throughout history and across diverse cultures. Though Romantic love is an emotion, it is not identical everywhere. The concept of romantic love has held multifaceted meanings and complex interpretations throughout human history and in modern cultures around the world. Robert J. Steinberg stated that ‘romantic love derives from a combination of the intimacy and passion components of love. According to this view, romantic lovers are not only drawn physically to each other but are also bonded emotionally. This view of romantic love seems to be similar to that found in classic works of literature, such as *Romeo and Juliet*’.<sup>13</sup> Lindholm defines the term ‘romantic love more narrowly, as a transcendental feeling for another’.<sup>14</sup> According to William Jankowiak and Edward Fischer, ‘the following five criteria was sufficient to assess the presence of romantic love within a culture : (1) accounts of personal anguish and longing, (2) love songs or folklore “that highlight the motivations behind romantic involvement,” (3) elopements due to mutual affection, (4) native accounts of passionate love, and (5) ethnographers’ affirmation that love is present. The evidence, they concluded, strongly supported the universal occurrence of romantic love’.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Purnima Mankekar, ‘Mobile Love: Moral Panics, Erotics and Affect’, in Ann Brooks, *op.cit.*, p.81, Also see Francis E.Merril, *Courtship and Marriage: A Study in Social Relationships*, William Sloane Associates, New York, 1949, p.33. Francis E.Merril says that to the average American, marriage without romance is unthinkable, ridiculous, and a little immoral.

<sup>12</sup> Wendy Langford, *Revolutions of the Heart: Gender, Power and the Delusions of Love*, Routledge, London, 1999, p. 23

<sup>13</sup> Robert J. Steinberg, *op.cit.*, p.124

<sup>14</sup> Charles Lindholm, ‘Love and Structure’, *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol.15, no.3 - 4, 1998, pp. 243–263

<sup>15</sup> William R. Jankowiak and Edward F. Fischer, ‘A Cross-Cultural Perspective on Romantic Love’, *Ethnology*, vol.3, 1992, pp.149–55

Victor Karandashev stated that ‘the word romantic love is generally used to denote heterosexual love between men and women distinguishing it from other types of love: conjugal, maternal, friendship, and other types of close relationship feelings. In this sense, a romantic relationship is just the relationship between a man and a woman implying sexual interest and attraction’.<sup>16</sup> Claire Langhamer in her work described romantic love as ‘a very strong attraction, mentally and physically. A sense of belonging of being ‘at home’ with. A strong desire to always be with the loved one. An overwhelming warmth. A longing to be at one with. A feeling that you have found perfection’<sup>17</sup>. The ecstatic declarations of the lover- that the beloved means "the whole world to him," that "outside of her nothing exists", and similar avowals-only express this exclusiveness of love in a positive fashion. By this means, love, an utterly subjective event, embraces its object in a strict and unmediated fashion.<sup>18</sup> According to Charles Lindholm ‘romantic love coincides with the advent of a leisure culture, where self cultivation is possible. It has also been linked with the modern smaller family size and a greater emphasis on the emotional tie between husband and wife’.<sup>19</sup>

According to Karen Lystra, what has been referred to be romantic love was, in reality, a range of emotional experiences in various historical contexts. Ernest R. Mowrer defined romantic love as, ‘that complex of attitudes and sentiments which regards the marriage relation as one exclusively of response’.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Victor Karandashev, *Romantic Love in Cultural Contexts*, Springer, Switzerland, 2017, intro., p.xi

<sup>17</sup> Claire Langhamer, *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of An Emotional Revolution*, Oxford University Press, UK, 2013, p.38

<sup>18</sup> George Simmel, ‘On Love’ in *Georg Simmel: On Women, Sexuality and Love*, (Trans.) by Guy Oakes, Yale University Press, London, 1984, p.165

<sup>19</sup> Charles Lindholm, *op.cit.*, p.243. We get a very interesting information about women in Victorian England, otherwise confined to their houses, going out to collect ferns which had by that time become a decorative piece. This led to socialising, leading often to 'love marriages'. we are indebted to Dr.K.P. Rajesh, Assistant Professor, Department of Botany, Zamorin's Guruvayurappan college for this information.

<sup>20</sup> Ernest R. Mowrer, *Family Disorganization*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1927, p.160



Regarding romantic love as an essential element in monogamous marriage was a revolutionary force even in the West. According to Lawrence Stone, in the nineteenth century, with the rise of the middle class in the West, marriage was considered as the combination of two equal individuals after a courtship of romantic passion.<sup>21</sup> Atlee C Stroup says that family and social prerogatives count for little in romantic love. The characteristics of the individual personality are stressed. In this respect romantic love is the epitome of mating democracy.<sup>22</sup> For Lawrence Stone, the emergence of the affective family in the eighteenth century marked a pivotal moment in the making of modernity and the right to marry for love was seen as a significant indication of the increasing autonomy and rights of the individuals.<sup>23</sup> Ethel Person argues that, romantic love has become ‘perhaps the most important of our cultivated freedoms, perhaps a vehicle for self realization, transformation, and transcendence’.

When the concept of romantic love disseminated to Asia, the socio-political impact was even greater than in the West. In Republican China, romantic love was articulated with the discourse of Enlightenment, and it was further combined with the notion of the freedom to choose marriage partners without intervention by parents.<sup>24</sup> Francesca Orsini has stated that ‘the idioms of love have a very long history, and within every culture or cultural area there will always be more than one available at any given time - prescriptive, poetic, commonsensical, satirical, religious, gender-specific, and so on. South Asia offers a particularly rich field for this kind of inquiry because several idioms - of ‘sringara’, ‘viraha’, ‘ishq’, ‘prem’

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<sup>21</sup> Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800*, Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1977, pp. 282-288

<sup>22</sup> Atlee C Stroup, *op.cit.*, p.122

<sup>23</sup> Lawrence Stone, *op.cit.*, p.282. Also see William Goode, ‘The Theoretical Importance of Love’, *American Sociological Review*, vol. 24, no.1,1959, pp. 38-47

<sup>24</sup> Fang-Mei Lin, ‘The Fantasy of Love and Identity Crisis:(de) Colonising Desire and Nationality’, Ann Brooks, *op.cit.*, p.287

and 'love' - have been active over a very long period of time'.<sup>25</sup> In the words of missionary Sidney Gulick, love is 'that which to Western ears is the sweetest word in the English language, the foundation of happiness in the home, the only true bond between husband and wife, parents and children'.<sup>26</sup> This plethora of definitions underscores the complexity of love as a subject, with its terminology often so ambiguous that precise analysis becomes challenging, if not entirely elusive.

## ROMANTIC LOVE IN INDIA

Early anthropological literature considered romantic love a Western concept and posited that conjugal love did not exist in primitive cultures.<sup>27</sup> This is not true. Falling in love is a natural and universal phenomenon. Love has been a fundamental aspect of human experience, and throughout history many couples have loved each other deeply. Ancient scriptures mentions eight modes of acquiring a wife known as *Brahma*, *Daiva*, *Arsha*, *Prajapatya*, *Asura*, *Gandharva*, *Rakshasa*, and *Paisacha*.<sup>28</sup> The *gandharva* marriage refers to a marriage by mutual choice and it is nearest to what may be variously termed as "free-choice", "romantic", or "love" marriage.<sup>29</sup> The *gandharva* marriage, according to

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<sup>25</sup> Francesca Orsini (ed.), *Love in South Asia: A Cultural History*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2007, p.1

<sup>26</sup> Michiko Suzuki, *Becoming Modern Women: Love and Female Identity in Pre War Japanese Literature and Culture*, Stanford University Press, California, 2010, p.9. In the late nineteenth century Japan, the word 'ai' was used to signify various kinds of love beyond the narrowly defined Christian or spiritual love. 'Ai' is embedded in the compound ren'ai (romantic love), a word popularized during the late 1880s and 1890s to refer to heterosexual love. *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Meghna Bohidar, Performances of "reel" and "real" Lives: Negotiating Public Romance in Urban India, in Ann Brooks, *op.cit.*, p.240. Also see William R. Jankowiak and Edward F. Fischer, *op.cit.*, pp.149-155

<sup>28</sup> Only the first four are known as *dharmya*, i. e. according to religion. See K.M. Kapadia, *Marriage and Family in India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1981 (First Published 1955), pp. 135- 136, Also see Haripada Chakraborti, *Hindu Intercaste Marriage in India : Ancient and Modern*, Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, 1999

<sup>29</sup> Giri Raj Gupta, 'Love, Arranged Marriage, and the Indian Social Structure', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol.7, no.1, 1976, pp.75-85. Also see Mody, 'Kidnapping,

Vatsyayana, was the superior form because it was attained without much difficulty, without a ceremony of ‘selection’ and was based on mutual affection or attachment which was said to be the ‘fruit’ of all marriage in any event.<sup>30</sup> A cultural framework of love in the Indian subcontinent can be traced to folktales that have been in circulation for centuries, such as Heer-Ranjha, Laila-Majnun, Radha-Krishna and Sohni-Mahinwal.<sup>31</sup> The classical Tamil literature was concerned with romantic love and lovers. In the Sangam period, the women enjoyed the right to select their husbands. Love marriages were common and it was considered proper for a young lady even to elope with her lover, provided that they returned to their homes afterwards and entered into a married life. There were also arranged marriages, inter-regional marriages and instances of chieftains and noblemen loving and marrying women of the lower classes. It was the existence of peculiar types of love marriages that made several Sangam poets introduce love as the central theme of their works. Their poems reveal the high principles maintained by women of those days. But sometimes the women folk of the village used to scandalise the girl in love. Those who eloped under the spell of mutual love were never condemned by society.<sup>32</sup> The nineteenth century English writers have noted the stories of Nala and Damayanti or Savitri and Sathyavan as examples for beautiful romantic and conjugal love to prove Indian mens preoccupation with romantic love.<sup>33</sup>

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Elopement and Abduction: An Ethnography of Love-Marriage in Delhi’, in Francesca Orsini, *op.cit.*, p.331

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Jigisha Gala and Shagufa Kapadia, ‘Romantic Love, Commitment and Marriage in Emerging Adulthood in An Indian context: Views of Emerging Adults and Middle Adults’. *Psychology and Developing Societies*, vol.26, no.1, 2014, pp.115–141

<sup>31</sup> Meghna Bohidar, *op.cit.*, p.240

<sup>32</sup> Nenmara P. Viswanathan Nair, *Akananuru* (Trans.), vol.I, vol.II and vol.III, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 1984

<sup>33</sup> Uma Chakravarti, ‘What Happened to the Vedic Dasi’, in Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (ed.), *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1993, pp.38-60

The colonial modernity and the wide ranging developments associated with it had made a considerable impact on the indigenous society and revived the concept of love giving an entirely different dimension of individuality. Although love is a personal experience, its expression and understanding are influenced by social constructs. The transition from agrarian to capitalist economy has played a role in transforming the concept and experience of love as well.<sup>34</sup> The term romantic love gained popularity in the later part of the nineteenth century to refer to a particular kind of intense love, different from maternal, paternal, brotherly and sisterly love, since then notions of romantic love and conjugality were widely discussed in India.<sup>35</sup> During the late nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth century a distinct style of marriage began to emerge, incorporating new elements of romantic love. As the English ideal of marriage was intertwined with the notion of love and romance, 'the Western influenced and English educated men were enthusiastic about the more intimate, dyadic relation it encouraged between husband and wife'.<sup>36</sup> Social interactions provided opportunity for the young men and women to mix freely and thereby to develop familiarity and understanding which under favourable circumstances grow into an intimacy conducive to marriage. This form of marriage represented a break from traditional norms, embodying a consciously modern relationship that connected with the principles

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<sup>34</sup> Pamela Epstein, 'Advertising for Love: Matrimonial Advertisements and Public Courtship', in Susan J. Matt and Peter N. Stearns (ed.), *Doing Emotions in History*, University of Illinois Press, USA, 2014, p.122

<sup>35</sup> Judith E. Walsh, *op.cit.*, p.59

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.87. Stephanie Coontz writes that Victorians were the first people in history to try and make marriage the pivotal experience in peoples' lives. Victorian marriage harbored all the hopes for romantic love, intimacy, personal fulfilment and mutual happiness. Victorians began to elevate love over any other consideration, indeed they believed that love was the only justifiable reason for marrying. During the Victorian era, there was a growing emphasis on prioritizing love above all other factors in marriage. Indeed, many Victorians believed that love was the sole legitimate justification for marrying. Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage A History: How Love Conquered Marriage*, Penguin Books, New York, 2006 (First published 2005), pp.177–178

of a progressive society. Consequently, romantic love formed the dominant discourse in the then contemporary literature.

Parveez Mody in her study based on Delhi defines marrying for love as ‘those marriages in which the couple fall in love and choose their marriage partners for themselves, and emphasises that this is a completely distinct phenomenon from arranged marriage, a marriage arranged by guardians’.<sup>37</sup> She also states that while arranged marriages are about social choice and social compatibility, love marriages are defined by the criteria of personal choice and individual compatibility.<sup>38</sup> Generally love marriage implies a clandestine courtship and a marriage that defies the desires of the parents.<sup>39</sup>

The nineteenth century concept of romantic love posed a challenge to the indigenous Hindu marriage customs, practices and family life. Increasing economic independence contributed to the dissolving of the traditional joint family structures into nuclear family units, permitting intimacy and personal bonding between husband and wife, which had not been feasible in the environment of the traditional joint family. They started restructuring the older patriarchy and began to construct new ideals of families, marriages and domesticity. Tanika Sarkar observes that ‘the Hindu Nationalist needed to naturalise love as the basis of Hindu marriage. They denied that the production of sons was the sole aim of Hindu marriage, instead they argued that it was a complete spiritual union through perfect love’.<sup>40</sup> A number of people in nineteenth century Bengal, began to voice objections to arranged marriages, where the partners had usually never seen one

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<sup>37</sup> Parveez Mody, *The Intimate State: Love-Marriage and the Law in Delhi*, Routledge, New Delhi, 2008, p.331

<sup>38</sup> Parveez Mody also pointed out a third category of marriage, that is the love come arranged marriage, in which the couple’s choice is legitimated by parental authority through a process of compromise.

<sup>39</sup> Catherine Twamley, *Love, Marriage and Intimacy Among Gujarati Indians: A Suitable Match*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2014, p.3

<sup>40</sup> Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2001, p.33

another before the marriage ceremony.<sup>41</sup> In the traditional society love and mutual attraction was not considered in marriage negotiations. As Sambuddha Chakrabarti observes, ‘the nineteenth century Bengali literature is replete with illustrations of how love expressed itself in Bengali life with all its complexities, timidity, sacrifice and agony. Love expressed itself in such myriad forms in Bengali life and literature in the nineteenth century, that it is hard to believe that the vast majority of Bengali society knew little of this emotional change’.<sup>42</sup> In Bengal from the 1850s and 1860s onwards the demand for allowing the bride and bridegroom to marry of their own choice was raised regularly.<sup>43</sup> Bankim Chandra Chatterjee wrote that every college student in Bengal knew by heart ‘the balcony scene in Romeo and Juliet’. Romantic love allegedly the product of literary studies, could not be satisfied within the institutional framework of child marriage and the extended family.<sup>44</sup> The ideological position of the Brahma Samaj with regard to love marriage was somewhat ambivalent. The Sadharan Brahma Samaj advocated love marriages but it was expected to be endorsed by the respective families. Personal choice was supposed to be in harmony with social choice.<sup>45</sup>

A key feature of modern companionate marriages is that young men and women actively participate in selecting their own partners, whereas in traditional arranged marriages, although a young man may be consulted and may be able to reject a potential bride, a young woman often had very little say and no power of

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<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Meredith Borthwick, *The Changing Role of Women in Bengal 1849 – 1905*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1984, pp. 124-125

<sup>42</sup> Sambuddha Chakrabarti, *op.cit.*, pp.311-312

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.339

<sup>44</sup> Thapan Raychaudhuri, ‘Love in a Colonial Climate: Marriage, Sex and Romance in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bengal’, *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 34, no. 2, 2000, pp.368-369

<sup>45</sup> Aparna Bandopadhyay, *Desire and Defiance: A Study of Bengali Women in Love 1850-1930*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2016, p.45. Love marriage within the Brahma Samaj was facilitated by a generally delayed age of marriage for women and a less stringent enforcement of Purdah.

veto over a potential groom at all.<sup>46</sup> For thirty or forty years after pre puberty marriage disappeared, arranged marriages of the traditional kind were still the norm among Tamil Brahmans, even in urban, upper-middle-class families.<sup>47</sup> In Tamil magazines, *Unarchi* or *Unarvu* was the term used for referencing emotions, which may be translated in English as ‘emotion’, ‘feeling’, or ‘sentiment’.<sup>48</sup>

The changes that took place in various parts of India as part of colonial modernity were also reflected in Kerala in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In Malabar too marriage was arranged by the elders of the family, considering the caste and economic status of the families involved as elsewhere in India. However in the late nineteenth century the idea of companionate marriage and marrying for love could make a profound impact on the educated middle class. This aspiration, exemplified in novels and periodicals constructed a novel paradigm that centred around the emotional content of conjugal life. They began to question traditional customs and social norms claiming that these imposed unnatural restrictions on conjugal emotion and intimacy. Critical of the joint family relations, the new middle class fashioned a new ideology of conjugality that placed significant importance to a husband's relationship with his wife and children.<sup>49</sup>

In the changed scenario of the twentieth century, the expectations and attitudes of men and women towards marriage began to change. Modern education became an instrument to break down the traditional social structures. New job opportunities in the colonial bureaucracy led many young men to leave their

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<sup>46</sup> C.J.Fuller and Haripriya Narasimhan, *Tamil Brahmans: The Making of a Middle-Class Caste*, The University of Chicago Press, London, 2014, p.139

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Mytheli Sreenivas, *Wives, Widows and Concubines: The Conjugal Family Ideal in Colonial India*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2009, p.95. The term *Kathal* was used to refer to romantic love and this word was very popular and vividly used in contemporary Tamil literature.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5

ancestral village and home. When it became necessary for their wife to join them, this transition brought about a dramatic shift in the atmosphere of family life. Conjugal relations, informed by new colonial sensibilities and free from the restricting authority of the elders, assumed an altogether new character.<sup>50</sup> As J. Devika observes, ‘the twentieth century saw the spread of modern domesticity and the conjugal family, earlier modes of domestic life and marriage came under increasing threat due to legislative interventions and economic change and as new ideas regarding civilized and moral family life and personal freedom gained greater velocity of circulation’.<sup>51</sup> One can see the changing attitude towards marriage in the literature of the period. Even though young people prioritised the element of romantic love in relationships, they also took into account the elements of caste, class, qualifications, and professions while deciding on a potential partner.

Western romantic literature had a major impact, not merely on the aesthetic sensibilities of the middle class, but on their expectation from life, especially in the area of the relationship between men and women.<sup>52</sup> There were many youngsters who took interest in foreign settings and longed for the same freedom. They believed that westerners enjoyed great freedom in the matter of marriage. Even in the early twentieth century Kerala, social spaces were distinctly segregated, with limited opportunities for men and women to meet and interact with each other. The partners seldom had a chance of meeting to forge romantic attachments. In her autobiography, Rosie Thomas herself describes the difficulties she faced in meeting C.J.Thomas during their courtship. Rosie says that they had no space to meet in private, and interact without fear.<sup>53</sup> Love stories in the

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<sup>50</sup> Thapan Raychaudhuri, *op.cit.*, p.369

<sup>51</sup> J.Devika, *En-Gendering Individuals:The Language of Reforming in Twentieth Century Keralam*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2007, pp. 5-6

<sup>52</sup> Thapan Raychaudhuri, *op.cit.*, pp.349-378

<sup>53</sup> Rosie Thomas, *Evan Ente Priya CJ* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 2005 (First published 1970), p. 5. In the Malayalam translation of the Catholic Bible, there is a word *Chittimbam* that is indicative of the meaning of the word “courtship” in English.



nineteenth century novels did not easily culminate in marriage. It is made clear that everyone wanted a brief period of courtship to precede marriage. The demand for courtship came from both men and women as seen in *Indulekha*, a novel published in the late nineteenth century. In this novel the couple decides to wait for some time even when the chance for a marriage opens up for them. In *Parangodeeparinayam* also of the same period, the lovers did not enter into marriage immediately but decided to wait for some more before getting married following the English custom of courting. To some, courting appeared to be an essential and indispensable precondition of marital happiness. Such men were few in number. But the change in attitude was what counted.

In the article 'Dambathya Jeevitha Shailikal' [Marital Lifestyle], published in the year 1927 in the magazine *Mahila*, novel concepts regarding marriage were elaborated. This article was a call for the parents to realise that marriage was not merely an exchange of commodities. Marriage was seen as a contract between two individuals to share a successful life led by higher ideals. People who enter this contract must have faith in each other, compatibility, friendship and good feeling. Only people who could assure this was to enter the institution of marriage as otherwise, it was bound to fail.<sup>54</sup>

The Literature of the period depicts the changing expectations that were placed upon the life partner. In *Lakshmeekesavam*, this is evident from Kesavan's opinions: "You have to think well before you accept a wife. If it is not according to your own interests, it would be a difficult affair" (My Trans.).<sup>55</sup> Similarly, Kesavan Unni thinks about making Lakshmi Kutti his wife in these terms: "If I want a wife, it has to be her. She has every quality that I have dreamed of. She has enough knowledge in Sanskrit. She has a good inclination towards music. She had enough experience with English. She is also so beautiful. Her parents are

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<sup>54</sup> G. Venu, 'Dambathya Jeevitha Shailikal', *Mahila*, vol.7, no.1, 1927, pp.34-39

<sup>55</sup> Komattil Padumenon, *Lakshmeekesavam*, in George Irumbayam (ed.), *Naalu Novalukal* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1985, p.144

distinguished as well” (My Trans.).<sup>56</sup> Similarly in *Vasumathi*, when Kunji Raman plans to hold an “exchange” marriage between his and Koran’s children, Koran asks the youngsters for their permission first.<sup>57</sup>

Many satirical novels depicted women setting their own condition for their partners. Mariam in the novel *Ghatakavadam* objects to father's choice of a bridegroom for her and says that ‘I know well that if I am not added to someone who is more intelligent and compassionate than myself then I shall definitely turn to evil ways’.<sup>58</sup> The contemporary literature also indicates the emphasis placed on getting the woman's ‘consent’ to the marriage. In *Parangodeeparinayam* when Kandappa Menon seeks Parangodi Kutti’s hand in marriage for his son, Mukkandiyamma replied “Let me ask the consent of Parangodi Kutty”.<sup>59</sup> In the same novel when he is asked about marriage, Pangassa Menon’s mother informs him: “You are the one who should decide whom you want to marry. However, just don’t bring in any one you see on the street” (My Trans.).<sup>60</sup> Here, even though there is no acceptance for love marriage as such, one can still see the individual’s interest being considered within an arranged marriage. Even though there is some freedom granted to choose whom to marry, there is also a restriction placed on whom not to.

Gomathi Amma in her autobiography pointed out that, when she got a marriage proposal from A.K.Pillai, Kalyani Amma her mother showed his photo to her and asked whether she would like to marry him.<sup>61</sup> When Rama Krishna Pillai asked B. Kalyani Amma to marry him, she replied, we scarcely knew each other

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p.151. The elite notions are apparent but it is not discussed here.

<sup>57</sup> Moorkkoth Kumaran, *Vasumathi* (Mal.), Sahitya Pravathaka Co operative Society, Kottayam, 1975, p.63

<sup>58</sup> Mrs.Collins, *Ghatakavadam*, quoted in J.Devika, *op.cit.*, pp. 74-75

<sup>59</sup> Kizhakkeppatt Ramankutty Menon, *Parangodeeparinayam* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 2004 (First published 1892), p.47

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p.55

<sup>61</sup> K. Gomathi Amma, *Dhanyayayi Njan* (Mal.), D.C. Books, Kottayam, 1979, p.46

to get married.<sup>62</sup> This is a clear indication that women wanted to know about their life partner before getting married.

## ROMANTIC LOVE AS A DISCOURSE IN FICTION

Love has been a popular theme in fiction all over the world. But the representation of love seems different in different periods, places and circumstances. K. Ayyappa Paniker says ‘that the circumstances that existed in India during the late nineteenth century were similar to those in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which accelerated the growth of a new genre of writing called the novel. The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of the novel in Malayalam literature. It would perhaps be more correct to say that both internal socio-educational conditions and external influence combined to produce and popularize this new genre’.<sup>63</sup> According to him ‘the existence of the printing press, the growth of a literate reading public, the development of the habit of buying books, the increasing requirements of educational institutions and libraries, the rise in the status of women and the gradual penetration of democratic ideas and liberalism into the social fabric etc. were essential factors which by their conjunction could favour the growth of the novel in Malayalam’.<sup>64</sup> Consequently a print culture developed, offering people an ever-expanding array of materials from which individuals could construct their own sense of romantic identity.

One of the most interesting cultural sites where romance is taught, retold, and a crucial point experimented within new forms is in the literal “romance story” of mass-market genre fiction.<sup>65</sup> The writers of the period in many cases were trying

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<sup>62</sup> B. Kalyani Amma, *Vyazhavatta Smaranakal* (Mal.), D.C. Books, Kottayam, 1982 ( First published 1916), p.47

<sup>63</sup> K. Ayyappa Paniker, *A Short History of Malayalam Literature*, Information & Public Relations Department, Kerala, 2006 (First published 1977), p.58

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.58-59

<sup>65</sup> Catherine M. Roach, *Happily Ever After: The Romance Story in Popular Culture*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2016, p.4

to emulate the West in concocting interesting love episodes. Many young men and women read novels and short stories by Western authors and are particularly intoxicated by the romance and free love which exist abundantly in Western literature.<sup>66</sup> Consequently, the ideas of the romantic movement began appearing in nineteenth-century periodicals and in popular novels. G. Arunima observes that, in Kerala love entered people's lives legitimately through the literary domain but courtship was certainly unknown.<sup>67</sup> The central focus of Malayalam novels since their inception was the theme of heterosexual love in all its manifestation, pre marital, conjugal and extra marital. In the midst of all the familial representations they illustrate one love story. This relationship is depicted as a major reward in life, transcending all other values. During this period, two elements were particularly striking in love stories: the principle of 'true love' and the phenomenon of 'love at first sight'. Both were evident in the literary texts and autobiographies. Love at first sight stories were a recurrent feature of the then contemporary novels and magazines. Love at first sight stories often constructed love as a once in a lifetime experience, whether or not the relationship eventually progressed into a marriage. Francis E. Merrill says that love at first sight is a signal for serious courtship to begin.<sup>68</sup>

The romantic notion of love became the central theme in early Malayalam novels like *Indulekha*, *Parangodeeparinayam*, *Lakshmeekesavam* etc.<sup>69</sup> The power of romantic love to cultivate a sense of individual identity is vividly

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<sup>66</sup> K.M. George, *Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1972, p.234

<sup>67</sup> G.Arunima, 'Friends and Lovers: Towards a Social History of Emotion in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Kerala', in Bharati Ray (ed.), *Women of India in Colonial and Post Colonial Periods*, Pauls Press, New Delhi, 2005, p.142

<sup>68</sup> For details see Francis E. Merrill, *op.cit.*, p.34

<sup>69</sup> In the previous chapter we dealt on changing notions of marriage in print. So, a certain amount of repetition is unavoidable here. In the third chapter writings about changing notions of marriage follows social reform attempts and so the focus is not on love per say but on changing notions of marriage with a view to effect reform. It was also a part of propaganda for reform. In the case of magazines, the focus is on articles advocating reform.

illustrated in the literature of the period.<sup>70</sup> Though early Malayalam novels presented love in different forms, such as reciprocal love, unrequited love, unrealised love, unexpressed love, and spurning of love, most of these novels are centred around reciprocal love that eventually results in marriage. *Indulekha* is definitely the most important novel of the nineteenth century that dealt with reciprocal love. The story of *Indulekha*, reflects the social, economic and cultural changes in the nineteenth century Kerala. The central theme of the novel is the love between Indulekha and Madhavan.<sup>71</sup> Chandu Menon depicts the intensity of their love by showing the mental turmoil of the hero and heroine Madhavan and Indulekha. *Indulekha* was portrayed as an educated girl who firmly decides that she will only marry the man she loves despite the barriers placed by traditions and beliefs. Thus, through this novel Chandu Menon presented the image of a girl with the courage to choose her life partner according to her wish. Chandu Menon says that there are many Nair ladies in Malabar who would talk like Indulekha to their lovers.

“I know of several cases of educated and accomplished Nair ladies of respectable *tarawads* having married for love in utter defiance of the wishes of their *karanavans* or parents. Love is the same whether in England or in India. In Malabar it is true that women are more or less subject to the tyranny of their *karanavans* or parents in matters relating to matrimony, yet in my opinion there are no women in India who enjoy as a class greater freedom in the selection of their husbands than the Nair women of Malabar.

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<sup>70</sup> This was the case in Bengal and Karnataka. Bankimchandra's *Durgeshanandini*, *Kapalakundala* and *Mrinalini* are good examples for love stories. Both the moral fables and the love stories for the first time bring in characters with 'modern' personalities. Although this does not mean that the heroes and heroines are all modern people, they are presented as having a different consciousness from the protagonists of the old tales, as being 'individuals' with clearly defined personalities. Shivarama Padikkal, 'Inventing Modernity: The Emergence of the Novel in India' in Tejaswini Niranjana, P.Sudhir, Vivek Dhareshwar, (ed.), *Interrogating Modernity: Culture and Colonialism in India*, Seagull Books, Kolkata, 1993, p.228

<sup>71</sup> O. Chandu Menon, *Indulekha* (Mal.), Poorna Publications, Kozhikode, 2016 (First published 1889)

My narrative of the love and courtship of Madhavan is intended to show to the young ladies of Malabar how happy they can be if they have the freedom to choose their partners and how supremely enjoyable thing it will be for a young educated lady at a time when she attains a marriageable age to observe, to study, to admire and to love a well-educated handsome young man of unblemished moral character like Madhavan, who becomes first her companion and friend get gradually closer and closer in friendship and finally falls in love with her, adoring her as a source of all his happiness in this world, as the person without whom he does not care to live and for whose happiness he would sacrifice everything in his power. Alliances arising out of such pure sweet reciprocal love only deserves to be called marriages and it is my earnest desire that this should be the way in which the Nair ladies who already enjoy much greater freedom in respect of matrimony than other Hindu women should take their husbands".<sup>72</sup>

Though he decided to follow the pattern of English novels he wanted to select a local theme to invite the attention of its readers. In this novel he adopted a style of Malayalam which spoke at home, thereby he wanted to relate the novel with contemporary society.

Chandu Menon expressed the idea of reciprocal love in his second novel *Sarada* too through the relationship between Kalyani Amma and Raman Menon. The acquiescence of a Nair woman adjusting to any man of *karanavan's* choice is questioned in *Sarada*. Kalyani Amma, the mother of the heroine of the novel *Sarada*, is a strong woman character like Indulekha. She belonged to a famous *tarawad* Pooncholakkara Edam. The elders of her family gave her in *sambandham* to a very unsightly and idiotic landlord who was rich and could bring some benefits to the *tarawad*. But she could not accept him as her husband and runs away with

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<sup>72</sup> W. Dumurgue C.S., *Indulekha* (Trans.), Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing, Calicut, 1965, intro., pp. xxi-xxii

the help of Vaithy Pattar and a servant. They reach Kashi where she marries Raman Menon, a man of her choice.<sup>73</sup>

The first historical novel in Malayalam *Marthandavarma* is a love story built around the history of Travancore. The central characters of romance are Ananthapadmanabhan and Parukkutty. The plot of the novel provided a very touching story of the heroine Parukkutty who waits patiently for the return of the lost lover Ananthapadmanabham who is believed to have been slain by unknown enemies. With another romantic subplot involving Ananthapadmanabhan and Zulaikha's unrequited love, the novel's emotional component is further emphasised, turning the love narrative into a love triangle.<sup>74</sup>

It is probably because they viewed the probability of developing a love story in Kerala of their times with scepticism that Appu Nedungadi and Padinjare Kovilakath Ammaman Raja chose to set their works outside Kerala. *Kundalatha* is set in Kundalarajyam and *Indumathee Swayamvaram* is portrayed as an incident that happened in the Kashmir royal family. The eponymous female protagonist of the novel *Indumathee Swayamvaram* is Indumathi the daughter of the Kashmir king Prathapa Rudran. The plot of the novel is the development of the relationship between Indumathi and Sukumaran, the male protagonist who grew up playing and studying with her from their childhood. Before they separate, Indumathi gives Sukumaran her sapphire ring and he gives her a ring with his name engraved in it.

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<sup>73</sup> O.Chandu Menon, *Sarada* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1997, pp.30-31. Chandu Menon could not finish this work. The first part - about one third of the proposed work - was published in 1892.

<sup>74</sup> The badly wounded Anantha Padmanabhan, was saved by a party of Muslim merchants whose leader, a Hakim nursed him back to life. He was converted to Islam and was given a Muslim name Shamsuddin. Hakim's daughter Zulaikha fell in love with him which he could not possibly reciprocate. S.Guptan Nair, *Makers of Indian Literature: C.V. Raman Pillai*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1992, p.28

This is similar to an engagement that was conducted with just a man and a woman in love. They overcome various struggles to end up married in the end.<sup>75</sup>

The theme of *Parangodeeparinayam* is also the reciprocal love affair between Parangodan Marar, an English educated lawyer and Parangodi Kutty also educated in Western ways. English education was a prominent medium through which love developed between the couple in many of the early novels. In this novel as well, Parangodi is led to love through the courage and learning accorded to her by English education. The hero and heroine had decided to marry each other from their childhood onwards. Parangodi was not a woman bent to the wishes of her family or relatives but trusted herself to make her own decisions. When her marriage is fixed without her consent, she writes to Parangodan: “I am 18 now. I am a major now. I am legally an adult. Therefore, you should come and take me away immediately”.<sup>76</sup> The courage, determination, and the strength of a woman who can think for herself is expressed here.

The nineteenth century novels depict lovers who are willing to give up everything else for their love. This is clearly picturised in the novel *Lakshmeekesavam* which revolves around the same reciprocal love between Lakshmi Kutty and Kesavan Unni Nair. The novel also depicts the idea of “love at first sight”. Lakshmi Kutty and Kesavan Nair’s first encounter is described so: “When they saw each other for the first time, Kesavan Nair stood awestruck, looking at Lakshmi Kutty’s face, and she at his’. For two or three minutes, they stared at each other’s faces with a fluttering heart, standing still like painted pictures. They were attracted to each other like an iron is attracted to the magnet”

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<sup>75</sup> Padinjare Kovilakath Ammaman Raja, *Indumathee Swayamvaram* (Mal.), D.C. Books, Kottayam, 1979 (First published 1890), p.5. George Irumbayam has opined that this story has great resemblance to Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline*.

<sup>76</sup> Kizhakeppatt Ramankutty Menon, *op.cit.*, p. 50. Shiju Sam Varughese notes that Parangodi is a ‘negative character’. To him *Paragodi Parinayam* ‘flashes the possibility of another modernity’. See his ‘Colonial Intellectuals, Public Sphere and the Promises of Modernity’ in Satheesh Chandra Bose and Shiju Sam Varughese (ed.), *Kerala Modernity: Ideas, Spaces and Practices in Transition*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2015



(My Trans.).<sup>77</sup> When Lakshmi Kutty's uncle began to force her to get married, she faced a dilemma knowing that Kesavan could only marry her after a year. Not wanting to pressurize him, she decided to run away from home with her friend Meenakshi.<sup>78</sup> This marks a very strange incident that could not even be imagined by contemporary society. It reflects the mind and willingness of a woman to sacrifice the entire family for her love. At the same time she never wanted to be a burden for her lover which provides an added adornment to her individuality.

The notion of 'love marriage' was so prevalent that even a detective novel written by Ramavarma Appan Thampuran during this time depicts young people in love. In the novel *Bhaskara Menon*, two different kinds of relationships are portrayed: the love between Kumaran Nair and Devaki Kutty, and that between Balakrishna Menon and Ammu. The relationship between Kumaran Nair and Devaki Kutty was one of reciprocal love, and is depicted beautifully in the novel. Devaki was a courageous lover, and overwhelmed with her feelings for him, used to wait alone for him fearlessly in the evenings deep in the forest.<sup>79</sup> In addition, Devaki was portrayed as a heroine who would fight to maintain her love inspite of numerous opposition and obstacles. She declared in front of her father and brother that she would not marry anyone other than Kumaran Nair. However hard her brother tried, and however hard her father pleaded, it fell on deaf ears. She was adamant, and stated that even if she were to be killed in the name of love, she would gladly choose it, rather than spending her life with anyone else than Kumaran Nair.<sup>80</sup> Just like Indulekha, the heroine of Chandu Menon's novel, Devaki was a strong-willed character, who would fearlessly proclaim her love. However, the relationship between Balakrishna Menon and Ammu in this novel was a far cry from that of Kumaran Nair and Devaki Kutty, and was one mingled

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<sup>77</sup> Komattil Padumenon, *op.cit.*, p.148

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.166-175

<sup>79</sup> Ramavarma Appan Thampuran, *Bhaskara Menon* (Mal.), B.V. Book Depot and Printing, Thiruvananthapuram, 1935, Reprint, pp.41- 56

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p.106

with deceit and guile. Even though Ammu's love for Balakrishnan was sincere, his approach towards this relationship was purely selfish and aimed at satisfying his own wants. But the novel ends with the marriage of four people, as noted by the author, out of love.

The peculiarity of the nineteenth century novels in Kerala is that all the love stories lead to their eventual culmination in marriage. However, there are hardly any novels that deal with relationships outside the same caste. *Saraswatheevijayam* is an exception. The theme of the novel deals with inter-caste marriage. However, this affair is made possible due to the freedom accorded in Christianity. According to C. Kesavan, '*Saraswatheevijayam* marks, the first time a small finger was extended in support of inter-caste marriage in the madhouse that was the society then'.<sup>81</sup>

However, the representations of the emotion of love differ across time. An analysis of novels written from the late nineteenth century to mid twentieth century shows that, there was a remarkable change in the way that love was portrayed. The novels of the twentieth century approached the theme of love more practically. Here apart from the reciprocal love different types of the love were presented. Moreover, the emotional intimacy between the lovers also marks profound changes. One of the most important novels of this kind is *Sundarikalum Sundaranmarum*, a renaissance novel by Uroob that deals with the various aspects of social life. This novel recorded the various developments in Kerala's social, political and family life by focusing on Malabar. Historically significant events such as the Khilafat Movement, Malabar Rebellion, Struggle for Independence, the World War etc. form the background of the stories. Though the glimpse of the untold miseries suffered by the people during the course of the Malabar Rebellion forms the inner spirit of this novel, *Sundarikalum Sundaranmarum*, it also expresses the unsuccessful love stories of three generations of people belonging to

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<sup>81</sup> C.Kesavan, *Jeevitha Samaram* (Mal.), Prabhatham Printing and Publishing, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999 (First published 1968), p.197

Malabar. These love stories become unsuccessful due to social, economic and caste differences.<sup>82</sup> This novel has four unfulfilled love stories. (Raman Nair - Kunju Kutty, Lakshmi Kutty- Gopi Kurup, Shanta-Viswam, Kunji Raman-Radha). Most of the characters in the novel thus have love stories that ended in failure and they carry the burden of that pain in their hearts. Among these, Kunju Kutty, Lakshmi Kutty and Shanta are female characters who were determined to deal with any difficulty in order to end up with their lover. Despite the fact that Raman Nair, one of the protagonists of the novel worked as a teacher, he lost his lover Kunju Kutty due to his 'social status and family honour'. In this novel Shantha represents the image of a Western educated woman with the courage to express her love. When she got a marriage proposal from the rich and educated Karthikeyan she boldly told her mother that she wanted to marry Viswam, their servant and she was courageous enough to ask Viswam to marry her.<sup>83</sup> But the ideal of love is different in the case of Kunjithayi in the novel. When Kunjithayi heard that Ammalu is in love with the priest of the temple she says love is absurd. In this novel, the only marriage that manages to survive even after going against the established traditions and customs, is that of Govindan (who converts to Muslim as Sulaiman) and the widow Khadija with two kids. All other marriages made as per customs, according to the status and honour of the caste and clan, and totally ignoring love have been depicted as utter failures.

In Moorkkoth Kumaran's *Vasumathi*, love is depicted so: "Love, true love: it is indeed a radiance that cannot be put into words. This radiance that originates from two hearts and exchanges its place of residence, is a kind of divinity that cannot be expressed in words. It is no exaggeration to say that the one who has experienced true love has savoured heaven on earth. It is regarding the one who

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<sup>82</sup> Uroob, *Sundarikalum Sundaranmarum* (Mal.), D.C. Books, Kottayam, 2004 (First published 1958)

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.168 - 169

has experienced true love that we use the claim that a wife is a man's other half'( *Pathiyum Manushyanu Bharyayennarinjalum*), (My Trans.).<sup>84</sup>

The love between Vasumathi and Damodaran in this novel is this sort of undefinable and pure love. The author often points, the parents who oppose love marriages as uncivilised. There are several such references in the conversations between Damodaran and Vasumathi. Vasumathi remarks that parents who prohibit their daughter from marrying a man of her choice even when he had all required good qualities are idiots. These novels evidently portray how concerns of money and the 'greatness of family' often come between couples who love each other. In *Vasumathi*, Damodaran did not have the courage to confess his love to Vasumathi. Moorkkoth Kumaran explains the reason for this inhibition through the portrayal of his internal conflict: "I am poor. I have no one to depend on. She is the daughter of a rich man. And very beautiful. She may love me. It may be just a passing feeling. In that sense, it doesn't make sense for me to love her or attempt to make her my wife. So, I must attempt to suppress my feelings as much as possible" (My Trans.).<sup>85</sup> In the same novel, Raman Unni, a character who reads a lot of English novels, approves of the affair between his sister Vasumathi and her lover. Through Raman Unni's views on love, Moorkkoth Kumaran indicates that educated and modern individuals also support love between individuals. Love is also a recurring theme in the short stories of Moorkkoth Kumaran like *Oru Vanakusumam*, *Misravivaham*, *Ammamante Makal* etc.<sup>86</sup>

The Namboothiris also had been moved towards modernity and reformism by the new print culture and the expanding public sphere. In the twentieth century the new literary forms were very impressively used by the reformers of the Namboothiri community, to spread the ideas of conjugal love and marrying for

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<sup>84</sup> Moorkkoth Kumaran, *op.cit.*, pp.64-65

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.71-72

<sup>86</sup> Dinesan Karippally (ed.), *Moorkkoth Kumarante Kathakal* (Mal.), Haritham Books, Kozhikode, 2003

love and to accelerate a progressive change in this direction. The self portrait of the Namboothiri community is drawn in a realistic style in their writings. The stories of V.T. Bhattathiripad, Lalithambika Antarjanam, Muthiringod Bhavatrathan Namboothiripad etc. reveal that love could penetrate even into the closed innards of the Namboothiri *illams*. Through his stories and plays, V.T. Bhattathiripad depicted Namboothiri men and women in love. His works provided, among the Namboothiri community, an awareness about the possibilities of love. It is possible that these writings made women aware of the feeling of what it means to be loved and be in love.<sup>87</sup> *Rajaneerangam*, the collection of stories of V.T. portray love among Namboothiri Youth in love. Some of the stories of *Rajaneerangam* like - *Vishukkettam*, *Mayayo Manmathi Branthiyo* and *Enkil* made pre-marital love as the central theme of narration.<sup>88</sup> These stories also had discussed sexual relations among the lovers which was not only impossible but also a strict social taboo in the then society. But through this V.T portrayed lovers as capable of or longing for romantic, passionate love and envisaging warmth and attachment as the real basis for marital union. His story *Vishukkettam* presents love as the essential human emotion. The hero of this story is an educated man representing modern culture. Their relationship transcends all social conventions and even moves towards physical intimacy.<sup>89</sup> A lost love is depicted in his story *Mayayo Manmathi Branthiyo*. But still this story projects the *antarjanams* urge to gain the freedom to choose their life partner based on mutual love and understanding.<sup>90</sup> The story *Enkil* too depicts the love affair of an adolescent couple Ashtamoorthi and Thethi, which eventually leads to their sexual union. The heroine of the story, Thethi, tells that she cannot leave the man she loved and

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<sup>87</sup> V.T. Bhattathiripad, *V.T Yude Sampoorana Krithikal* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 2015 (First published 2007), p. 30

<sup>88</sup> Five stories are included in this collection of short stories first published in 1928. In all these five stories women emerge as central characters and are portrayed as the unfortunate victims of the existing patriarchal social structure.

<sup>89</sup> V.T. Bhattathiripad, *op.cit.*, pp. 45-48

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.69-82

accept someone else as her husband. It was this thought that enabled her to have sexual relation with him.<sup>91</sup> The plot of his drama *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk* too revolves around the love between Madhavan and Thethi. While Madhavan is in Madras for his education, Thethi's marriage with elderly Namboothiri is arranged. Thethi's father was hesitant to give his daughter in marriage to Madhavan, despite his fondness for him, due to the fear of committing the sin of *Parivedanam*. Madhavan, with the help of his friends, decided to foil the marriage through a court order. Finally, Thethi is married to Madhavan and appears in public without *gosha*. The drama aimed at eliminating the existing marriage system and replacing it with a marriage based on mutual love. This would in its turn 'liberate' the *antarjanams*.<sup>92</sup> V.T. through his writings tried to project an ideal family based on romantic love which the women of Namboothiri community at that time could not even dream of.

One among the four areas of reform suggested by Muthiringod Bhavatrathan Namboothirippad through his series of speeches was love marriage, through which he envisaged the introduction of the union of harmonious minds.<sup>93</sup> Love is a major concern in every work of Muthiringod from *Aphante Makal* onwards. The theme of the novel *Aphante Makal* is the relationship between Madhu, Ittichiri and Sulochana. In this novel the character Sulochana represents a platonic love. The thoughts that Ittichiri has following her secret meetings with her lover, reveal the restrictions placed on the youth in the Namboothiri community. However, Ittichiri's words show her resolve to survive anything for the sake of love: "If I can lead a life with Madhu, it doesn't matter even if I am shunned by my community or my country or even this whole world. I can endure their

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.87-98

<sup>92</sup> V.T. Bhattathirippad, *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk* (Mal.), D.C. Books, Kottayam, 2008 (First published 1930)

<sup>93</sup> Muthiringod Bhavatrathan Namboothirippad, 'Nalu Parivarthanangal', *Unninamboothiri*, vol.11, 1930, p.51. The four areas of change he suggested were educational, religious, matrimonial and economic.

displeasure for the sake of my love” (My Trans.).<sup>94</sup> E.M.S. views this story from a very different perspective. He wrote in the preface: “The author wanted to prove that only same caste marriages are practical in those days. This is why Madhu marries Itticheri instead of the beautiful Sulochana who was also in love with him” (My Trans.).<sup>95</sup> The love between Madhu and Sulochana shows the distant possibility, or rather, the near-impossibility of inter-caste marriage, while that between Madhu and Ittichiri shows that the only relationship practically possible was the one from within one’s own caste. The changes in the Namboothiri marriage system are also clear in this context.

The theme of Muthiringod’s collection of short stories *Poonkula* is the love story of *antarjanams*. Many novels and short stories depict how several Namboothiris were locked in their house and denied the right to meet their lovers when their relationship was discovered. All of them depict stories of childhood romance. For instance in *Nirasayude Nizalpadukal*, Thatri and Vasudevan have been in love since their childhood. Their horoscopes also matched with each other. Vasudevan reveals to Thatri's father his affection for her. However, her father doubts his character because he had fallen in love before marriage.<sup>96</sup> In the eyes of a traditionalist, love was wrong, a crime, a sin. The story *Eyya Okke Oru Poley*, Kunjunni Namboothiripad falls in love with and marries a widow, Pappi.<sup>97</sup> In stories like *Maranathinte Madiyil*, *Atmahoothi*, *Vidhavayude Vidhi*, *Kooriruttil* etc, the theme of love and loss is a significant feature.

M.T.Vasudevan Nair’s *Nalukettu* depicts the evolution of Kerala society and the impact of modernity in the aftermath of colonialism. M.T. depicts throughout the novel the clash between tradition and modernity. Appunni’s mother

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<sup>94</sup> Muthiringod Bhavatrathan Namboodirippad, *Aphante Makalum Mattu Kritikalum* (Mal.), Little Prince Publication, Kottayam, 1984, p. 40.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.19 -20

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p.114

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 119 - 128

Paru Kutty in the novel, is a character who was written off by her family for marrying the man she loves. Paru Kutty is a woman who showed the courage to elope with her lover Konthunni Nair on the day before her arranged marriage. Paru Kutty and Konthunni Nair had fallen in love due to several circumstances that allowed them to meet and talk with each other. This woman had to leave her home, abandoning all her rights and claims. Since it was a love marriage, no one would care about her.<sup>98</sup> It may be recalled that the same situation is depicted in the novel *Sarada*. But a new legal system had come into place after the gaining of independence that vested women with property rights and this was a major difference.<sup>99</sup>

National Movement enabled men and women to know each other and often participants fell in love with each other. U.K.Kumaran's *Thakshankunnu Swaroopam*<sup>100</sup> details the reciprocal love between Mettilda Kallan and K. Kelappan. The novel makes it clear that many were aware of the fact that there was a silent attraction between Kelappan and Mettilda. Even while being a frontline resistance leader of the National Movement, he carried his love for Mettilda in his heart. Dr. Sreedharan in this novel mentions that Kelappan's voice used to become tender whenever he talked about Mettilda.<sup>101</sup> In one of the poems penned by Kelappan, there is a girl who walks all alone amidst the paddy fields. When Sreedharan remarked that there was a resemblance to Mettilda, Kelappan only gave a soft smile. In order to get updated of his well-being while being away

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<sup>98</sup> M.T. Vasudevan Nair, *Nalukettu* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur, 1997 (First published 1958), p.188

<sup>99</sup> In the novel by Chandu Menon the heroine *Sarada* fights for her rightful property but before the book could be completed Chandu Menon died.

<sup>100</sup> This novel, which traces the evolutions and transformations of a village, also touches upon the social and communal life, the political scenario, the beliefs and traditions of the people, and various financial transactions of the time. The impact and political ripples created by the National Movement upon a small rural community is clearly portrayed. Mahatma Gandhi, K. Kelappan, and his numerous followers are all prominent characters in this novel.

<sup>101</sup> U.K. Kumaran, *Thakshankunnu Swaroopam* (Mal.), Sahithya Pravarthaka Co operative Society, Kottayam, 2020 (First published 2012), p.73



at the National Movement, Mettilda, along with Kelappan's daughter-in-law Devaki, used to visit Dr. Sreedharan. In this novel, the love between Kelappan and Mettilda pops up multiple times in the conversations between Kunjikelu and Ramar. At one point, Kunjikelu remarks: "Mettilda teacher and Kelappan are in love. They wish to marry each other. They are waiting for Gandhi's consent" (My Trans.).<sup>102</sup> However, U.K. Kumaran does not give any reason as to why the two did not marry.

Similarly, in Cherukad's novel, *Muthassi*, Nani teacher and Chathu Nair meet as part of their activities in the National Movement and in the Teachers' Movement, and subsequently fall in love. Through the protagonist Nani teacher, Cherukad presents a very strong and determined heroine.<sup>103</sup> When a false rumour spread through the village that Chathu Nair and Nani were in love, it was she who took the initiative to boldly suggest to Chathu Nair, "Then in that case, let us be in love" (My Trans.).<sup>104</sup> Later, when Chathu Nair was imprisoned due to his role in the National Movement, and subsequently lost his job, Nani considered the man whom she loved as her wedded husband, and took it upon herself to take care of, and sustain his family. Through the characters of Nani teacher and Chathu Nair, Cherukad was able to depict a reciprocal love that was both strong and deep rooted. In this novel, in a conversation between Kunjimaalu and Nani teacher, Nani asks Kunjimaalu whether she was intent on marrying a particular person, and remarks that this is the trend of the youth of the present day, implying the fact that in the 1930s, the concept of love had influenced and changed the perspectives of the women of that time. Both the authors, U.K. Kumaran and Cherukad in interviews

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.182-183

<sup>103</sup> When the fifteen-year old Nani was married off to Kuttappan Nair who was more than fifty-years old, she strongly resisted and retaliated against this, and forsaking her husband, she left his home, all alone. Later, she entered into the field of teaching, got a job, and then chanced to meet Chathu Nair.

<sup>104</sup> Cherukad, *Muthassi* (Mal.), Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 1989, p.209

have said that these ‘affairs’ were not ‘fictional’ narratives born out of imagination but which were ‘real’, incidents that happened in real life.

Love became a major theme in Malayalam poems also. Kumaran Asan’s *Nalini* and *Leela* and Changampuzha Krishna Pilla’s *Ramanan* all deal with love. *Nalini* and *Leela* are examples of female characters who are the embodiments of love. These are characters whose entire nature and lives appears to be focused on the quest for unblemished love, which leads them away from the conventionally prescribed way for women's existence. The change these poems have made in contemporary society is evident in the words of Devaki Nilayangod. In her childhood, Devaki recounts that the verses of *Ramanan* captured the hearts of the *antarjanams* in the *illams*. The young ladies forgot Sheelavati the puranic character and began to hum the lyrics of *Ramanan* instead.<sup>105</sup>

In all this literature, the intensity of love is made evident through the pangs of separation. In most of the novels, we have the male lead/ hero forced to run away due to harsh circumstances. The reader can feel the unity between the couple, their determination, their faith in each other, their longing for each other, and so on. The reader could identify themselves in the place of the male or female lead. *Parangodeeparinayam* also contains suggestions that women had begun to look for husbands who possessed or exhibited characteristics similar to the male leads that they had read about in the novels. Thus print culture popularised and intensified the aspiration for romantic love and thereby marrying for love.

But still as G.Arunima argues love was seldom the lived cultural experience that the novelist attempted to portray. It was aspirational. She says that

‘one can see the nineteenth century novels as ‘literary ethnographies’ where often the novelist seems to play the role of an anthropologist in presenting the details of everyday life. As an anthropologist the novelist standardised

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<sup>105</sup> Devaki Nilayangod, *Kalappakarchakal* (Mal.), Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 2008, p. 75

and generalised the customs, lifestyles and social practices. Therefore like ethnographies these novels are as real or as fictional about reality as one might choose them to be. The ethnographic models available in the late nineteenth century Kerala clearly posed a problem for the novelist wishing to write a love story. This mismatch between artistic desire to represent reality and extent cultural practices has created some of the most extraordinary situations of love'.<sup>106</sup> This argument makes it clear that love was not necessarily a lived experience as seen in novels.

Undoubtedly there were many marriages out of love, some of them cutting across caste but it has to be added that we cannot quantify love marriages for want of adequate sources.

### **MARRIAGE DISCOURSE: POPULAR MAGAZINES**

Some of the articles published in the contemporary magazines of the time also attempted to popularise the concept that love was an increasingly dominant requirement in choosing a spouse, and it should take precedence over all other considerations. In these writings, marrying for love was assumed to be superior because they are supposedly based on romance, understanding, and mutual affection and they are said to facilitate compatibility. Love marriages are often seen as idealistic, and arranged marriages as materialistic, where parents and family prevent the individual choice of the young people. Some went further, suggesting that love was an essential component of everyday life. Magazines of the period also provided fictional narratives that readers could apply to their own emotional lives. Sometimes these writings were straightforwardly advisory.

The practice of non-consensual arranged marriages began to be questioned by a small group of intelligentsia. T.N. Parameswara Pillai's article published in

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<sup>106</sup> G.Arunima, 'Allies, Confidantes and Beloveds: Representations of Ideas of Friendship in Nineteenth Century Kerala', in Sujata Patel, Jasodhara Bagchi, Krishna Raj (ed.), *Thinking Social Science in India: Essays in Honour of Alice Thorner*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2002, pp.282 - 293

*Keraleeya Yuvajanamithram* clearly indicates this: “Back when men and women were married off to each other without even having seen their would-be spouse at least once, there was a saying that marriage is a lottery where your luck is tested. In an age when we are clamouring for political freedom, this practice is antiquated and meaningless. However, the practise is still carried out in our society. Even now, decisions regarding marriage are taken by the guardians. Here, wealth and the social standing of the families are the important concerns. People who marry based on compatibility of their wealth, the position of the family and such factors, appear to be living a contented life. However, it is doubtful whether the happiness they project is real. For this reason, in regards to matters of marriage, real love between the couple is more important than external factors like the compatibility between the families or the comparative wealth of the families. When it comes to their marriage, women and men should be vested with complete freedom. It is absolutely necessary that men and women should marry of their own choice” (My Trans.).<sup>107</sup>

The article ‘Bharateeya Kudumba Jeevitam’ [Indian Family Life], cites the changing conception of family in the nineteenth century: “There will be numerous benefits if youngsters from different classes can develop between them the ideals of love and matrimony. If our young lads and ladies can be made to realize that marriage devoid of love is nothing but a laughable notion, it would a good sign” (My Trans.).<sup>108</sup> In his article, ‘Premam’, Kannambuzha S.K Varrier says, “Our culture is dependent on the mode of education. We need children from marriage between couples who share the values of our culture and pure love. Only when the necessary purification to attain this change has been implemented in the society, can we call ourselves human” (My Trans.).<sup>109</sup> In his diary, Vidwan Kelu Nair notes

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<sup>107</sup> T. N. Parameswara Pillai, ‘Vivaham’, *Keraleeya Yuvajanamithram*, vol.8, no.3, 1919, pp. 160-162

<sup>108</sup> Author not mentioned, ‘Bharateeya Kudumba Jeevitam’, *Mahila*, book.4, issue.11-12, 1924, p. 388

<sup>109</sup> Kannambuzha S.K Varrier, ‘Premam’, *Mahila Mandiram*, book. 1, vol. 6, 1927, pp. 260-61

that marriage for reasons like fear of derision without considering what lies in the heart of the youngsters is deplorable.<sup>110</sup> *Mahila* published an article with instructions for women regarding matters of love. “The indication of true love is a secret. Eyes never lie. A single glance of the eyes reveals more meaning than a thousand words. The main method of seduction used by men upon women is private conversations. A man who makes promises in the name of God or upon a woman, is not a man harbouring genuine love. Never trust a man who repeats more than once the promise that he is willing to even die for you. A person who promises to live with you is better than a person who says that they are willing to give up their life. Never trust poets or humourists, they cannot feel true love or freedom or affection. A boastful lover is not a steady and solid individual. A man who seduces you with trickeries and deception is not fit to be a husband” (My Trans.).<sup>111</sup> The publication of this article that specifically instructs women on the traits to look for in a lover and what to watch out for in a man, points to the possibility that such marriages were not uncommon during the time.

*Mahila* once published an article criticising a matrimonial advertisement printed in the *Social Reformer* for a B.A holder from Madras seeking a bride. The advertisement went like this: “I seek an alliance with a girl from a wealthy and prestigious family from Bombay, North Kerala, or any other region. The girl must be not more than 16 nor less than 15 years of age. I am not concerned about caste. I am not opposed to the alliance even if the girl is from the lowest caste or if she belongs to a debased family as long as she has beauty and wealth. I am a 23-year-old man born in a prestigious Brahmin family.” The magazine published a response to this: “We request that every parent pay careful attention to this letter. Parents who marry their daughters off to men such as this end up becoming a bigger enemy to the society than the men themselves. Marriage should always be built on the foundation of love and consent between the man and the woman”(My

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<sup>110</sup> E.P. Rajagopalan, *Jeevitandakam: Vidwan P. Kelu Nair's Dairy Entries* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur, 2008, p.86

<sup>111</sup> ‘Mahilakalkulla Chila Nirdeshangal’, *Mahila*, book. 2, issue. 5, 1922, pp.170-171

Trans.).<sup>112</sup> Bharatiyamma raised a similar opinion in her article as well: “Love or affection is what can be felt in the very instant that a man sees a woman, and vice versa. This cannot occur merely due to good looks or physical attraction. The sentiments expressed in the face are most crucial. Only people who find themselves in love should be united in marriage” (My Trans.).<sup>113</sup>

Sulaikha’s article apologizing for falling for a man engaged to marry another woman reveals the intensity of unrequited love: “Forgive me for loving Anantha Padmanabhan intensely without knowing anything about the woman in his heart. I have decided to remain a virgin throughout my life because I have already accepted a man in my heart and I do not wish to marry another. Let me prove, at least by my own example, that men’s accusation of women as being weak and their incessant insult of our gender as being cheaters is without basis” (My Trans.).<sup>114</sup>

Magazines published in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries had numerous love stories in them. The novels and short stories proliferated during this period through periodicals and magazines also helped for the popularisation of the emotion of love.<sup>115</sup> All the stories were in Kerala context and the characters were mainly Meenakshi, Sukumari, Pappu, Kurup etc. Almost all the short stories revolve around romantic love and almost all these love affairs finally lead to marriage. These stories talk about love, heartbreak, the attitudes of the society towards love, concerns like tradition and family heritage. There were several love stories written by women. Such stories were published often in magazines like *Sarada*, *Mahila* and *Lakshmi Bai* that boasted a huge readership. There were also love stories that were published in a serialized format. These magazines also reflect

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<sup>112</sup> Author not mentioned, ‘Vivaha Parasyam’, *Mahila*, book. 2, issue. 7-8, 1922, pp. 265-267

<sup>113</sup> M. K. Bharatiyamma, ‘Vivahavum Sthreepurushanmarum’, *Mahila*, book. 9, issue.10, 1929, p.349

<sup>114</sup> Sulaikha, ‘Sulaikhayude Kath’, *Mahila*, book. 7, issue.4, 1924, pp. 222-223

<sup>115</sup> Pavanam, *Polichezhuth* (Mal.), Prabhath Book House, Kottayam, 1958, p.29

how the concept of love evolved with time. The stories published in the start of the twentieth century were imitative of *Indulekha* to an extent regarding their description of love, its general nature, and so on. Most of them end with the couple's marriage. The concept of platonic love is also common in them.

The novel *Premathinte Asthiratha Athava Mayavilasam* [literally translated as 'The Instability of Love or its Vanity'] contains the theme of "love at first sight". Gomathi Kutty and Sukumara Menon fall for each other the moment they meet. "The seeds of love were sowed at the instant that they saw each other. Seeing that he would be a groom compatible with her interests, she pasted his likeness within her heart" (My Trans.).<sup>116</sup> The story *Premaprakarsham* portrays a love triangle between Padmini, Bhaskaran and Kamala. This story represents reciprocal love of Padmini and painter Bhaskaran and platonic love of Kamala.<sup>117</sup> Though the story *Bhaskaran* by Muller N. Kesava Pillai mainly centred around the disappearance of a boy named Bhaskaran, a beautiful love story is also narrated in between.<sup>118</sup> The plot of the story *Sukudas* revolves around the love between poor Sukudas and rich Sukumari during their college days.<sup>119</sup>

Veliyath Kuttiyamma's story *Chinthavishtayaya Sanumathi* is written in imitation of the story of *Indulekha*. The story revolves around Sukumaran going to Madras for higher studies under the assurance of Sanumathi that she will not marry anyone else. However, under the insistence of her family, Sanumathi has to agree to marry Bhagadathan Namboothiripad. Similar to *Indulekha*, Sukumaran receives the marriage invitation of Sanumathi and, unable to bear the grief, he decides to leave Madras just like Madhavan. But on the day of the wedding, Namboothiripad is kidnapped by a group of people claiming to be community

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<sup>116</sup> K.P.Gopala Pillai, 'Premathinte Asthiratha Athava Mayavilasam', *Mahila*, book.5, issue. 2, pp.71-76

<sup>117</sup> K.K.N.P (As in the original) *Premaprakarsham*, *Mahila*, book.1, issue.9, 1921, pp.310-317

<sup>118</sup> Muller N. Kesava Pillai, *Bhaskaran*, *Mahila*, book.1, issue.10, 1921, pp.350-360

<sup>119</sup> K.V. Sankaran Nair, *Sukudas*, *Mahila*, book.5, issue.9, 1925, pp.325-332

leaders and later Sukumaran and Sanumathi get married.<sup>120</sup> So all these stories ended up with the couple joining in marriage giving a positive message of love to the society. Another story published in *Mahila*, *Vimala* is a totally different narrative from all this. *Vimala* shows the unexpressed relationship between Gopeenathan and Vimala. Both were reluctant to open up about their love for each other during their college days. It was only after their separation they realised the intensity of their love. At the end of the story Gopeenathan dies and she decides to live considering him as her husband. It portrays Vimala, an ideal woman who stays unmarried for her lover all her life. The imagination of the writer went to the extent that even her parents accepted her decision. This marks a very different approach towards love as the parents accept their love even after her lover's death.<sup>121</sup>

At the same time, during the twentieth century stories were also published giving more importance to desire rather than love. The elements of betrayal and disloyalty are referred to in these stories. *Bhamayude Premam* by C.Sankunni Nair<sup>122</sup>, *Pranayahoothi* written by K.P. Gaurikkutty Amma<sup>123</sup>, *Nalini* written by B.Bhageerathi Amma portrays these kinds of stories. Many criticisms have been raised against the novel *Nalini* stating that the male and female protagonists were not idealistic.<sup>124</sup> However, none of these stories exist in isolation. Even in V.T. Bhattathiripad's stories one can notice numerous references to *antarjanams* being deceived and taken advantage of in love during this period. Most of the stories revealed this dark side of relationships. In the novel *Premathinte Parinamam*, when Sunderlalan asks Harini if she believes in love, Harini's reply indicates a

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<sup>120</sup> Veliyath Kuttiyamma, *Chinthavishtayaya Sanumathi*, *Mahila*, book.11, issue.6, 1931, pp.270-279

<sup>121</sup> D.A. Kumari, *Katharamam Vimala*, *Mahila*, book.4, issue.4,1924, pp.116-128

<sup>122</sup> C. Sankunni Nair, *Bhamayude Premam*, *Atmaposhini*, vol.8, book.8, 1918, pp.541-468

<sup>123</sup> K.P. Gaurikkutty Amma, *Pranayahoothi*, *Mahila*, book.8, 1930, pp.79-90

<sup>124</sup> B. Narayana Pillai, 'Nalini Oru Niroopanam', *Mahila*, book.11, issue.11,1931, pp.306-315. In this novel, the heroine Nalini marries a rich old man to settle her parents' debts. But after marriage, Nalini cheats him and leaves the country. Meanwhile, the hero Sreedhara Menon develops an illicit relationship with the judge's wife. But when Nalini and Sreedharan meet, they fall in love with each other and get married.



change towards this direction: “The time when I could have trust in love or romance has passed by and has been lost beyond any hope of recovery. Does anyone comprehend its purity and greatness?” (My Trans.).<sup>125</sup> Love stories were also published in school and college magazines.<sup>126</sup> In literature some, both men and women, are characterized as timid and not expressing their love. If chances of verbal expressions of love were limited, there were other possibilities: writing love letters was one such.

### **EXPRESSING INTIMACY: LOVE LETTER**

Personal expression in various forms was perhaps the most important element of romantic love. Through out history love letters were a popular way for lovers to express their deepest thoughts for one another.<sup>127</sup> Love letters are one of the ways through which intimacy is expressed. The letters exchanged between the people in love provide insight to the new quality of feeling in marriage. Such love letters show how a relationship was developed or maintained. ‘A love letter, like love-talk in general, is a performative act - however hackneyed the words, the mere fact of writing it signifies one's emotional investment. A love letter therefore enacts love, calling it forth and hoping to multiply it in the heart of the receiver; as a powerful token of affection’.<sup>128</sup> Letters allowed for the expression of intensely felt emotions, such as anger, jealousy, fear, and love, that would not have been easily expressed aloud. The letters of lovers were sacred. Meant only for each other

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<sup>125</sup> N.P.Chellappan Nair, *Premathinte Parinamam, Mahila*, book. 11, issue. 4-5, 1931, pp.180 -188

<sup>126</sup> For details see E.P.Vijayan, ‘Nipped in the Bud’, *The Government Brennen College Magazine, Thalassery*, vol.10, no.1, March 1939, pp.47- 48, E.K. Ramakrishnan, ‘For Love's Sake’, *B.E.M.P.High School Annual Magazine, Thalassery*, April 1941, pp.29-31

<sup>127</sup> The first known love letter dates back some 4000 years to ancient Summer. In this “ my precious caresses are sweeter than honey. Come my bridegroom and let me caress you” written on clay tablets. These Cuneiform documents are on display at the Istanbul Archaeological Museum in Turkey. It is also called Billet- doux which means in French ‘sweet letter’. John Stark, Will Hopkins and Mary K.Baumann, *The Dictionary of Love*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 2008, p.590

<sup>128</sup> Francesca Orsini, *op.cit.*, p. 228

the love letters indicate well the kind of affectionate closeness that could be achieved in a marriage where women were given the image of themselves as helpmates.<sup>129</sup> The strength of feeling outlined in the letter attested to a bond of love between the lovers. Since young men and women seldom had the chance to meet, date or enjoy time alone together, love letters provided them with the opportunity to stay in contact with their sweethearts.

Love letters were an important part of the crescendo of verbal activity in nineteenth-century American life and in Victorian America, letters exchanged in a serious romantic relationship were carefully guarded.<sup>130</sup> Karen Lystra had found that in spite of their public reticence and active self-censorship, Victorian love letters survive in large numbers.<sup>131</sup> She says that, ‘compared with love letters, traditional sources such as memoirs and other public documents were usually superficial reports on romance, ranging from the deliberately misleading to the self-consciously limited. Though private and solitary recollections, even diaries could be disappointing sources of self-revelation because they lacked the crucial dimension of social interaction’.<sup>132</sup> Correspondents employed a conversational language, tone, and rhythm as well as more literary tropes, metaphors, and

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<sup>129</sup> Meredith Borthwick, *op.cit.*, p. 137

<sup>130</sup> Karen Lystra, *Searching the Heart & Women, Men, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century America*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1989, p.4

<sup>131</sup> Karen Lystra had read the letters of more than a hundred people from scores of manuscript collections in the archives of Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, California. These letters, beginning in the 1830s, span a time period that roughly coincides with Queen Victoria's reign. The authors of the letters were a geographically dispersed lot, which included southerners, but perhaps best represented the West, Midwest, and Northeast, *Ibid.*, pp.3-4. ‘A collection of personal love letters addressed directly to Adolf Hitler was discovered by Wilhelm K. Eucker a German-born American military officer and later published in a small booklet ‘Love Letters to Adolf Hitler’. In 1946, during an unofficial visit to the bombed-out Reich Chancellery in Wilhelmstrasse, located in the Russian sector, he found piles of private letters written to Adolf Hitler strewn across the floor. The entire collection is still held in private hands rather than properly preserved in a publicly accessible archive’. Alexander C.T. Geppert, ‘Dear Adolf: Locating Love in Nazi Germany’, in Luisa Passerini, Liliana Ellena, and Alexander C.T. Geppert (ed.), *New Dangerous Liaisons: Discourses on Europe and Love in the Twentieth Century*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2010, pp.158-177

<sup>132</sup> Karen Lystra, *op.cit.*, p.4

romantic figures of speech.<sup>133</sup> Letters appear as the means to confess and communicate emotions which cannot be spoken face to face.<sup>134</sup> Love letter in particular, thus provides a space, where individual feelings and the legitimacy of love can be upheld forcefully and clearly against familial and social pressures.

As Laura M. Ahern pointed out, ‘in addition to offering us valuable insights into the rapidly changing marriage practices, these love letter correspondences also provide us with a deeper understanding of the social effects of literacy. One of the reasons for courtships such as this one involving love letters in the late nineteenth century was the increasing female literacy rates’.<sup>135</sup> Both men and women have used their literacy abilities to the new courtship practice of love letters. Francesca Orsini in her study of *Love in South Asia : A Cultural History* argues that, ‘one of the most widespread and explicit fears about educating girls (both Muslim and Hindu) in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was that they would write love letters. She has also stated that within the context of female literacy and bureaucratic jobs, letters acquired a new importance as a medium of intimate communication between husband and wife’.<sup>136</sup> The understanding that reading one’s love letter gave pleasure to the beloved was an encouragement to write. Thus, the concept that sending a letter would provide pleasure to the person you love, was a powerful emotional motivation and a reinforcement of romantic feelings.

In the nineteenth century autobiography and fiction in Malayalam there are references to love letters. In her autobiography, B. Kalyani Amma talks about her relationship with Ramakrishna Pillai: “Within 2 or 3 weeks of confessing his love, he sent me four or five letters where he detailed everything about his life until then

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p.19

<sup>134</sup> Francesca Orsini, *op.cit.*, p. 240

<sup>135</sup> Laura M. Ahern says that the increase in female literacy rates in Junigau (Nepal) made possible the emergence of new courtship practices involving love letters and facilitated self-initiated marriages. Laura M. Ahern, ‘Literacy, Power, and Agency: Love Letters and Development in Nepal’, *Language and Education*, vol.18, no.4, 2004, pp.305-316. Also see Alexander C.T. Geppert, *op.cit.*, pp.158-177

<sup>136</sup> Francesca Orsini, *op.cit.*, p.31

in the form of prose and matters regarding his aspirations and his longings in the form of poems. Our relationship blossomed through the letters that we exchanged” (My Trans.).<sup>137</sup> Rosie Thomas says that while studying at Aluva UC College, Rosie and C.J. Thomas communicated through letters rather than direct contact fearing family opposition.<sup>138</sup> In his autobiography *Ethirppu* P. Kesavadev writes that during his school days a boy studying in VI forum wrote a letter to a girl in V forum.<sup>139</sup> Senders and receivers of love letters in the nineteenth century, seeking to guard their privacy, sought to either destroy the letters or censor them.<sup>140</sup> Kesavadev recounts his own experience of writing a love letter: ‘I wrote a letter to my girlfriend and tore it up fearing that someone else would see it’.<sup>141</sup> Thakazhi in his autobiography talks about finding his assistant’s love letter from under the table cloth. He understood that the man was in love from the opening address of the letter itself, which read as, “My love”.<sup>142</sup>

The book titled *Premathe Kurichoru Pustakam* by K. Surendran shows a lover who eagerly waits for days to get a letter from his beloved. The postman delivered the love letter when he was thinking how lovely it would be to read the fluttering pages penned by his beloved. Then he says: ‘how true it is to say that as long as there is a postman, the excitement of life never dies. In fact, these postmasters are doctors who inject zest for life. The lovers feel thrilled when they hold the love note in their hands’ (My Trans.).<sup>143</sup> Reading or writing a love letter was viewed as a private or bedroom communication. K. Surendran described girlfriend’s letter as *Pennezhuth* (literally translated as girl writings) and

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<sup>137</sup> B.Kalyani Amma, *op.cit.*, pp.48-49

<sup>138</sup> Rosie Thomas, *op.cit.*, p.23

<sup>139</sup> V forum stands for 9<sup>th</sup> and VI forum 10<sup>th</sup> standard.

<sup>140</sup> P.Kesavadev, *op.cit.*, p.92

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.92-93

<sup>142</sup> Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, *op.cit.*, pp.109-110

<sup>143</sup> K.Surendran, *Premathekurichoru Pusthakam* (Mal.), National Book Stall, Kottayam, Year not mentioned, p.20

boyfriend's letter as *Aanezhuth* (literally translated as Man writings). All other letters are gender neutral.

The lovers experienced receiving certain letters as if their lover was visiting them in person, and it showed a spark of intimacy. They often read and wrote love letters in seclusion simulating a conversation that they felt could potentially be overheard. In *Indumathee Swayamvaram* while Sukumaran leaves Indumathi, he insists that she write letters daily so that 'he can feel her presence'.<sup>144</sup> He entrusts Chandrabhanu with the task of ensuring that Indumathi can send letters to him regularly, and to purchase the required material for it if needed. He draws comfort from the thought that he would be able to feel Indumathi's presence at least from her letters.<sup>145</sup> In her letters, Indumathi addresses him as: "To my Life Partner". During the period of separation, Indumathi repeatedly reads the letters she had received from Sukumaran. She kept them hidden in her cupboard for a long time without anyone else finding them out.<sup>146</sup> Indumathi spent hours reading sukumaran's letters and conversing through them. Thus, those letters became their only consolation in isolation. When alone, both Indumathi and Sukumaran tenderly kissed their letters, carried them to bed and engaged in private conversation with them. Men and women in the nineteenth century often realised that emotional pain was vital and even impossible to avoid in romantic love. The suffering of pain authenticated their love as explicit in the case of Indumathi and Sukumaran. Similarly in the story *Thiraskritha Pranayam* whenever Sumesan was alone, he looked at Shantha's letter and conversed with it. Then the golden alphabets in those letters would seem to him to be her eyes.<sup>147</sup> In another novel *Katharamam: Vimala* the protagonist mentions how letters have been more

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<sup>144</sup> Padinjare Kovilakath Ammaman Raja, *op.cit.*, p.61

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109

<sup>147</sup> T.P.Ramakrishnapillai, *Thiraskrita Pranayam*, *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 1935, pp.25-26

frequent than actual meetings.<sup>148</sup> In *Parangodeeparinayam*, also there are references to Parangodi writing a letter to his lover when her relatives decide to marry her to Pangassa Menon.

Though the language of emotions was sometimes conventional and the imagery hackneyed, within the body of the nineteenth-century love letter both women and men expressed elaborately their emotional states.<sup>149</sup> Both men and women enthusiastically expressed their emotional ties with each other. They used a wide range of metaphors, adverbs, and adjectives to portray their feelings. In love letters the content of the opening form of address reflected the level of intimacy between correspondents. Pet names were the most clear indications of a privileged relationship. For instance, Swadesabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai addressed his wife as 'Daali'. In the novel *Indumathee Swayamvaram*, Indumathi addresses her lover as 'My own life's soul'. Similarly Gopeenathan in the novel *Katharamam:Vimala* addresses his lover 'My dear' and signed off as "To my love forever and ever, your ardent servant Gopeenathan".<sup>150</sup> Furthermore, the act of sending and receiving love letters distinguished someone as a particular kind of person, someone capable of fostering a deep companionate marriage with a life

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<sup>148</sup> D.A Kumari, *Katharamam :Vimala, Mahila*, book.4, issue.4, 1924, pp.116-128

<sup>149</sup> Karen Lystra, *op.cit.*, p.20. Amongst the Muslims of Malabar, love letters were circulated in the form of *Katthupattus* (letter-songs). They were called so as these letters were written in the form of lyrics. This is a literary genre where the personal experiences of certain particular individuals were arranged and composed as songs. During the time when love letters were frowned upon and opposed, these *Katthupattus* were used express one's love for another. Moyinkutty Vaidyar and Pulikkottil Hyder enriched the *Katthupattus* through their contributions. In its early days, love was the major theme of these songs. Those in love expressed their love through these songs, and those who could not write or compose approached poets for assistance. One of the most famous *Katthupattus* is the *Mariyakutty Katthupattu* penned in the backdrop of the Malabar Rebellion by Pulikkottil Hydar. For details see Aswathy.K., 'Kathupattukalile Muslim Jeevithanubhavavum Akhyanaavum' in Puthalath Dinesan (ed.), *Malappuram Midyayum Yadhathyavum: Bahuswara Samskara Padanangal* (Mal.), Vol.II, Deshabhimani, Thiruvananthapuram, 2024, pp.442-450

<sup>150</sup> D.A. Kumari, *op.cit.*, pp.116-128

long partner.<sup>151</sup> This is indicated in the love letters written by Sumesan and Shanta in the short story *Tiraskrita Pranayam*.<sup>152</sup>

Romantic love also aroused special emotions like jealousy, pain, longing and happiness. This is very clear from the love letters written by Sulochana and Hemachandran in the novel *Premathyagam*.<sup>153</sup> In this novel the letters they exchange are monologues filled with personal anguish and self-doubt, but still both of them try to support each other. After the first chance meeting, then, letters become the primary space for developing a love relationship. Thus love letters became a space for expressing emotional intimacy in love.

It can be seen that both in published books, periodicals and magazines, love and marrying for love get the pride of place as a recurring theme. But how far removed was such portrayals from reality? Literature is taken to be neither a reflection of society nor a set of ideologically-refracted images of social life, but as a discursive space of negotiation in which 'social reality' gets constructed, challenged, reformed and so on.<sup>154</sup> The writers of the fiction depicted the advantages of love affairs leading to marriage. To begin with, such practices existed only in imaginary stories, in real life the parents used to arrange marriages. But later things have changed considerably. Love marriages have become less unusual and consulting the future partners before finalising the marriage has become increasingly popular.

## **MARRYING FOR LOVE : FROM FICTION TO REALITY**

During the twentieth century, beyond merely existing as an aspiration, there were some examples of true love, loss of love and love marriages throughout

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<sup>151</sup> Laura M. Ahern, *Invitations to Love: Literacy, Love Letters, and Social Change in Nepal*, The University of Michigan Press, USA, 2001, p.4

<sup>152</sup> T.P. Ramakrishna Pillai, *op.cit.*, pp.25-26

<sup>153</sup> K.M.Prabhakaranunni, *Premathyagam, Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 1942, vol.34, pp.7-9

<sup>154</sup> J. Devika, 'Beyond Kulina and Kulata: The Critique of Gender Difference in the Writings of K. Saraswati Amma', *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, vol.10, no.2, 2003, pp.201-228

Kerala. We noted earlier that it would be difficult to quantify love marriages. However, one important source for such an endeavour is autobiography. The autobiographical literature from the twentieth century bears ample testimony to the fact that the stories of 'ideal love', originating from the romantic imagination of the writers, and which gets represented through literature cannot be completely set aside as just imagination or aspiration. The autobiographies of the period present some true narrative of love stories. Just like in fiction almost all the couples in these love stories belonged to the educated class. The story of their attraction and attachment were different for each of these men and women. These stories draw attention to the ways in which gender, status, material circumstance, and generation shaped understandings of love. Falling in love deeply or being head over heels in love can be seen in some of these autobiographical accounts. One of the significant works is *Vyazhavatta Smaranakal* (Reminiscences of 12 years) written by B. Kalyani Amma in memory of her husband K. Ramakrishna Pillai (Swadeshabhmani). This work gives the details of their love marriage, one of the earliest recorded love marriages in twentieth century Kerala.<sup>155</sup> Kalyani Amma says that despite the great belief that people in those days had in astrology, and despite the astrologer insisting that their zodiac-signs were a mismatch, the two of them did not even consider ending their relationship.<sup>156</sup> Even as Ramakrishna Pillai was nearing death, it is obvious from his final words that the love was strong between them: "Daali, my torments are about to end. My only sorrow is that I must bid you adieu so early. I know, Dali must be very sad. If possible, you can accompany me" (My Trans.).<sup>157</sup> Kalyani Amma did not represent the romantic moments with her husband or her literary activities in this work.

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<sup>155</sup> We get a fairly good idea about her achievements from her daughter's autobiography *Dhanyayayi Njan*. She was the first woman to pass the matriculation examination in Travancore and one of the first graduates amongst Nair women. K.Gomathi Amma, *op.cit.*, p.79

<sup>156</sup> B.Kalyani Amma, *op.cit.*, p.50

<sup>157</sup> Ramakrishna Pillai addressed Kalyani Amma by the pet name Daali. *Ibid.*, p. 94



This is not the case of C.J.Thomas's and Rosie's love marriage. Their relationship had no familial acceptance as both belonged to different congregations. C.J. fell in love with Rosie when he was a teacher at Paul's college and she was a student there. Their relationship faced enormous difficulties. The family tried to dissuade Rosie from this relationship in all possible ways. She recounts this period in her autobiography. "The rest, my God, is better left unsaid; all imaginable resistance, tears, taunts, attempts to change my mind, heartfelt sobs, it all made me mad. With pain and remorse, I recall my friend, who had never bowed his head in front of someone in his life, having to now not only bend his head, but literally his backbone in front of my family".<sup>158</sup> At some point, Rosie eventually decides to leave C.J. unable to handle the family's grief. She tells C.J "Sir, If you marry soon, then I will marry someone according to my family's wishes".<sup>159</sup> Though he was well educated and a prolific writer he was ready to compromise for his love when her father insisted on him becoming a catholic if he wished to marry Rosie.<sup>160</sup>

In his work *Premarishtam* that C.V. Raman Pillai wrote, towards the end of his life, he talks about a failed relationship in his own life. He describes meeting Janaki Amma in a house in Perunna located in Thiruvananthapuram and having dreamed of a married life filled with love as beautiful as those described in the novels. Later, an incompatible elderly man marries her and the author describes the sense of loss he felt following it.<sup>161</sup> However, they later shared a different kind of domestic life. When Bhageerathi Amma, Pilla's wife passed away in 1905, Janaki Amma was also a widow. Following the death of C.V.'s wife, she stayed in his home for some time. When she decided to return to her

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<sup>158</sup> Rosie Thomas, *op.cit.*, p.18

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.30-31

<sup>161</sup> He ended up marrying her sister Bageerathi after the insistence of the family. P.K. Parameswaran Nair, *C.V. Raman Pillai Jeevacharithram* (Mal.), Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 1992 (First published 1948), pp. 60-63

home after a while as she did not want to stay in his house for long without any title and any relationship to him, C.V. Raman Pillai asked her to “stay on and look after me and the kids” (My Trans.).<sup>162</sup> Those words suggest that a novel type of marital relationship evolved between the two of them and Janaki Amma became the woman of the household.<sup>163</sup> Their relationship was unconceivable in the society of that period- that two unmarried people living together in the same household.

Another love marriage was between barrister G.P. Pillai and Seetha Lakshmi. Seetha Lakshmi was G.P. Pillai’s childhood friend who grew up playing with him. Their marriage was held when they came to Thiruvananthapuram to collect signatures for the Malayali Memorial. Contrary to the usual norms, their marriage function was very simple. G.P. Pillai brought the bride with him, accompanied by two of his friends.<sup>164</sup>

Thikkodiyar’s was also a love marriage. His wife's uncle's younger daughter Meenakshi recalls that Thikkodiyar used to find some excuse to visit his neighbour Parvathy’s house. He was the kind of lover who would exchange in just a glance or a word his feelings towards his lover, even though he would sit there with the pretence that he was playing with the kids.<sup>165</sup> Their marriage was held in an unusual manner. It was not the kind of marriage where invitations were distributed throughout the land and *sadya* was served for everyone. There was neither a *kathirmandapam* nor a promise made before the lamp. He discussed with his elder brother’s wife the details of his upcoming marriage: “There is no need for *thalikettu*, exchanging the *pudava*, inviting a crowd or a

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<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.175-176. Also see K.Saradmoni, *Matriliny Transformed: Family, Law and Ideology in Twentieth Century Travancore*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1999, pp.9-10

<sup>164</sup> Velayudan Panikkassery, *Ayyankali Muthal V T Vare* (Mal.), Current Books, Kottayam, 2007, p.77

<sup>165</sup> A. Sajeewan, *Thikkodiyante Kalam* (Mal.), Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 2009, pp. 48-49

huge ceremony and celebration with *vadyaghosham* (music). It is enough that Ambu *ettathi* bring her here as my bride. No other ritual is necessary " (My Trans.).<sup>166</sup> In his four hundred page long autobiography divided into seventy seven chapters, Thikkodiyar devotes just four lines to his wife Parvathy. It was because of his intense love towards his wife that he made this decision to not write anything about her.

Many autobiographies make it clear that mutual respect and admiration between educated people often led to love. The notion of a 'perfect partner' is also certainly evident in autobiographical writings. Kalyani Amma says that her acquaintance with Ramakrishna Pillai was quite accidental. At the insistence of his friends, Ramakrishna Pillai who had been bereaved of his wife Nani Kuttiamma, agreed to a meeting with Kalyani Amma. In 1904 Ramakrishna Pillai happened to read the short story *Lalitha* published by Kalyani Amma in *Rasikaranjini*. The story attracted Ramakrishna Pillai so much that it marked the beginning of the intimacy and friendship that led to their marriage.<sup>167</sup> When he first met her they spent time discussing literature and literary trends. He sent a copy of each book that he had written to Kalyani Amma, may be a very different attempt to get the attraction of an educated woman.

In his autobiography, C. Kesavan talks about his relationship with C.V. Kunjiraman's daughter Vasanthi.<sup>168</sup> C. Kesavan was attracted to Vasanthi primarily due to her capability and her social activities. Vasanthi was the secretary of the Mayyanad Woman's Association. She could also sing, write poems, give speeches etc. He writes that during their courting period, he left unwillingly for his teaching position in the English High School run by the Basel

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<sup>166</sup> Thikkodiyar, *Arangu Kanatha Nadan* (Mal.), D.C. Books, Kottayam, 2011 (First published 1991), pp.150-151

<sup>167</sup> B.Kalyani Amma, *op.cit.*, pp.47-48

<sup>168</sup> C. Kesavan, *op.cit.*, pp.186-88

Mission in Palakkad, leaving behind his heart and his mind with her.<sup>169</sup> Even though several of Vasanthi's relatives did not approve of the relationship, C.V. Kunjiraman gave her his permission for marriage. Their marriage was held in 1921. The *muhurtam* was 1'o clock but it got delayed by an hour. It was T.K. Madhavan, instead of the priests, who gave the couple the garlands to exchange. This marriage was held upon the instruction of Sree Narayana Guru, flouting the traditional norms.<sup>170</sup>

E.K. Ayyakutty's eldest daughter Parvati got married to K.Ayyappan in 1930 after a long relationship. Their marriage is a result of the acquaintance and intimacy between two educated people with a similar ideology and similar outlook on life. Their relationship grew with the exchange of letters and meetings with each other. Ayyappan's daughter says this about the relationship between her parents: "The love that my father had towards my mother cannot be expressed in words. Having seen her mental agony when he was away, a pain that persisted, I sometimes feel that they should not have loved so intensely. The beautiful statement, 'Love is a many splendored thing' was befitting for them (My Trans.).<sup>171</sup>

In the magazine *Mahila*, Ramdas talks about his very distinct type of love marriage that happened during the start of the twentieth century: "It has been 10 years since my marriage. We have a very fulfilling marital life. I chose my wife myself. Be it friends or family or the society: no one else had any say in this relationship. My wife married me not due to the compulsion of her family or relatives. We were attracted to each other due to the sense of equality and freedom- two values that have taken root and flourished in us from childhood itself. The marriage ceremony was also conducted distinctly. The ceremony was

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<sup>169</sup> R. Prakasam, *C.Kesavan: Jeevacharithram* (Mal.), Department of Cultural Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990, p.37

<sup>170</sup> C. Kesavan, *op.cit.*, pp.220 - 221

<sup>171</sup> Quoted in M.K. Sanu, *Sahodaran K. Ayyappan* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 1989 (First published 1980), p.247

held in another house because it felt like holding it in my house would be an insult to her pride and holding it in hers would be an insult to mine. The major ritual was giving her the *pudava*. In exchange for the dress I gave her, she handed me a pair of clothes as well” (My Trans.).<sup>172</sup>

Men began to take great efforts of many kinds to win the love of the lady they liked: writing poetry , singing songs or whatever means to win the lady’s heart. The impact of this upon literature was admirable as the period witnessed the gradual appearance of love stories and poetry. For instance, the well known writer Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai wrote his first love story inspired from his first such relationship. He recalls in his autobiography, of having felt a particular feeling towards one of his classmates and writing a love story for which he gave her name as the title.<sup>173</sup> Thakazhi also talks about the impact that love had on his assistant (he uses the word *gumastan* not referring his name): “His assistant began to comb his hair neatly and dressed up handsomely. He started wearing clothes cut out of good fabrics. He began using scented powders and perfumes. The places where he entered began to leave a fragrance. He began to act like a lover all together” (My Trans.).<sup>174</sup> Similarly Madambu Kunjukuttan suggests that later love stories of V.T Bhattathiripad could have stemmed from his own lost love.

Love became a major topic of conversation among the youth in the early twentieth century. P.Kesavadev recounts that whenever they met, the main topic of discussion between Kesavan and his friend Pappukutty was love. They would be thrilled to discuss the love stories in books they read. They discussed the representation of love in Victor Hugo's novel *Laughing Man*, love between Tanner and Anna in Bernard shaw's play *Man and Superman*, love in

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<sup>172</sup> Ramdas, ‘Ente Vaivahika Jeevitham’, *Mahila*, book.2, issue.9, 1929, pp. 61-65

<sup>173</sup> Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, *Atmakatha - Thakazhi* (Mal.), Green Books, Thrissur, 2007, pp.222-229

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p.109

Kumaranasan's work *Nalini* and *Leela*, love story of Damayanti and Shakuntala, love in college campus etc.<sup>175</sup> There are also references where the idea of the loved one afforded the lover great pleasure and satisfaction and sometimes even pride. Kesavadev in his autobiography illustrates the love affairs of his friends Pappukutty and Ramdas. When Ramdas showed his girlfriend to his friends, Ramdas was proud and the other two were jealous.<sup>176</sup> Thinking of the loved one made Ramdas happy, even in the midst of the most uncomfortable circumstances. He also recounts romance on the roadside. "Kolunthu had a girlfriend, Mariya the sweeper of the municipality. Their love chat was on the roadside. Everyone who walks by will see it. They are unconcerned about people staring at them".<sup>177</sup> He ascribed such liberties to the freedom accorded by Christianity that enabled them to indulge in love talk as christian religion always promoted marriage based on love. This may lead to proselytisation. For instance, in his autobiography, C.H. Kunhappa talks about the affairs between the students belonging to different religions in Brennan college and the resultant religious conversions: "Some religious conversions took place even without the influence of religious speakers and such. When a girl and boy from different circumstances felt that love had blossomed between them, and that their relationship would be broken up due to differences in their religion, community or wealth, the next step would be religious conversion" (My Trans.).<sup>178</sup> He says that the lovers even dared to step across the caste divide and marry persons of their choice. As an example of a fruitful affair between fellow students, Kunhappa remembers how his friend Balakrishna Panikker ended up marrying his classmate in intermediate class, a girl named Meenakshi. They were from different castes.<sup>179</sup> C.H. also talks about

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<sup>175</sup> P. Kesavadev, *Ethirppu* (Mal.), Prabhat Book House, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999 (First published 1959), p.316

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p.314

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p.107

<sup>178</sup> C.H.Kunhappa, *Smaranakal Mathram* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur, 2000 (First published 1981), p.107

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p.113

the famous Ammu-Amina case during that time: “A girl named Ammu hailing from Edakkadu was taken to Ponnani, converted to Islam and renamed as Amina by a Mappila who then married her. They then returned and started living in Ammu’s house. This led to Ammu’s family becoming the butt of jokes for both Muslims and Hindus. Finally, waiting for a moment when her husband was not home, Ammu’s family took her away in secrecy. Ammu’s husband sued the family. The case attracted public attention and people thronged to the court in large numbers to listen to the verdict. He notes that K.T. Chandu Nambiar who argued for the Hindu side got several threatening letters. Finally, Ammu was sent along with her family members by the court” (My Trans.).<sup>180</sup> Kunhappa says that despite the huge hullabaloo around the case, such instances did happen again.<sup>181</sup> C.H. Kunhappa also talks about his own love affair in his autobiography. He met K. Kelappan’s niece Devi when he took charge of the first Tribal school in Moodadi. Even though they faced severe opposition, they got married in 1936 with the blessings of Kelappan.<sup>182</sup>

The communist movement in Kerala provided opportunities for men and women to work together in the political movement. The leaders of Communist Party promoted a life of equality without caste, creed, and gender differences. The socialist ideology penetrated to the nook and corner of Kerala during the twentieth century. It was also a time when the leaders of the communist movement were in disarray due to police brutality. While working for the Communist Party, A.K. Gopalan had to take refuge and hide out in Karunakara Pillai’s home for a while. It was there that he met Karunakara Pillai’s niece and ended up falling for her. Even though he was ready to sacrifice his love, so that she would be spared of having to be a part of his trying life as a Party worker, it

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<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p.106

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1

was Susheela's determination that led their affair culminating in a marriage.<sup>183</sup> Due to the age gap between the couple, her mother was against their marriage. The mother was finally convinced by I.C.P. Namboothiri, T.V. Thomas and C.Raman Nair, the *karyasthan* (secretary) of E.M.S.Namboothiripad. It was I.C.P. who told Susheela's mother that to ensure her daughter's happiness, she must marry her off to the man of her own choice.<sup>184</sup> They got married after a relationship that lasted for 9 years. This is what A.K.Gopalan says about his marriage: "The party arranged our marriage on a particular evening. Our marriage was conducted in the Alappuzha Union Office in the presence of several friends and comrades in a ceremony helmed by K.C. George. Except having exchanged the blood-red garlands, no special ceremony was conducted" (My Trans.).<sup>185</sup> Kallatt Krishnan, (a Thiyya by birth) got chances for close interaction with Priya Dutta(a Namboothiri) during his hideout in one of her cousin's homes. She managed to provide all the amenities he required at the instruction of I.C.P. Namboothiri and this closeness slowly led them to fall in love.<sup>186</sup> Similarly, Gouriamma says in her autobiography that, while working in the Communist Party she got chances for close interaction with T.V. Thomas, eventually leading to the development of a relationship with him. This was the same in the case of V.V.Raghavan and C. Sathyabhama.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> A.K. Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakatha* (Mal.), Chinta Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, 2014, p.193

<sup>184</sup> I.C.P.Namboothiri, *Viplavathinte Ulthudippukal* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 2019 (First published 2002), pp.116-117

<sup>185</sup> A.K.Gopalan, *op.cit.*, p. 193

<sup>186</sup> Personal interview with Jayasree Kallatt, Daughter of Kallatt Krishnan and Priya Dutta at her residence on 21.10.2023. Also see Priya Dutta Kallatt, 'Ente Jeevitha Saghavu', *Janayugam*, March, 2000, pp.31- 34, I.C. Priya Dutta, 'Nadakathil Sahodaran Jeevithathil Nayakan', *Malayala Manorama Weekly*, book.43, vol.12, March 1998

<sup>187</sup> Johnson Ayroor, *Swayamvara Kanyakal* (Mal.), Vidyarthi Mithram Press, Kottayam, 1988, pp.31- 35. The first marriage of Sathyabhama ( sister of C. Achutha Menon) was carried out within her caste, as per their traditions. After her divorce, while being an active member of the Communist Party, she fell in love with V.V. Raghavan, who was from a different caste, and married him.



During this period love even penetrated into the very orthodox Namboothiri community. M. Leelavati talks about the marriage of her parents during a time when the Namboothiri community could not even fathom a thing such as love between a man and a woman: “If a *sadya* is arranged in the *kovilakam*, it was customary that at least one person from each *nambiveedu/nambidibhavanam* must attend the event. Even though my mother knew that it was forbidden to wear a blouse inside the *kovilakam*, she broke the custom during a feast she had to attend. When the *tampuran* ordered her to remove the clothing, the girl who was merely 15 or 16 years old, walked out in protest. This was what attracted my father Kazhukkambilli Kunjunni Nambidi to my mother” (My Trans.).<sup>188</sup> On the other hand, her mother agreed to marry a man older to her by 28 years because of her admiration, as he had defeated the *tampuran* in litigation.<sup>189</sup> Similarly Lalithambika Antarjanam’s father had been attracted to her mother due to her musical talent. While accompanying the groom to the wedding of Lalithambika’s mother’s eldest sister, he was captivated by the voice of a girl whom he heard singing inside. Subsequently, an alliance was proposed and it resulted in their marriage.<sup>190</sup>

In his autobiography, I.C.P. Namboothiri also talks about the love marriage between a Namboothiri girl called Veetikatt Savitri and a Kayamkulam native named Rajeev. They got married in the Pattambi registrar office despite the opposition of the family.<sup>191</sup> When a marriage proposal came in for I.C.P.’s younger sister Priya Dutta (the sister of V.T.’s wife), she openly declared that the man she

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<sup>188</sup> M. Leelavati, ‘Dhaniprakaram: Sahityathil Oru Penninte Sahasa Sancharangal’, *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 2021, Jan 10, p.17

<sup>189</sup> He had succeeded in bringing the Kovilakam temple under the control of the Hindu Religious Endowment after a lawsuit against the *tampuran*. *Ibid*.

<sup>190</sup> Lalithambika Antarjanam, *Aatmakathaykoramugham* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur, 2007 (First Published 1979), p.38

<sup>191</sup> I.C.P. Namboothiri, *op.cit.*, pp.117-118

wants to marry is Kallatt Krishnan, a person from the Ezhava caste.<sup>192</sup> Kallatt Krishnan was one of the leaders of the CPI. Kallatt had already mentioned his interest regarding the marriage to E.M.S. Namboothiripad and other prominent leaders.<sup>193</sup>

Jayaprakash Raghaviah writes that the Basel Mission took initiative in arranging marriage between converts formerly belonging to different castes.<sup>194</sup> The members of some lower caste like the Pulayas who were agricultural labourers did have the space for romantic marriages with members of the same community. In this community both men and women were traditionally wetland agricultural labourers and performed the agriculture duties together. There were occasions for courtship before marriage. For the missionaries, romantic love was the natural way to marriage.<sup>195</sup> Raghavaiah further stated that the Basel Mission factories provided a public space for women as their daytime at home was replaced by work time at factories. A large number of women were employed as spool winders, label makers and in the tailoring and embroidery departments of weaving factories. Women were also employed in tile factories in large numbers. There was a certain sense of freer mutual association as there was opportunity for men and women to meet freely which often resulted in romantic liaisons leading to marriage. The factory managers did not object to these and allowed such marriage to take place if both the partners belonged to the same church. Moreover such romantic liaisons took place under the watchful eyes of maistries and the factory manager.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Personal interview with Jayasree Kallatt, Daughter of Kallatt Krishnan and Priya Dutta at her residence on 21.10.2023

<sup>193</sup> I.C.P. Namboothiri, *op.cit.*, p.67. The marriage was held at 4'o clock in the evening in the Ganapath School at Kozhikode.

<sup>194</sup> Jayaprakash Raghaviah, *Basel Mission in Malabar and South Canara: 1834 -1914. A Study of Its Social and Political Impact*, Gian Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990, p.27

<sup>195</sup> Jayaprakash Raghaviah, *Faith and Industrial Reformation: Basel Mission in Malabar and South Canara*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2018, pp.203-204. This observation on the Pulaya community is made after making extensive personal enquiries.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.206-207. There is this interesting phase of two Nambeesan brothers who went abroad and as a consequence lost their caste status. On returning the elder brother

These marriages indicate a remarkable change in the institution of marriage as society moved from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. However, these changes were not uniformly reflected across Kerala. Depending on the people, community and region changes took place differently. Most of these marriages were confined within the caste limits and can be conceived as ‘self arranged marriages’ rather than love marriages.<sup>197</sup>

### **LEGALISING ‘LOVE MARRIAGES’**

Registration of marriages is an important legal procedure, as it provides a legal recognition to the marriage. The legality of marriage is frequently overlooked in Indian culture since it is viewed through a religious lens as a sacred rite and a social and spiritual understanding between two people. From the beginning of the social reform movement in the nineteenth century there were attempts to legalise marriage. This period witnessed colonial legal intervention, at the invitation of Indian elites, extended into the most intimate aspect of life such as marriage.<sup>198</sup> The prime intention for legalising marriage was, 1) preventing child marriages and enforcing a minimum age of marriage, 2) prevention of marriages without the consent of both men and women and 3) preventing illegal polygamy 4) enabling claim for property etc. But it could not produce expected changes in India in the initial stages as all communities are bound by caste rules.

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‘purified himself’ through Arya Samaj and regained his caste status. The younger one later converted to Islam and married a Muslim women. However, this cannot be regarded either as marriage out of love or conversion for love. For details see Maneesha.K.K, ‘Muhammadali Nambeesan: Adayalappeduthathepoya Nethav’ in Puthalath Dinesan (ed.), *Malappuram Midyayum Yadhathyavum: Bahuswara Samskara Padanangal* (Mal.), Vol.I, Deshabhimani, Thiruvananthapuram, 2024, pp.221-224

<sup>197</sup> The romantic relationship that goes through the process of an arranged marriage is called ‘self arranged marriages’. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century almost all the marriages were self arranged, provided the lovers belonged to the same caste and almost same socio economic status.

<sup>198</sup> Praveena Kodoth, ‘Courting Legitimacy or Delegitimizing Custom? Sexuality, Sambandham, and Marriage Reform in Late-Nineteenth-Century Malabar’, *Modern Asian Studies*, vol.35, no.2, 2001, pp.349–84

The Special Marriage Act of 1872 was implemented on the recommendation of the First Law Commission set up by the colonial government. Officially titled “An Act to Provide a Form of Marriage in Certain Cases,” the Special Marriage Act has come to be seen as India’s first Civil Marriage Law, and with several amendments, it is the current law as well.<sup>199</sup> The call for a new marriage legislation did not come from a group of people yearning to marry for love, rather the demand came from a group of social reformers. The process of legislation commenced with Keshub Chandra Sen making a petition in 1868 to the Government of India on behalf of the Brahma Samaj for a law that would secure the legality of Brahma marriages.<sup>200</sup>

The Act provided freedom to a person in selection of the marriage partner, even if such marriages cut across religious or community rules. This was the first act providing for civil marriage and registration of marriage as against the general custom of looking upon marriage as a sacrament and involving religious ceremonies, since it was a form of marriage that was to be solemnised not by a religiously appointed ‘clergyman’ but rather by a state-appointed Registrar. According to Parveez Mody, the colonial authorities were keen to create a “civil marriage law for all Indians, so that those choosing to dissent from the religious practices of their marriage rites could find state sanction for their acts even if they were disowned by their families, caste or ethno-religious communities”.<sup>201</sup> Though the intention of the Act was to facilitate inter-religious marriages, it could initially be availed only by those who did not claim to profess, or renounced any of the established religions.<sup>202</sup> However, through an amendment effected in 1923, the Act

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<sup>199</sup> Nandini Chatterjee, ‘English Law, Brahma Marriage, and the Problem of Religious Difference: Civil Marriage Laws in Britain and India’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol.52, no.3, 2010, pp.524–552

<sup>200</sup> Meredith Borthwick, *Keshub Chandra Sen: A Search for Cultural Synthesis*, Minarva Associates Private Ltd., Calcutta, 1977, pp.174–201

<sup>201</sup> Parveez Mody, ‘Love and the Law: Love-Marriage in Delhi’, *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 36, no.1, 2002, pp. 223-256

<sup>202</sup> ‘This act was conditional on certain declarations that, the bride and groom had to make before the registrar could marry them. The persons who marry under the act have to

was modified to make it convenient for Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains to marry within these four communities without renouncing their religion, thus permitting inter caste marriages. Parveez Mody argues that, this law placed Indians marrying for love in ‘a social space of extreme moral ambivalence’, at once possible and disavowed. It is argued that the two weeks residence prior and post-registration was a concession to the orthodox who felt that sufficient time should be allowed for families to travel to the relevant district and put forth their objections against the marriages of their children. Such measures made marriage a serious problem for eloping couples. There are even instances of people moving out of India to marry their lover because of the impossibility of legal union in India.<sup>203</sup>

The Special Marriage Act 1872 was eventually repealed and replaced with the new Special Marriage Act 1954. The special marriage solemnised under the 1954 Act is basically “a marriage between any two persons”, thus recognising the independent identity of an individual and liberating him/her from the traditional coercive collectivities in the matter of marriage. With this Act, ‘communities’ surrendered their rights to excommunicate and the state came to safeguard the secular rights of individuals marrying out of choice.<sup>204</sup> This Act was applicable to

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renounce whatever religion they follow. The declaration said: 'I do not profess the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muhammadan, Parsi, Buddhist, Sikh or Jaina religion. While it did not demand a renunciation of 'religion' altogether, it did imply that any persons choosing to avail of the law would have to place themselves outside the professed faiths of these eight religious groups. Thus the Act marks actually a self excommunication clause. It also set a minimum age of fourteen for the bride (with her guardian's consent) and eighteen for the groom'. Quoted in Parveez Mody, *The Intimate State ...*, *op.cit.*, p.61, Varsha Shirgaonkar, 'Native Marriage Bill and Special Marriage Act of 1872 : Some Aspects', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 53 ,1992, pp.526-527

<sup>203</sup> The special Marriage Act of 1872 made it mandatory that the couples intending to marry not be related to each other in any degree of consanguinity or affinity. So Atul Prasad from Bengal was forced to take his cousin to England with the expectation that the marriage could take place there. Unsuccessful in England, the lovers next went to Scotland and got married in the village of Gretna Green according to the local customs. Aparna Bandopadhyay, *op.cit.*, P.58

<sup>204</sup> ‘Under the Special Marriage Act, 1954 which applies to all Indian citizens irrespective of religion, marriage is registered by a designated Marriage Officer appointed for the purpose. The enactment of this Act represents a landmark in which the state came to

Indian citizens irrespective of religion, and each marriage was registered by the Marriage Officer specially appointed for the purpose.<sup>205</sup>

However, in reality, neither of these Acts provided complete support for individual choices in marriage. Mody says that the nineteenth-century debates surrounding civil marriages were mirrored in contemporary perceptions regarding the uneasy match of love and marriage, even amongst those who worked in and around the Civil Courts in Delhi where such marriages were regularly solemnised.<sup>206</sup> Despite all the legal enactments caste restrictions remained as an obstacle in the selection of mates and none of these acts were effectively put into practice.<sup>207</sup>

Though the legitimacy of love-marriage was endowed by law, all these marriages were illegitimate in the context of society. 'Love' was seen as a dangerous emotion capable of undermining the bonds of obligations between individuals and their broader social groups. In Malabar the act did not make any impact even in the early twentieth century as people were bound by their own

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protect the secular rights of individuals marrying out of choice'. Kameshwar Choudhary, 'Anatomy of the Special Marriage Act', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 26, no.52, 1991, pp. 2981- 2983

<sup>205</sup> The act extends to the whole of India except the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Special Marriage Act 1954 ( Central Act XLIII of 1954) and the Madras Special Marriage Rules 1954, Superintendent, Government Press Madras, 1955

<sup>206</sup> Parveez Mody, 'Love and Law....', *op.cit.*, pp. 241-248

<sup>207</sup> Sobha P.V. in her study entitled 'Gender Justice among Partners of Self Choice Marriages' recorded the district wise distribution of total registered marriages under the Special Marriage Act of 1954 as on 31/ 03/ 2008. According to this information, 314 marriages have taken place in Thiruvananthapuram, 104 marriages in Kollam, 294 marriages in Pathanamthitta, 357 marriages in Kottayam, 29 marriage in Idukki, 627 marriages in Ernakulam, 138 marriages in Thrissur, 20 marriages in Palakkad, 101 marriages in Malappuram, 94 marriages in Kozhikode and 112 marriages in Kannur. She has stated that during the whole fifty years there was not even one set of partners that sought this sort of marriage registration in the Kasargod District. She has not received any information from Wayanad district. Sobha P.V., 'Gender Justice Among Partners of Self Choice Marriages', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Calicut, 2009, pp.153-154. Johnson Ayroor in his work *Swayamvara Kanyakal* discusses 30 marriages since the enactment of this Act. Johnson Ayroor, *op.cit.*, pp.1-144

religious laws. Even in the attempts to make *sambandam* legalised, it could not produce the desired result.

#### **MARRYING FOR LOVE: NEGOTIATING TRADITION AND MODERNITY**

Sanjay Joshi, in his study based in Lucknow, refers to the colonial modernity as a 'fractured modernity'.<sup>208</sup> In his opinion, modernity is a paradoxical concept. Along with modernity, there emerged additional anxieties about social structure, family, marriage, and sexuality. Although extending their support, the new middle class that appeared with colonial modernity, did not dare to entirely overrun the existing traditions. For the same reason, Western civilization, even though glorified, was often criticised in certain respects due to people blindly following it. Besides, there were conflicting positions deriving from them with regard to social and cultural issues. The most important among these is, their attitude towards marriage and the status of women in society. The idea of a relatively higher age of marriage and the idea of widow remarriage have gained wide acceptance among the middle class, but the ideas of inter caste marriage by mutual choice of the persons concerned, and the idea of the dissolubility of marriage have had much less acceptance.<sup>209</sup> As Parveez Mody pointed out, marrying for love was considered unholy as they challenge 'natural' caste hierarchy, and social considerations of class, status and standing.<sup>210</sup>

The middle class promoted romantic love because they supported the idea of monogamous marriage. They were greatly influenced by the Western concept of companionate marriage. In *Indulekha*, *Parangodeeparinayam*, *Meenakshi*, *Indumathee Swayamvaram* etc. the couples love each other and look forward to their courting time. Rosie Thomas reveals in her autobiography that she had sweet

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<sup>208</sup> Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p.4

<sup>209</sup> M S Gore, *op.cit.*, p.219

<sup>210</sup> Parveez Mody, 'Kidnapping, Elopement and Abduction: An Ethnography of Love Marriage in Delhi' in Francesca Orsini, *op.cit.*, p.333

dreams of courting when she was in love with C.J. during her college days. That is, many people were influenced by the Western idea that men and women should understand each other, and marry for love. But attempts were very rare to bring that into practice in real life.

*Indulekha* is a unique piece of art that calls for a radical overhaul of Kerala family relationships and calls for a restructuring of the social order. This is a novel that points an accusing finger against the feudal culture of Kerala and the sexual anarchy of the *Savarnas*, who are the epitomes of the social system, and the strained family relationships. By breaking such systems, *Indulekha*, the novel, led Kerala society towards a more progressive and cultured individual family setup. This novel also conceptualises a shift from a joint family to a nuclear family system. Its author, Chandu Menon, was an important representative of the middle class that emerged in Malabar. But he took a very different stand on the proposed changes to the marriage laws in Malabar. Chandu Menon, who clearly expressed modern and revolutionary ideas such as love marriage, monogamy, and nuclear family in his novels, voiced a more conservative approach to the Malabar Marriage Bill.

When the Report of Malabar Marriage Commission was submitted, it was signed only by four out of the six members. Two of these four had reservations on certain points and submitted separate memoranda. Two members, the President, Sir Muthuswami Aiyar, and Chandu Menon submitted dissenting notes expressing near total disapproval of the Bill.<sup>211</sup> Chandu Menon submitted a separate memorandum expressing disagreement with the report of the Commission. G.Arunima argues that ‘there were clearly many things about contact with the West that O.Chandu Menon found beneficial to the society: technology, education, modern notions about governance etc. However, in certain respects, especially in those that impinged on what one might consider a part of the private sphere, with regard to matrilineal kinship and its norms, or Hindu religious practices he was not

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<sup>211</sup> Praveena Kodoth, *op.cit.*, p.372



willing to either accept the superiority of the Western system or indeed accept that there was any necessity for change within his indigenous *Malayali* one'.<sup>212</sup>

He attributed the vehement and widespread opposition to the marriage bill to provisions which interfered with caste rules, introduced registration of marriage, removed customary rules of consanguinity and affinity, and enabled descent of self-acquired property to the 'natural' family.<sup>213</sup> Chandu Menon charged travel writing about Malabar by foreigners and the colonial interpretation of *sambandham* as concubinage with excessive reliance on the Namboothiris who, from interested motives have always wished to make out that our women do not and need not practice chastity.<sup>214</sup> Given the construction in the colonial discourse of the Nair woman as sexually permissive and the Namboothiri version that they were created for gratification of the sexual desires of the Namboothiri male, Chandu Menon premises his argument that *sambandham* constituted marriage on the sexually confirmative, chaste Nair woman-wife.<sup>215</sup>

Chandu Menon in his famous dissenting minute to the Malabar Marriage Commission strongly argued to continue with existing customary practices. Other than the fact that there would be no concept of widowhood amongst Nayar women, due to the lack of institutionalised marriage, in all other respects they were as any other patrilineal or monogamous community. To allow any state involvement in the Nair marriage system would be an attack against their caste practices and traditions. The suggestion that they were licentious and adulterous was pure calumny, as the Nairs protected their marriages with as much zeal as the monogamous (patrilineal) communities.<sup>216</sup> Arunima argues that this is a clear

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<sup>212</sup> G. Arunima, 'Glimpses from a Writer's World: O. Chandu Menon, His Contemporaries, and Their Times', *Studies in History*, vol.20, no.2, 2004, pp.189–214

<sup>213</sup> RMMC, p.91, quoted in Praveena Kodoth, *op.cit.*, p.377

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p.101

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p.379

<sup>216</sup> G. Arunima, 'Glimpses ...', *op.cit.*, p. 199

demarcation of private from public which is predominantly an experience of modernity.<sup>217</sup>

Chandu Menon advocated similar principles of privacy in the disputes about religion in *Indulekha*. This is well expressed through the character Madhavan in this novel. In the eighteenth chapter of *Indulekha* there was a debate on religion where Madhavan, a product of colonial modernity takes a position which favours religion devoid of superstition. In denying either a difference from Western views, or the supremacy of the latter in terms of understanding, Chandu Menon was making a statement in defence of his traditions and culture.<sup>218</sup>

Sometimes even those who spoke in support of love marriages were conservative within their own household, as is evident from his daughter's account of K. Ayyappan. He was an advocate of intermarriage, but inter-caste, inter-religious marriages that arose out of love were often considered as mere youthful decisions by him. He says that this would only serve to create enmity between the relatives of both families and that such marriages will end in failure as they are against the social norms.

As a parliamentarian, one of the three bills that Ayyappan introduced was the Civil Marriage Bill. This Bill gave legal backing for marriage between different communities. He underlines the concept of love in his speech introducing the Civil Marriage Bill: "Love is of great importance in earthly life. Love should not be faced with unnecessary restrictions. But lust should be restricted. In the form of love, affection between individuals should be allowed to freely develop. True love does not see caste differences as a hindrance. However, the norms of our society today follow the codes of caste-based conduct. This will be detrimental to the

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<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p.199. Also see Sreejith K., *The Middle Class in Colonial Malabar: A Social History*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2021, p.154. This conflict between tradition and modernity is well expressed in the novel *Parishkarappathi*. Kochuthomman Appothikkari, *Parishkarappathi*, Chinta Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram, 2013, Reprint.

prestige of our nation.<sup>219</sup> He also stated that “There is an argument that since marriage is a sacrament, it should not be registered. If marriage is a sacrament, it is because of love, not the mantra or tantra of a priest. If there is love between the couple, marriage will be a sacrament even if they marry in front of the registrar and not the priest”.<sup>220</sup>

However, Ayyappan’s daughter says that the same man approached love practically as well. Once, when she asked about love, Ayyappan’s reply was: “However strong the love may be, marriages between people of similar backgrounds are usually the ones to be successful. If you ignore this fact and submit to your initial desire, the chance is that two lives will be spoiled” (My Trans.).<sup>221</sup> She remembers him advising two youngsters from different communities who eloped from home and sought his help to get married and sending them back home. This demonstrates how middle-class identity is conflicted between tradition and modernity. Though the English educated reform minded middle-class men enthusiastically spoke about romantic love, they hesitated to abandon the traditional pattern of family life. On the one hand they were attracted to the foreign ideas of romantic love marriage on the other they feared a future cut off from the family and parents. Sambuddha Chakrabarti argues in Bengal context that the social system in which marriage was deemed as a transaction between two families and in which an intimate relationship between the husband and the wife took an abnormally long time to develop, would certainly not allow the bride or the bridegroom to choose his or her own match. Even till the last decade of the nineteenth century this was not recognized as an accepted form of marriage.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> M.K. Sanu, *op.cit.*, pp.151-152

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p.153

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, p.252

<sup>222</sup> Sambuddha Chakrabarti, *op.cit.*, pp.338-339

The magazines of the period make it evident that fears about love marriage proliferated in Kerala in the early twentieth century. Love marriages were often presented as deeply transgressive. They came to stand for marriages that threatened borders of caste, religion and social status and within such marriages women were promised to exert new kinds of freedom. Thus articles were published disagreeing with the premise of love marriages. A critical article was published in *Vidyavinodini* citing the example of *Kundalata* as a demonstration of how love has become immaterial in Kerala for *Malayalis* in fixing a marriage: “As he demonstrates his opinion in his stories that marriage must be a union of love resulting from men and women having met and being acquainted with one another rather than being based on the words of messengers or by seeing a picture or because of the interests of elders, Appu Nedungadi must have felt that such a portrayal was contrary to the actual experience of the average *Malayali*. This could be the reason why he chose to set the story in ancient Kalinga instead of contemporary Kerala” (My Trans.).<sup>223</sup>

Similarly, Pachi Amma’s article ‘Sthreekalum Swathantryavum’ [Women and Freedom], lays open the helplessness of women in matters regarding their marriage. It also emphasizes on how crucial it is for both the bride and the groom to consent to their marriage:

“Marriage is something that is equally important to both men and women. In such matters, our ancestors vested all freedom to women to make their own choices. There were several practices like *Gandharva vivaham*<sup>224</sup> and *Swayamvaram*<sup>225</sup>. They knew that in marriage, the most important factor was the compatibility and consent of the bride and the bridegroom. This is the secret behind the solidity of the marital bonds in that age. However,

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<sup>223</sup> Author not mentioned, ‘Kundalatha’, *Vidyavinodini*, book.7, no.3, 1892, p.147

<sup>224</sup> The type of marriage between two consensual parties, devoid of any rituals or the blessings of others.

<sup>225</sup> The type of marriage where the bride would be free to select her husband from an array of prominent men.

what is the modern situation compared to that? Young people have no space to raise their opinion regarding the most crucial phase of their life. In such matters, their situation is no better than that of objects of barter. In every community of Kerala, women have no other option but to become the wife of the man selected for them by their guardians. They can utter no word of protest even if the man is uneducated, a leper, an alcoholic or a lecherous man who frequents the houses of prostitutes” (My Trans.).<sup>226</sup>

In her article, G. Bhageerathi Amma makes this remark: “The fundamental reason for marriage is preserving the purity of the bloodline and to make sure that the vigour of the community remains undiluted. Inter-caste alliances will lead to the destruction of caste-based lifestyles and principles by leading to the inter-mixing of bloodlines and ideologies. What will be the net impact when completely different people are brought together by nothing but attraction? They will co-habit for a long time with the intensity of that love. However, their love will deplete with the eventual and gradual loss of their passion” (My Trans.).<sup>227</sup> Similarly, an article published in the *Rasikaranjini* says: “Today’s youngsters believe in the myth that the only basis for marriage is love. This foolish belief comes from the drivel that is printed and published by the press. Even though love is a requirement in a marriage, it cannot be the sole basis” (My Trans.).<sup>228</sup>

Some of the contemporary magazines also mention cases of suicides that took place because the men and the women were prevented from marrying the person they loved. For example, in an article published in *Yuvajanamithram* in 1916 titled ‘Streekalum Cherupparum’, there is a mention of such a case: “There are several women who take their life because they cannot get the man they desire as their husband and several men who take their life because they cannot get the

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<sup>226</sup> B. Pachiyamma, ‘Streekalum Swathantryavum’, *Mahila*, book.3,1921, pp. 108-110

<sup>227</sup> B. Bhageerathi Amma, ‘Streekalum Sahithyavum’, *Mahila*, book. I, issue. 11, 1931, pp.25-26

<sup>228</sup> Author not mentioned, ‘Bharyamarude Chila Avakasangal’, *Rasikaranjini*, book. 1-2, issue.1, 1903, p. 551

woman of their liking as their wife. We see this even among the more cultured people now. It is indeed a necessity that men and women get the people they love as their partner” (My Trans.).<sup>229</sup>

Many lovers did not dare to cross the caste divide and marry the persons of their choice. Since caste endogamy was one of the main prerequisites for a marriage union in upper caste Hindu society, the violation of this principle by the lovers enraged their family and society. V.T.Bhattathiripad was in love with a woman and their courtship ended only due to the fact that they were unable to openly admit their love before their families. Madambu Kunjukuttan talks about the relation that V.T. had with an *ambalavasi* girl named Ammukutti Varasyar during his youth when he was the *shanti* [priest] at the Shastamkavu temple. However, this relationship did not end up in marriage. V.T says about the loss of his love: “The spring season of one’s life occurs during the days of youth. I thought of love as a precursor to the full realization of one’s personality. And so, as I was savoring the sweetness of marital life, the cup fell from my hands and shattered” (My Trans.).<sup>230</sup> The breakdown of this relationship brought V.T into despair. He writes that the experience left him feeling like he had lost his own identity. Ammukutti represents and symbolises many other women who could not voice their opinion regarding their marriage or express their love openly. She tells V.T. that her marriage is fixed to another man: “It is not because I like it, it is due to the insistence of others”.<sup>231</sup> V.T. realized that this terrible loss they suffered was only due to the lack of freedom of individuals. Namboothiri families used to marry from the Varrier caste even then. It was not wrong as per tradition. Girls of the Varrier caste were also given the freedom to do so. Even so, they were not able to open up about their love to their families. V.T. was haunted for a long time by thoughts such as, if only Ammukutty had more freedom, if only she could insist that she

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<sup>229</sup> Author not mentioned, ‘Sthreekalum Cheruppakkarum’, *Yuvajanamitram*, book.1, issue.1, 1916, p.29

<sup>230</sup> Madambu Kunjukuttan, *Abhivadaye* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur, 1989, p.56

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

would only marry her lover Thazhath Raman Bhattathiripad, if only he had the courage and the financial stability to give her the traditional *pudava* and make her his, and so on. His very first experience must have been a primary reason as to why he was always supportive of love marriages later in life. When he ventured into social activism, he wrote about his early relationship and painted the mental compatibility of the male and female characters in his dramas and short stories. He also described the beauty in getting married after falling in love and intimately knowing each other. When T.N. Govindan Adiyodi, an upper caste married Narayani from the Ezhava caste in 1935, it was V.T. who helped them tie the knot despite severe criticism. This marriage was conducted in a school and overrode every norm of traditional marriages.<sup>232</sup>

M.P. Bhattathiripad, who presented the revolutionary concepts of love and love-marriages among the Namboothiris through the play *Rithumathi*, had a love-failure in his own life. K.G. Shankarapillai reminisces the words of M.P.Bhattathiripad about his lost love:

“In my youth, I fell madly in love with a girl I was close with. When I went to her house to meet her brother, she was the first one whom I saw. She was on her way to the temple. I opened my heart to her, and expressed my feelings towards her, which had been suppressed within the depths of my heart for a long time. I only told her that I loved her. As I kept walking forward, thinking whether she would like me as well, she called me from behind. When I turned back, she gave me a kiss on the cheek and ran off. This incident transformed me into a completely different person. My life felt as if it had a new meaning to it. However, over time, that love was lost for me”.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Personal interview with Kaviyoor Rajagopalan at his residence, 12/04/2023

<sup>233</sup> Quoted in N.P. Vijayakrishnan, *Premji* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 2002, pp.30-31

It was with deep anguish that he viewed this tragic loss. When it seemed that he would either have to commit suicide or go mad, he left his native place and went to Bangalore.<sup>234</sup>

In his autobiography C.H.Kunhappa talks about the marriage of a couple from different backgrounds and the difficulties it caused during that time. The wife of his teacher who was a Thiyya at the Thalassery Mission High School, where C.H. Kunhappa studied for almost 8 years, was a *Vannathi*, a lower caste woman. The Thiyya community refused to recognize this marriage or to accept her as the wife of the teacher and the kids as theirs. Subsequently, having no chance for social relationships, he and his family converted to Christianity.<sup>235</sup> The caste restriction is also evident from the autobiography of Rosie Thomas. C.J. Thomas, a well known literary and cultural figure in Kerala, had to convert to Catholicism to marry his love Rosie with the consent of her parents.<sup>236</sup> They had even to battle the disapproval of their families because of the difference in their social status.

There are several recorded instances of romances aborted under familial pressure. V.M. Vishnu Bharatiyan for instance could not marry the woman of his choice on account of the antipathy of his family. In his autobiography he talks about a failed relationship that he had in his youth: “When I went to Thiruvallam for a case involving the Vaidiri Mana Namboothiri, I started a relationship with a 16-year-old girl there. I used to meet her in secret and exchange letters with her. Even though her mother gave her blessings for the relationship, her father was against it. Even after I returned to Malabar, I continued to receive her love letters. Finally, we had to let go of each other due to the compulsion of the family and I ended up marrying the daughter of my uncle and the girl ended up marrying someone her parents approved of” (My Trans.).<sup>237</sup> Vishnu Bharatiyan adds that

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<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> C.H.Kunhappa, *op.cit.*, p.7

<sup>236</sup> Rosie Thomas, *op.cit.*, pp.30-31

<sup>237</sup> V.M.Vishnu Bharatiyan, *op.cit.*, pp. 23- 24. The hindrances towards romantic love and their consequences were visible in the contemporary newspapers of the time. For



when her relatives came to know of their affair, they feared that the couple would elope to get married and raised their concern.

In his autobiography, Thakazhi talks about leaving Thiruvananthapuram when he felt that he might fall in love with a particular person.<sup>238</sup> However, he does not proceed to elaborate further on the topic. He talks about his departure in this manner: “Because I left, nobody’s heart was broken, I ruined no one, and no one had to shed a drop of tear” (My Trans.).<sup>239</sup> These words reveal the conflicts that love marriages create in a family.

Inter caste marriage has been one of the main themes of social reformers in India. In Kerala too the social reformers of the period especially Sree Narayana Guru urged for inter caste marriages. They propagated a form of marriage based on mutual consent. They even tried to mobilise opinion in favour of legislation which would enable individuals to marry outside the *varna* group. But the romantic pattern of marriage only after courtship has not been much propagated by Indian social reformers. Early reformers ranging from missionaries to leaders of community movements sought to redo *Malayali* family and marriage practices along the lines of what they perceived to be an ideal high Hindu form. This form was often perceived as being simultaneously Indian and modern.<sup>240</sup>

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instance, when Krishnan Ezhuthachan who was the headmaster of an elementary school fell in love with a woman from a lower caste, her guardians and some of the townsfolk relocated her to a relative's house far away in Tirur. The *Prabhatham* newspaper in 1938 reported that when she was brought back to her home after 22 days, she had gone completely insane. For details see *Prabhatham*, July 1938. Similarly, in Pannikurissi Desom near Cherpullassery, a youth from a Nair family fell in love with a woman from the Asari community. Following this, his family exiled the woman from that region, according to reports. For details see *Prabhatham*, June 1938

<sup>238</sup> Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, *op.cit.*, pp. 93-94

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> J.Devika and Avanti Mukherjee, ‘Reforming Women in Malayalee Modernity: A Historical Overview’, in Swapna Mukhopadhyay(ed.), *The Enigma of the Kerala Women: A Failed Promise of Literacy*, Social Science Press, New Delhi, 2007, p.103

The following statement of Swadesabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai makes it clear that although during this period both men and the women's consent were sought in the matter of marriage it had not become a regular practice. When Rama Krishna Pillai asked Kalyani Amma to marry him, she replied 'we scarcely knew each other to get married'. Ramkrishna Pillai's reply to this was 'Being strangers is not a hindrance to marriage. None of the husbands and wives you see today were married because they were acquainted. The reason why you feel the need to be acquainted prior to getting married is perhaps due to the influence of reading English novels'.<sup>241</sup> However, it is also apparent that compared to the conventional methods, numerous changes occurred in this matter in the nineteenth and twentieth century among the middle class.

Experiences of and attitudes towards love varied according to status and socio-economic milieu. The social taboos and a legacy of an ideal chaste woman restrict young couples from courting before engagement or with anyone whom their parents might not approve of. In an attempt to create marriages which meet both romantic and traditional ideals young people attempt to arrange love within socially acceptable boundaries. Thus romantic love seems acceptable only if it eventually leads to marriage and that too, if the mate is from an appropriate class, caste and religion. One of the reasons for the success of B.Kalyani Amma's marriage was that both of them belonged to the same caste and social background. She had stated that there was no familial contention in their marriage. But still her daughter indicated that this was an unusual marriage in Kerala at that time. This was the same in the case of Thikkodian.<sup>242</sup> In exceptional instances, elite women had relationships with lower-status men, rooted in love and attachment that developed into marriages, such as the union of Priya Dutta with Kallat Krishnan.

In Uroob's *Sundarikalum Sundaranmarum*, when Raman Nair and Kunju Kutty confess their love to Kunju Kutty's mother, her reaction is that of a woman

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<sup>241</sup> B. Kalyani Amma, *op.cit.*, p.47

<sup>242</sup> Thikkodian married his cousin Parvathy.

afraid to break the tradition: “ Raman Nair, you are like a son to me. You have no flaw whatsoever. However, this is an old *taravad*. The older generations say that one must look at not just the face, but also the family. I don’t know if that is right or wrong. However, I find it difficult to think any differently” (My Trans.).<sup>243</sup> In the same novel, despite having had an unfulfilled love of her own, Lakshmi Kutty refuses to accept her daughter Shanta’s relationship with Vishwam. This is because the tradition did not teach her to consider a relationship beyond the dictates of wealth and family heritage. This novel depicts the failure of every relationship that is not founded on mutual love, but on concerns like the family’s greatness and traditional norms. Thelapurath Rama Kurup’s *Pranayaprabhaavam* is a novel that exposes the hypocrisies of people who campaign for changes in the system of marriage. The story is about the love between Padmavati and Kurup who meet during a train journey. When he approached Padmavati’s father to ask for her hand in marriage, Kurup was given the reply: “I am happy that I got someone from your background as my daughter’s husband. However, if we conduct this marriage, there can be several conflicts between our castes. Even though everyone talks about unity beyond caste boundaries, inter-caste marriages, *panthibhojanam* shared between different castes etc. in various meetings and write about such ideas in newspapers, the truth is that such changes are yet to be accepted by our Nair community. This community still follows all the traditional rules by dictum. No one with a commitment to their family will have the courage to abandon the societal regulations so carelessly. Even if Padamavati wants it, I cannot give you permission for this marriage” (My Trans.).<sup>244</sup> Even in the novel *Balyakalasakhi* published in 1944, the love of Majeed and Suhara did not materialise as they belonged to different economic classes. Through this novel Basheer reveals the social reality that the class difference was equally powerful like caste or religion. The customary marriages were evidently enforced even to protect the family

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<sup>243</sup> Uroob, *op.cit.*, p.35

<sup>244</sup> Thelapurath Rama Kurup, *Pranaya Prabhavam, Mahila*, book. 6, issue.1, 1930, pp.175-181

honour. Majeed and Suhara and many others like them are the victims of this hard reality. It is clearly indicated in the novel *Sarada* and *Nalukettu* that women who marry for love even lose their property rights. Before marrying Kallat Krishnan, Priya Dutta submitted a signed declaration at the Cherpulassery Register Office stating that she had no claims or rights whatsoever to the family property.<sup>245</sup>

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century various ideas about love coalesced as an evolutionary trajectory to create a modern image of women. With the rise of the concept of romantic love and companionate marriage there was a gradual rise in the status of women who were previously considered as an instrument for enjoyment or as a child bearer. In the patriarchal system of society, women were treated as personal property. But gradually, especially during the twentieth century, she reached the status of helpmates. 'Love marriage' suggested that three ideas were at stake—first, the principle of individual freedom to choose a life partner; second, the new importance of romantic companionship within what had often been first and foremost an economic social structure; and third, the changing status of women.<sup>246</sup> Thus, the concepts of individual freedom, companionship, and the status of women began to acquire importance, and the rigid and outdated ideas of elders deciding the future of the youngsters, marriage as merely an economic transaction, and women as objects of labour, gradually began to be sidelined.

To understand the impact of the renaissance ideals on women, one should look at the articles and stories that appeared in the later publications of women's magazines. Lakshmi Amma's article 'Purusha Dharmam' questions the concepts of women's dharma created by men for their own convenience and instead makes educated men aware of a husband's dharma.<sup>247</sup> Most revolutionary movements did

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<sup>245</sup> Personal interview with Jayasree Kallatt at her residence on 21.10.2023

<sup>246</sup> Shameem Black, 'Love Marriage', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, vol. 40, no.2, 2007, pp.345–348

<sup>247</sup> She has stated that a husband's Dharma was to take care of his wife and children with love and affection. The husband should be a best companion to his wife in all sense. He

not aim for the total overthrow of the patriarchal order. This is apparent in the articles published in the early magazines. Contributors to women's magazines of those days would select women from ancient myths and legends who were the perfect symbols of chastity, endurance, devotion to their husbands, devotion to God and compassion and project them as worthy of emulation.<sup>248</sup> Prescriptions of *streedharma* and *pativrata* were considered necessary to ideologically bolster a form of marriage that was based on a man's ownership of his wife's body, on his absolute control of her sexuality, without any reciprocal control exercise by the wife on the husband's sexuality.<sup>249</sup>

The new middle class embraced what went along with their culture and rejected the rest of the Western civilisation. The women characters in Malayalam novels are the best examples of this. Indulekha, Kalyani Kutty, Indumathi, and Meenakshi, the heroines of the late nineteenth century novels represent educated, modern, and sophisticated women. But they are presented as quintessential *Malayali* women irrespective of them having acquired a Western education and longed for marrying for love. These women are rooted in tradition as they are capable of cooking, sewing, and stitching which the middle class put forth as the

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should educate her and provide mental support. He should try to make his children best citizens for the future. K.Lakshmi Amma, 'Purusha Dharmam', *Sarada*, book.2,issue.8, 1906,pp.175-177

<sup>248</sup> M. Meenakshi Amma, 'Damayanti', *Sarada*, book. 5, 1905, pp.26-28

<sup>249</sup> Aparna Bandopadhyay, *op.cit.*, p.1, Regarding the sexual freedom of women, there is an argument that Nair women were already free to marry the man of their choice. A lot has been written about the sexual freedom of Nair women both by foreigners and natives, but the sexual freedom that the Nair women had in the late nineteenth century was subject to the arrangements, customs and practices of the matrilineal joint family system. The marriage or sexual relation in *sambandham* never had a place for personal relations or natural man-woman love. The tastes or opinions of women were irrelevant in matters determined by the patriarch. The girl didn't even know who she was going to engage in a *sambandham* with. The patriarch even could dismiss a man from a *sambandham* relationship if he so wishes for some reason. Women did not have the option of choosing a man of their choice for the *sambandham* relationship in that era either. Instead, they only possessed the choice to leave the man if they so wanted. This freedom that was applicable only in cases of rejection rather than acceptance is seen as women's sexual freedom in the Nair community. See Mannath Padmanabhan, *Ente Jeevitha Smaranakal*, vol.1, NSS, Changanassery, 1964, p.69

necessary qualities that women should possess. That is why even in love, they consider their lovers as husbands. There is abundant use of the word ‘husband’ while referring to lovers in the nineteenth century Malayalam novels. There are also references to *antakarana vivaham*. In the novel *Indulekha* the heroine wakes up from a bad dream about her lover Madhavan calling him ‘husband’. The lovers engaged in *antakarana vivaham* the moment they fall in love.<sup>250</sup> The novel *Parangodeeparinayam*, also portrays *antakarana vivaham* having been conducted by Parangodi and Parangodan in their childhood.<sup>251</sup> In *Indumathee Swayamvaram*, after Indumathi and Sukumaran confessing their love, Indumathi the heroine refers to Sukumaran everywhere as her husband. When Sukumaran plans to leave the country for a while, she thinks to herself: “Oh no, will I be able to enjoy my husband’s presence soon? How am I supposed to bear it? If something like separation happens, it is better to give up my life”.<sup>252</sup> In the novel *Katharamam Vimala* published in *Mahila*, the lover Gopeenathan in several occasions is referred to as the husband.<sup>253</sup>

During this period, romantic love was pictured as an innate force capable of ensuring the stability of the monogamous marital union.<sup>254</sup> But there were always conscious efforts to portray ‘romantic love’ and ‘lust’ as separate entities. The emotion of love is used for a disciplining of bodily desire, reserving it for the culmination of a love relationship in marriage. Strictly differentiated from bodily lust, love was often found to be no less than a social necessity. In 1935, Sahodaran K. Ayappan spoke at length on this in the Kochi legislature : “Everyone should be free to find love. When we say love should be free, it does not mean that lust should be unrestricted. There is a certain danger in unrestricted lust. However, there is no

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<sup>250</sup> O.Chandu Menon, *Indulekha*, *op.cit.*, pp.37-38

<sup>251</sup> Kizhakkeppatt Ramankutty Menon, *op.cit.*, p. 49

<sup>252</sup> Padinjare Kovilakath Ammaman Raja, *op.cit.*, p. 44

<sup>253</sup> D.A. Kumari, *op.cit.*, pp.116- 128

<sup>254</sup> J.Devika, *op.cit.*, p.68

harm in the freedom to love”.<sup>255</sup> There was always an anxiety whether the licence to interact before marriage will be misused to make sexual liaisons.

Even English education was dismissed for propagating love. In fact, English education was the most cited reason, when women started making decisions about themselves. Contemporary literature points to the sense of individuality and independent thought produced by the English language. The traditionalists not only discouraged women’s education, they levied strong opposition to it. A major reason for this opposition was to restrict the free movement of women, as well as their chance to interact freely with others. In *Lakshmeekesavam*, the words of Kammaran makes this obvious: “If they are educated, they will interact with a lot of people. This opens up the possibility of compromising their chastity” (My Trans.).<sup>256</sup> When they hear of Lakshmi Kutty leaving her home because she was opposed to her marriage, Chathara Menon and Namboothiri have a conversation that reveals these anxieties: “I haven’t heard such things before. I wonder how women can become so rebellious. This is the effect of learning a vile language. They acquire courage, they demand freedom, they do not want to listen to others. This is what they are taught from the beginning” (My Trans.).<sup>257</sup> In *Vasumathi*, Mannan Vaidyar tells Raman Unni: “This English education is what causes all this societal deterioration. This is what makes women disobedient and teaches them questionable things. Inter caste marriage was one among the many vices resulting from Western education” (My Trans.).<sup>258</sup> In an article titled ‘Mahila Bhashanam’ published in the *Mahila*, there is a strong opposition to women and men intermixing in the classroom. “People who want to maintain the purity of the community and the activists concerned with education, have to come to the decision that young girls who have passed puberty and is nearing the age should stop getting their education alongside boys of the

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<sup>255</sup> M.K.Sanu. *op.cit.*, pp.151-152

<sup>256</sup> Komattil Padumenon, *op.cit.*, p.145

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, p.178

<sup>258</sup> Moorkkoth Kumaran, *op.cit.*, p.135

same age in the same classroom”.<sup>259</sup> This article has the suggestive undertone that opportunities for inter-caste and inter-faith marriages need to be curbed.

In the early novels, romance gives women an active space and individuality. Yet, there was no attempt to elevate women into the public sphere. All the novels accorded a place within the house and the family for women. Even while moving towards modernity, there were tendrils of tradition that pulled it back. In almost all contemporary novels, the intensity of love is expressed through longing. Love which women in novels bore within them as a secret betrothal, is experienced as a painful yearning in the long periods of absence of the lover and the consequent loneliness that mark their relationships. In all these novels the experience of loneliness or longing has specifically gendered dimensions.<sup>260</sup> Women for the most part live in secluded domestic spaces and love for them becomes akin to agony. The confinement of all the anxieties, longings and pains of women in love within the home is linked to their complete exclusion from the public sphere. Despite the fact that all of them find their situation painful and unbearable, none of them is ever enraged by it. Except Lakshmi Kutty of *Lakshmeekesavam* (who makes a self imposed exile), these heroines did not possess the agency to transform the conditions of their existence.

The vast majority of novels published in the nineteenth century include the names of women in their titles. The premise of these novels revolved around women. These publications considered women as ‘objects to be reformed’. In an article titled ‘Puthiya Novel’ [literally translated as New Novel] this is made clear: “As per the practice today, if the novel’s title has a woman’s name in it, it will be better. All the novels published in Malayalam till now make this clear: *Kundalatha*, *Indulekha*, *Parangodeeparinayam*, *Meenakshi*, *Indumathee* *Swayamvaram*, *Sukumari* etc” (My Trans.).<sup>261</sup> In one sense, these titles make the

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<sup>259</sup> Author not mentioned, ‘Mahila Bhashanam’, *Mahila*, book.1, issue.11,1921, p.362

<sup>260</sup> G. Arunima, ‘Friends and Lovers....’, *op.cit.*, pp.139-157

<sup>261</sup> Author not mentioned, ‘Puthiya Novel’, *Vidyavinodini*, book.3, no.7, 1892, pp.136-137



importance of women in the Kerala renaissance very apparent. The naming of women is also an assertion of their identity as their own persona.<sup>262</sup> Women were usually referred to as someone's wife or mother, or the one residing inside a particular household (*Akathullaval*) etc. instead of by their own identity.<sup>263</sup> Not only in their titles, but in content as well, the nineteenth-century novels emphasised women and the 'woman question'. Thus, these novels presented an idealised, heroic, and subservient image of women and thereby created 'new men' and 'new women', and 'new relationships' between them. However, the customs and norms that governed gender and interpersonal relationships, held the hegemony of the sacramental institution of marriage predicated on the denial of a woman's choice and consent. A woman was not expected to exercise her choice of partner for marriage or to have intimate relations with someone before marriage.

In Bengal it was felt that women marrying of their own choice were liable to turn disloyal after marriage because choice itself was perceived to be capricious and ephemeral. A woman might cease to love her husband after a point in time and grow a fancy for someone else.<sup>264</sup> But in Kerala at times, love was suggested as a means for keeping/preserving women's chastity.<sup>265</sup> For instance, in the article titled 'Charitriam'[chastity] published in *Sarada*, the prevailing marriage system was cited as the cause of women's transgression: In order to bring a desired relationship to the *tarawad*, the *karanavan* regardless of the wishes of the girls, make some ugly or old men as their husbands. The mental agony resulting from this leads to women losing their chastity. Rather, men and women should marry only after getting to know and liking each other"(My Trans.).<sup>266</sup> Thus, the author

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<sup>262</sup> Lekha Narendran, 'Malayala Novalum Pennezhuthum', in N. Jayakrishnan (ed.), *Pennezhuth* (Mal.), The State Institute of Languages, Kerala, 2011, pp.106-114

<sup>263</sup> Geetha, *Pranayam Laingegatha Adhikaram* (Mal.), Current Books, Thrissur, 2006, p.15

<sup>264</sup> Aparna Bandopadhyay, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>265</sup> Even when the social reformers advocated marriage based on mutual consent, at times it was argued that non consensual arranged marriages would lead to the faithlessness of wives. Aparna Bandopadhyay, *op.cit.*, pp. 3- 4

<sup>266</sup> V.Ammukkutty Amma, 'Chaaritriam', *Sarada*, book.1, issue.10, 1905, pp.11-12

is pointing out marriages decided by elders who are more interested in adding to the status of their ancestral homes rather than considering the wishes of the young women, pave the way for the women to opt for extra-marital relationships with someone more compatible with them. On the other hand, the author states that such outdated practices of marriage should be put aside, and that young men and women be encouraged to get married only after liking each other.

Another article published in the *Vidyavinodini* strongly opposes the idea that educated women were not chaste. This article says that ‘this perception is wrong and that it is not only the woman who is responsible for women's chastity, but that both men and women are equally involved and responsible in cases of adultery’. Moreover, to overcome such trends, the article mentions that existing customs should be forgotten, and love marriage should be favoured, and arrangements should be made for the people in love to live together. The social institution of marriage regulated sexual behaviour and chastity became a woman's highest virtue.<sup>267</sup> Here love marriage is suggested to control a woman's sexuality and to protect her chastity and thereby projected as a social necessity. Simone de Beauvoir in her work *The Second Sex* stated that, “the single word love in fact signifies two different things for man and woman. What woman understands by love is clear enough, that it is a total gift of body and soul without reservation without regard for anything whatever. As for man, if he loves a woman what he wants is unconditional love from her but he is in consequence far from postulating the same sentiment for woman”.<sup>268</sup> Therefore ideology of romantic love was crucial in upholding the relationships of domination and subordination that constituted patriarchy. Contemporary literary works have all endeavoured to make women feel that meaning in a woman's life could be realised only through total devotion, selfless love and sacrifice to her husband and family. The feminine

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<sup>267</sup> Malavika Rajkotia, *Intimacy Undone: Marriage Divorce and Family Law in India*, Tiger Books, New Delhi, 2017, p.36

<sup>268</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, (Trans. by H.M.Parshley), Jonathan Cape, London, 1953 (First published 1949), p.608

consciousness in particular was structured to see women's freedom through self sacrifice in love. Therefore, love is operated as a means of patriarchal control over women and love marriage did not alter the inequality embedded in gender relations. The emotional interaction between man and woman was received as a new experience in course of the nineteenth century and at the same time women emerged as a new but distinctively Indian identity.

C.S. Chandrika observes how the Malayalam language and vocabulary has several terms to refer to women that is referential to their sexuality- *kanyaka* (virgin), *bharya* (wife), *kudumbini* (housewife), *sathiratnam* (gem), *pativrata* (chaste), *charitravathi* (monogamous), *sheelavathi* (woman of good character) etc. These terms reveal the underlying misogynistic control of women's sexuality, the repression of women and so on. C.S. Chandrika observes that the conventions and regulations that a woman has to follow during each stage of her life is made obvious through the language itself.<sup>269</sup>

While imitating Western culture in house construction, decoration, manners, food and dress, the status of women was changed to a "desired womanhood" as required by a middle-class family. Colonial laws and social reforms focusing on women and marriage reimprisoned women into new patriarchal structures and renewed domestic discipline.<sup>270</sup> Man woman relationships were perceived in a profoundly different way from those in the West. There were small protests against this from women during those times. Lalithambika Antaranam, through her stories, confronts the notions of femininity put forward by the Namboothiri reform movement, and the modern marriage and family relationships moulded according to masculine values. Lalithambika

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<sup>269</sup> C.S. Chandrika, *Keralathile Sthrecharitrangal, Sthree Munnetangal* (Mal.), D.C. Books, Kottayam, 2016, p. 264

<sup>270</sup> Charu Gupta, *The Gender of Caste: Representing Dalits in Print*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2016, p.31

Antarjanam expressed through her literary works the resistance of women from within when the reform movement tried to tame and control women's desires.<sup>271</sup>

The autobiographical reminiscences indicate that the Western literature sparked a profound longing for romantic love in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Similarly fictions written by O. Chandu Menon, Ramankutty Menon, Cheruvalath Chathu Nair, Padinjare Kovilakath Ammaman Raja, Moorkkoth Kumaran, etc. produced plots revolving around romantic entanglements and further intensified this yearning for love. The concept of romance as seen in European marriages, began to emerge in the new Malayalam genres of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Though these ideas were imported into the Indian novel their articulation was very distinctive as societal notions of what constituted the natural family in the nineteenth century were very different in England and India.<sup>272</sup> Even then the generalization regarding the love marriage narratives in contemporary literature seems problematic. But it can be argued that whether they express disillusionment or happiness in a love based union, and whether they stem from real experiences or not, many of them were influenced by the ideology of love marriage promoted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

As Lauren A. Corwin says, "love-marriage" sometimes resulted in permanent estrangement from both sets of parents and the chances of a "love-marriage" being socially accepted were minimal.<sup>273</sup> In the late nineteenth and early

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<sup>271</sup> Lalithambika Antarjanam, *Lalithambika Antarjanathinte Kathakal Sampooranam* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 2011. K.Saraswathy Amma through her stories makes a detailed discussion of power relations in modern families and the status of women. K. Saraswathy Amma, *Saraswathy Ammayude Kathakal Sampooranam* (Mal.), D.C.Books, Kottayam, 2013. Her novel *Premabhajanam* criticised modernity, which promoted emotional relationships between partners in marriage and at the same time restricted the freedom of interaction required for this to happen. The protagonist of the novel Luisa flirts with several men in her search for an ideal partner. K. Saraswathy Amma, *Premabhajanam*, D.C.Books, Kottayam, 2013

<sup>272</sup> G.Arunima, 'Friends....', *op.cit.*, p.140

<sup>273</sup> Lauren A. Corwin, 'Caste, Class and the Love-Marriage: Social Change in India', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 39, no. 4, 1977, pp.823-831

twentieth centuries, marrying for love is being projected as a fundamentally Western practice. In actuality, however assimilated and modified, the practice of marrying for love remained uncommon even among the educated populace and still it has the power to provoke.

Love marriage was primarily valued as an expression of individuality. These unions were perceived as opportunities for self-development and fulfillment, allowing both partners to choose their spouse and thus actualize their individual potential and achieve their true selves. This emphasis on the individual and insistence on equality between husband and wife stand in stark contrast to the concept of wife as mere 'helpmate' to her husband. Though in India there is still a preference for arranged marriage within the same caste or subcaste group, it is not as rigid as before and the lines between arranged and love marriage are blurring. The young middle class people are increasingly offered more choice and participation in the selection of their future spouse within arranged marriage.<sup>274</sup>

Since personal choice/individual compatibility is the foundation of love-marriages, it could also be argued that social choice/social compatibility is the base of arranged marriages. However, these categories are not mutually exclusive, and considerable overlap has been often observed between these two, where individual choice has been socially compatible as well, and vice-versa. In fact, many love marriage couples sought to justify their choice based on terms of 'social' rather than individual compatibility, viewing their decision as beneficial for society or the collective group.<sup>275</sup> Rajat Kanta Ray argues that while the Western influence brought about distinct changes in the sphere of thought, there was a greater

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<sup>274</sup> Catherine Twamley, *op.cit.*, p.9. Also see Patricia Uberoi, *Freedom and Destiny: Gender, Family and Popular Culture in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2008, pp. 261-262. Parveez Mody's work highlights the failure of the colonial period in its intervention of such a social matter as marriage, which had both private and public implications. An example is the special Marriage Act of 1872, which promised legalisation of the individual's autonomy in private relations, but yet constrained them with regards to bring members of particular religious communities.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12

underlying continuity in the sphere of feeling.<sup>276</sup> Based on lust, and far from being social events, love marriages were considered to be anti-social.<sup>277</sup>

In the West the middle class valued heterosexual romantic love as a necessary experience for marriage. They imbibed the notion that the people were to progress not only through modernization in the public sphere but also advancing in their private emotions and personal experiences. But the middle class in Malabar as elsewhere in India made a 'selective acceptance' from the Western ideology leaving behind whatever they considered a challenge to the established social set up. Unlike in the West, there have been no revolutionary changes in the concept of marriage. Pre marital love had become a distinct possibility at the beginning of the twentieth century however it was still quite unlikely to lead to a happy and unopposed marriage. Arranged marriages remain popular to further alliances that serve socio economic or political purposes and love received approval only within prescribed social barriers. It still remains indisputable that, intense romantic expectations for marriage began to increase in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, fuelled by print culture. These changes led to a fascinating tension between romantic love and sexual restraint in middle-class respectability. Consequently to some extent the middle class tried to confine love within the borders of family and religion through self arranged marriages. But to a larger extent the middle class 'emotionology' made its control over the actual emotional experience of love.

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<sup>276</sup> Rajat Kanta Ray, *Exploring Emotional History: The Language of Gender, Mentality and Literature in the Indian Awakening*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p.37

<sup>277</sup> Parveen Mody, *The Intimate State* . . . ., *op.cit.*, p.8

## CONCLUSION

Marriage is one of the most ubiquitous institutions of our society. Marriage was governed by certain societal rules and regulations laid out by religious beliefs. The system of marriage that prevailed in Malabar during the nineteenth century was intricately connected to and inseparable from the caste system. The traditional family structure was closely tied to the convention of marriage. Therefore, marriage, religion, and family have been interlinked with each other. Traditionally, arranged marriage was considered as the acceptable norm, where a person's choice of mates, especially a woman's, was strictly controlled.

Social structure underwent significant changes as a result of colonial intervention. Gradually the traditional order with 'feudal' characteristics faded out, leading to the emergence of new social classes. Introduction of modern education, though mainly to cater to colonial needs, also contributed to the growth of a middle class. In the nineteenth century revenue, judicial, police and administrative functions were to be performed by the educated class. In a limited way new industries, private banks and insurance companies that were established provided new employment opportunities. All these contributed to the growth of a middle class.

The emergent middle class effected changes in lifestyle and thinking and a new consciousness emerged. This was more clearly visible among the Nair's and Thiyyas of Malabar. All these were markers of colonial modernity. Men and women marrying for love was seen as a diversion from the natural state of affairs. However, modernization channelised circumstances for opposite genders to interact with each other without restriction and created a conducive atmosphere for love marriages starting from the late nineteenth century. The modernization of family structures initiated two major changes: the shift from joint family to nuclear

family and shift from the agreements of marriage between families to the agreements between the individuals involved.

During the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, Malabar witnessed a world shaped by the discourses of colonial modernity, successful in affecting a transformation of the traditional, stratified, caste based society of Malabar. One of the remarkable advancements of colonial modernity in the nineteenth century was the creation of a middle class imbued with Western ideology. The radical changes in the socio economic sphere of Malabar accompanying colonial rule such as the new employment opportunities in the British administrative system, the redefinition of land tenures in the wake of colonial modernity, the proliferation of industries etc. provided favourable circumstances for the emergence of the middle class. This middle class restructured the trajectory of Malabar in many complex turns and played a creative role in accelerating the growth of modernity.

The middle class was a heterogeneous and stratified community in terms of income, education, occupation etc. It comprised of officials in the administrative apparatus, professionals, intellectuals, industrialists, workers and even agriculturists to some extent. Unlike in the other parts of India, the caste composition of the middle class in Malabar was unique. Here they consisted of even people from the lower caste like the Thiyyas, who utilised the educational and employment opportunities provided by the British and formed a greater part of the middle class especially in North Malabar. The Thiyyas could become a part of the socio economic and cultural sphere of Malabar negotiating the forces of modernity and creating a new identity. Thus, in Malabar the upper caste Namboothiris and Nairs and the lower caste Thiyyas constituted the major part of the middle class.

Colonial modernity and its reform discourses restructured the traditional Kerala society and the strong currents of colonial influence on the middle class were visible from the nineteenth century onwards. During this period, Malabar



witnessed the gradual development of a middle class culture through their self fashioning. Colonial modernity transformed the attitude of the middle class towards traditions which is visible in their everyday life in the form of what could be termed as semi Western lifestyle, attitudes, dressing, home decors, food habits and even names.

Parallel to the emergence of the middle class, the nineteenth century Malabar society witnessed the inception of print and print culture. Though the printing press was pioneered by Christian Missionaries, it contributed to the growth of literacy and the creation of a reading public. Magazines began to be published and later weeklies and newspapers.

Print became commonplace and unexceptional and a commodity in a market economy. It enabled readers to understand their world in different ways. Gradually, a 'print culture' began to take shape. People of different regions began to buy and borrow printed material and to read and see the world differently.

The advent of printing and the introduction of Western education, and the newfound interest in reading and new genres of literature resulted in significant changes in the cultural arena. Printing revolutionised the dissemination of knowledge and acted as an agent of social transformation. The technology of printing, which was first introduced in Malabar by the Basel Mission, saw a proliferation of print culture at the turn of the twentieth century. In addition to religious organisations, other individuals and professionals also began to establish printing presses. The growth and development of Malayalam as a language was parallel to the development and expansion of printing. This resulted in a Literary/reading Revolution in Kerala, which pushed the people into the collection and discussion of books. Print enabled the widespread dissemination of ideas and concepts, and introduced a new world of debate and discussion.

The creation of a 'reading community' led to issues being debated on its terms. Though colonialism prevented the emergence of a full fledged civil society, literature provided a platform for debate and discussions.

One of the most prominent outcomes of colonial encounters was the publication of novels which could be seen as a pan Indian phenomenon and debuted in Malabar in the second half of the nineteenth century. Malabar witnessed a flood of novels starting from *Kundalatha* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which in turn accelerated the development of a reading culture. The novels and short stories were more than a means to provide entertainment and leisure for the middle class. The novels of the nineteenth century like *Indulekha*, *Meenakshi*, *Parangodeeparinayam*, *Sarada*, *Lakhmeekesavam* etc. presented the passionate deliberation of the socio-cultural concerns and aspirations of the period. The rise of the magazines and newspapers from the nineteenth century exemplifies a trend towards the wider dispersal of reading culture in Malabar.

Apart from the printed forms, clubs, debating societies and homes served as centres for the formation of a public sphere.

The number of libraries and reading rooms (*Vayanasalas* in Malayalam) established in different parts of Malabar indicates the massive spread of reading culture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These libraries contributed immensely to the inclusion of people belonging to different strata to the reading public. In course of time, even libraries were established with the term *thozilali* in their names. In the early twentieth century, newspapers played a pivotal role in linking common man with the outside world. People visited these reading rooms on a daily basis and sometimes people were hired on daily wages to read aloud news papers to the illiterate. In the twentieth century the establishment of public libraries and reading rooms provided pathways to the public sphere.

Incourse of time some of the reading rooms functioned as centres of national movement especially in North Malabar. But still the public libraries and reading clubs remained largely as male preserves.

This reading culture accelerated the development of a literary public sphere among the middle class in Malabar as elsewhere in Kerala which in turn contributed for the development of a political public sphere. In Malabar, the literary public sphere was formed in its own distinctive way incorporating a wide range of people. The newspaper reading groups that were formed around reading rooms, libraries, rural tea stalls, barber shops, beedi workers etc. became a platform for public discussion, and served to create and mould public opinion among the lower strata of the general populace. The private and public discussions held at homes also became a contributory factor for the emergence of this public sphere. Consequently, the isolated individuals were incorporated into 'new collectivities' with a new consciousness that accelerated the creation of strong public opinions. The Malayalam novels provide strong indications of this public sphere indicating their search for identity.

Women, who were newly exposed to literacy and the ensuing 'new identity', also formed a part of this public sphere with certain restrictions. By the second half of the nineteenth century women had begun to acquire the skill of reading in significant numbers. The proliferation of education and the availability of printed literature created a new community of 'reading women' irrespective of caste and religion. Almost all the autobiographical records from Kerala refer to women's passionate desire for reading. The literature of the period, irrespective of genre, drew constant attention to the motif of the reading woman. This period witnessed the growth of women's involvement in literary culture as writers as well. The proliferation of magazines, especially women's magazines, also significantly contributed to the emergence of women as readers and writers. The discussions in the magazines centred around their life in and outside home attracted women towards these magazines which inturn accelerated a reading and writing culture

among them. But still there were conservative men who looked with alarm at the reading culture of women and their craze for novels and attempts were made to restrict their passion for reading, fearing that such tendencies would lead to women becoming licentious. But the status of women became a major concern in social discourse.

From the late nineteenth century onwards the process of modernisation has become well entrenched in the Malabar society. The penetration of colonial knowledge redefined the perceptions of the middle class towards the traditional social setup. Imbued by colonial culture the middle class tried for a re-modelling of existing social conditions somewhere imitating the colonial model. Their cultural and ideological exchange with colonial modernity led to the emergence of novel notions of individuality and redefined norms and values concerning social life. The emerging middle class made attempts to revolutionize and establish new lifestyle, ideas and cultures in a society with an entrenched caste system and hegemony. Print culture became a tool for the formation of public opinion, and the emergent middle class using this technology drastically revamped the existing socio-political structure. New ideals of marriage, family and domesticity began to be aired more often.

The social scenario of Malabar in the nineteenth century was not conducive to close conjugal relations. Marriage in Malabar was considerably distinct from other parts of the country and it was organised in different ways based on the community. The Nairs followed a loose marital relationship called *sambandham* which was usually arranged by the *karanavans* of the families partners. In this relationship the husband had no responsibility or legal obligation towards his wife and children and the *tarawad* system prevented him from maintaining close attachment to the wife and children. Similarly, the highly esteemed position of the Kerala *Namboothiris* provided them the possibility for unfettered sexual freedom through the *adhivedanam* system at the same time relegating the position of women to the closed innards of *Namboothiri illams*. Except the elder Namboothiri,

the younger ones maintained *sambandam* with women of other high castes and wandered about without the identity of being either a father or a husband. The Thiyya community also followed certain complex marital rites like the *thalikettu kalyanam*, *pudavakoda kalyanam*, *madhuram koduppu* etc. All these communities lacked family relations in the modern sense and they had no freedom in marital choices.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century witnessed the emergence of social reforms in Malabar prominently as a response to the middle class aspirations for restructuring the age-old premodern customs and traditions. The first awakening among the Namboothiri, Nair and Thiyya community could be seen in their struggle for refashioning their family organisation and marriage system. The newly emergent middle class questioned the authority of the *tarawad karanavan*, the traditional marriage practices like *sambandham*, *marumakkathayam* etc. They even resorted to colonial judicial process to legalise marriage which resulted in the passage of many Acts in favour of monogamous marriage; thereby initiating demolition of joint families such as Malabar Marriage Act, Madras Marumakkathayam Act, and Madras Namboothiri Act. For the Thiyyas, Sree Narayana Guru recommended reformed marital tradition which altogether transformed their traditional marriage practices. The middle class used print as a medium to expose the deplorable aspects of their society. This encouraged the youngsters to protest against the evil practices in their communities.

The dawn of the twentieth century was a period of major social movements in Kerala. Almost all leaders during this timeframe worked towards the progress of their castes and communities and caste associations surpassed general religious and social reform movements. There were widespread movements to challenge and obliterate superstitious beliefs and unethical practices within every caste. The sincere and adept activities of the SNDP Yogam, NSS, Yogakshema Sabha etc. set the stage for several changes. All these organizations tried to awaken communities

that were entrenched in superstitions and malpractice, and aimed for their upliftment by enabling them to achieve an 'intimate conjugal relationship'.

Print was the prominent medium chosen by social revolutionaries for propagating new aspirations for marriage and conjugality. The novel ideas of marriage and conjugality are obvious in all the new genres of literature and the community based publications during this period. The protagonist of almost all the novels of the period projected the need for reformed marital practices and they urged for conjugal love. The magazines of the period also acted as platforms for discourses on marriage and family. The Namboothiris, though late in the social reform movements, made great advances in the early twentieth century through organisations like Yogakshema Sabha, Namboothiri Yuvajana Sangham and Antharjana Samajam. The social reformists among them used literary creations to propagate the ripples of revolutionary thought inside the Namboothiri *illam*. Even theatre was used to highlight the Namboothiri reformism and the plights of the *antarjanams*. As a result there was a radical shift from *sambandham* to marriage in all communities where a single spouse was sanctioned by law.

In the wake of colonial modernity, the increased bureaucratic jobs under the new administrative system led the youngsters to move out of *tarawad*. The consequent social acquaintance created new ideals of conjugality among them. The concept of a new family ideal inspired them to take their family with them; gradually breaking the joint family system and the constitution of the nuclear family where the husband holds the responsibility of safeguarding the family. The economic independence through salaried jobs contributed immensely to strengthen conjugal relations and the image of the father/husband figure with authority over his children/wife began to be naturalized. Print culture popularised the concept of 'companionate marriage' based on mutual love and affection. They wanted to make a domestic world and family relations 'appropriately reformed' for the colonially modern present.

These new ideas were not fully revolutionary as the 'emancipated women' was to have virtues of traditional Hindu womanly qualities mixed with modern features.

Femininity was always defined in accordance with the needs of the patriarchy. The tendency to limit women to their gender roles was present at all times. Along with the changes related to family and marriage, the role and status of women became a contested theme in the public sphere. Consequently women became both the subjects and objects of the vernacular print culture. The values of 'companionate conjugality' became very much part of middle-class self representation. The middle class has displayed increasing concern about marriage and selection of an ideal partner. The reform minded middle class men wanted a 'new woman' suitable for their concept of companionate marriage. Education was considered an essential factor to the construction of a new female identity but still they proposed such an education which helped women to perform their domestic duties better. They wanted woman to develop her own personality and intelligence just to meet the requirements of a middle class family. This also promoted certain disciplining of women and helped men to create newer forms of control over women. Thus the new middle class followed to a great extent Victorian moral values and male centric ideas in the domain of family life.

The magazines published in the beginning of the twentieth century reveal the trend of women announcing their presence in public spaces. Their agency became more marked. It was in this era that women expressed their experiences and opinions through articles, creative writings and so on. During this period, women writers took the initiative to attract women to the public sphere of reading. However, the focus of the topics taken up for such discussions was predominantly based on the concept of the quintessential woman and the duties she had to perform. In most articles published in *Sarada*, *Mahila*, *Lakshmi Bai* etc, the major issues in discussion would be the duty of women, the duty of looking after one's husband, women's education, chastity, maternal love and so on.

The reform attempts and discussions of the period were aimed at women and gender relations prevailing in the family. By the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century new ideas about the social places of men and women and the role they were destined to play appeared in the novels and magazines. Several articles strictly differentiate between the position, duties and responsibilities of men and women in the society. The responsibilities of a woman are connected repeatedly to the domestic sphere. In the nineteenth century novels and magazines women and her domestic world became a burning issue of discussion. These topics ranged from hygiene and household management to cooking and child rearing. Through magazines the newly emergent middle class promoted such Victorian values as discipline, efficiency, well regulated domesticity, order etc. More than a woman's aspirations and rights, her functional role as a woman was accorded predominance.

The twentieth-century view of women's domestic roles had its roots in the 'contractual model' of family relationships. The authority of women within the household was depicted as a position vested with a certain power and authority symbolising the women's dominance in the private sphere in contrast to men's dominance in the public sphere, which subsequently confined the role of women within the domestic sphere. The westernised middle class through their discourses in print placed the 'women question' as a highly controversial one. But this process is not a unilinear model of complete submission to Western ideals as it contained thorough searches of and reflections on both indigenous and Western practices and values. The reform agenda of the twentieth century became instrumental in shaping a 'new woman' with desired 'womanhood'. This created the image of an ideal woman who is endowed with duties, and responsibilities appropriate to the cultural sensibilities of the westernised sections of the middle classes. Consequently, women became completely responsible for home and the children, their health and emotions.



Even *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekk* concluded with the message that a woman's naturalized place in society is their own home. Most proponents of social revolution also came to the same conclusion. So it can be argued that societal spaces always tend to be hierarchically demarcated and are regulated by dominant power structures. The women's space has been restricted to the private realm in relation to gendered perceptions. The 'desired domesticity' ideal popularised through print culture confined women to patriarchal authority and re-moulded the image of women as the intimate companion of her husband as 'helpmates'. But the recognition of wife as a companion reflected a new value in the Malabar society. The middle class got attracted to the idea of 'marrying for love'.

Parallel to the changes associated with the emergence of the middle class a new notion of 'marrying for love' germinated in the late nineteenth century and gradually developed in the twentieth century and took deep roots in the twenty first century. Traditionally, within the joint family the young men and women were expected to subordinate their individual desires to the demands and needs of the family. In such marriages, emphasis was placed on factors such as religion, caste, social standing, and economic status, over individual preferences and choices.

In the changed scenario of the nineteenth century the middle class aspired for romantic love leading to marriage. Romance began to be considered an important element in the reframing of family. In the twentieth century, the rising mobility of people provided greater opportunities for men and women to interact before marriage in work places, political spaces, and social activities. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the concept of love within marriage had been popularised by various literary genres particularly through novels, articles, poetry and plays. Moreover, as literacy rates increased, notions of romantic love disseminated further through print media. The literature of the period illustrate how the culturally elite concepts of romantic love were reaching a wider reading public throughout the twentieth century. These writings emphasised the significance of establishing an ideal home through marrying for love. The

progressive modern man sought to experience new forms of love, courtship and marriage. People started marrying the person they loved despite opposition from different quarters. These marriages were in opposition to the traditional value systems and customs. The economic independence of either or both the persons was a major reason why such marriages could be sustained in spite of the opposition.

Malayalam novels of the nineteenth century can be considered as documents of utmost importance that record and trace the changes that were brought about in every aspect of life as a result of the renaissance in Kerala. All of these novels trace the social situation and changes of the day leading to love marriages and are important ways in which people learn about love, about how to love and be loved. The major plot of these novels was the overcoming of outdated customs and striving for progress after imbibing modern culture. Modern family structure and marrying for love were a perpetual theme of discussion. Love was a major theme in all novels published in the nineteenth century, starting from *Kundalatha*. The publicity and reception that novels like *Indulekha*, *Parangodeeparinayam* and *Lakshmeekesavam* revealed the excitement they created. Periodicals and magazines also regularly published columns on love, marriage, and domesticity.

Romantic love, which had long been confined to the domain of literary works, made its way towards the real-life experiences of a few men and women towards the beginning of the twentieth century as evident from the autobiographical records. Some of the twentieth century autobiographies and biographies are complex accounts of love and companionate marriage. Regardless of how love marriages were represented and described in literature, the experience of love resulted in an identity that was in resonance with the ideals of a changing modernity. However it is difficult to quantify the love marriages that took place in real life.

Along with the idea of love marriages, the concept of “one man for a woman and one woman for a man” also became popular. Thus, usages such as: ‘a man born to be mine’ or ‘a woman born for me’ emerged. The emotional concern in love found expression in love letters. The common acts of love letter writing and reading were processes of defining experience that fostered the development of a romantic consciousness of self in the twentieth century.

The complexities of the links with modernity that Chandu Menon highlights, provide us with certain indications of the intellectual atmosphere of Malabar in the nineteenth century. His writings record the conflicts that he experienced in both his official life and his socio-literary life as being a part of the nascent and yet-evolving public sphere in Kerala. He discussed and debated modernity and tradition in both his novels, *Indulekha* and *Sarada*. The effect of colonial modernity upon Chandu Menon prompted him to place himself between tradition and modernity. However, this was not the case with Chandu Menon alone. The middle-class that grew up as part of colonial modernity exhibited such an outlook as well. While following the Western model in many ways such as the adoption of Western lifestyles, the acceptance of liberal values, and the like, the spheres of tradition and privacy were distanced and kept apart from this modernity by the popular protagonists of the novels of the nineteenth century print-culture. Though the English educated reform minded middle class men enthusiastically spoke about romantic love, they hesitated to abandon the traditional pattern of family life. As emblems of modern life, the young men were attracted to romantic love and companionate marriage but equally feared and rejected for the threat they posed to older practices of the indigenous tradition. The middle-class accepted a view-point that scrutinized and justified tradition through the lens of modernity. The eighteenth chapter of the *Indulekha* offers multiple examples of the correspondence between tradition and modernity during the formation of the intellectual atmosphere of Malabar.

When C.H. Kunhappa was studying in Maharajas College (1928), an essay he was assigned to write was titled 'The Women of 1950'. The answer he wrote was that 'women in 1950 would have advanced socially but not yet achieved an equal footing in society like the women in Western societies'. This prophecy more or less came true. When Western societies strongly believed that men and women should take independent decisions pertaining to their marriage, here the responsibility of the girl child's marriage was still being taken up by her parents. Even though several changes were induced due to the colonial modernity and social reforms, they were not uniform, and a system where men and women could independently decide who and when to marry did not fully come to force.

In the West heterosexual romantic love was considered a necessary experience for marriage. This notion of 'love marriage' was not fully accepted by the members of the middle class in Malabar. There was only selective acceptance. This becomes clear from memories, autobiographies, 'love letters' and printed material dealing with this theme.

The present study reveals that the dissemination of print culture sparked off multifaceted changes in the lives and thoughts of the middle-class. Through Western contact, new concepts regarding the family, romantic love, and conjugal love were created in their minds. The print culture constructed a novel paradigm that made the emotional content of conjugal life the centrepiece of reform. The concept of romantic love that Chandu Menon expressed in *Indulekha* was not new; what was new in the nineteenth century was the print culture. The social diffusion of love was facilitated by the development of print culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which allowed the wide dissemination of the concept of love as a commonly recognised form of emotion and with this the place and meaning of love within marriage has shifted. As is evident from literature, print culture played a pivotal role in revolutionising the discourses around love by widely disseminating them. Love became not only ubiquitous but also increasingly 'popular' in twentieth-century literature, perhaps for the first time. While

expressions of physical and emotional attachment existed in human relationships in Malabar prior to the late nineteenth century, this new conception of love, intertwined with modernity, marked a significant departure from traditional ideals of marriage in Malabar.

It was the new awakenings in the private and personal domains that rose towards the late nineteenth and early twentieth century through the print culture and the subsequent literary imagination that sprung from the dissemination of print, that paved the way for 'love' to become a 'reasonably accepted' emotion in Malabar. During this period there was a significant cultural shift that provided romantic love an unprecedented social validation. The literature explored the evolving modern identities through love, and romantic love became vital for the construction of modern identity both for men and women.

But still love cannot transcend the realm of patriarchy. The middle class reformism of the nineteenth century clung in a dilemma between tradition and modernity. Colonial modernity urged men to construct new definitions of their own identity in the family and society. Though the concepts and ideals of modernity were accepted and inculcated by them, they also strove to firmly hold on to their indigenous traditions and rituals and made a 'selective acceptance'. The middle class promoted romantic love because they were attracted to the Western ideal of companionate monogamous marriage. Even those who supported love marriages in public were either conservative in their own households or tried to confine love within 'self arranged marriages'. Here love seems more like a choice sanctioned by the society, provided love should stand within the borders of religion and socio economic status; where the line between arranged and love marriages are blurring. But still some inter-caste inter-religious love marriages took place but were few and hardly became trendsetters.

This shift in attitude can be seen even in twentieth century literary expressions which indicates a shift in the 'emotionology' in Malabar when the society moved from the late nineteenth to twentieth century. In the late nineteenth

century romantic love began to influence courtship and marital expectations. The newly emergent middle class urged greater attention to love between spouses which set a new 'emotional standard' in the society. The community based reform movements furthered the new emotional trends as well. As society moved to the twentieth century, the social attitudes towards love began to shift during this period providing a new 'emotionological' turn in the middle class. The middle class supported only those love relationships which were confined within caste, religion and social status. Most of the novels of the nineteenth century represented this type of love. In the twentieth century, as love began to break through these barriers, love marriages were pictured as deeply transgressive.

Even love as a relationship was never based on 'intimate equality' between women and men and there were attempts to make women disciplined and to control their bodily desire. In the Western world, love based unions were perceived as arenas for individuality, as both the man and woman had the freedom to select their own spouse. This autonomy was believed to empower them to actualize their individual potential and achieve their true selves. But in Malabar along with the development of the concept of marrying for love the status of women got refashioned, limiting women's authority to the private realm of home. The highly differentiated gendered space, assigned the status of 'helpmates' to the 'reformed women' in the twentieth century. So it can be argued that, the emphasis on individualism and the pursuit of equality between spouses in Western cultures contrasts with the ideology surrounding love marriages in Malabar as the wife was given the role of 'helpmate' to her husband. The middle class attempted to create a 'new private sphere' around the emotion of romantic love. Even in love relationships women became the perfect embodiment of 'desired womanliness'.

Towards the second half of the nineteenth century the popularity and demand for love marriages increased. This doesn't mean that love marriages got easily accepted during this period. Arranged marriages, where romantic love is often not a premarital factor, remain prevalent throughout much of India, including

Kerala, even now. These arrangements typically prioritise factors such as religious background, social standing, and economic status over individual preferences and wishes in marriage. But still there is no doubt that socio-economic changes and the growth of a print culture inculcated a desire for love marriage among people and that it inspired love to become a more or less accepted emotion later. A gradual movement towards the acceptance of the love marriage ideal can be noticed in the late nineteenth century and very explicit in the late twentieth and early twenty first century.

Social history, especially emotional history, is a rather unexplored theme in Kerala historiography. Emotions can be spoken, demonstrated or written. A methodology has to be developed to 'use' available sources and to glean out expressions of emotions. We have taken only conjugal love in this project. There are other emotions like sorrow, anger, greed, empathy etc. To historize such emotions a field work is required to look for hitherto unused sources and to use available sources - here printed ones - in which emotions may lie hidden. Of particular help in such attempts would be the concept of 'emotionology' put forward by Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns.

The influence of love leading to marriage need not be restricted to the three communities taken up in this study. Similar transformations would have been effected in the Christian, Muslim, and other communities in Malabar through print culture. A comprehensive study on marrying for love in Malabar would be complete only if studies on these and other communities were carried out as well. However, such investigations are beyond the scope of the present study. Similarly the implication of the Special Marriage Act of 1954 on love marriages need to be analysed to have a broader outlook of the process of transformation of marrying for love through the late twentieth and early twenty first century, setting yet another emotional standard. The research suggests these larger questions for further study.

## GLOSSARY

<i>Acharam</i>	: Traditional practices
<i>Adhikari</i>	: Revenue functionary
<i>Adivedhanam</i>	: System of polygamy followed by Namboothiri <i>grihasthans</i>
<i>Akathullaval</i>	: The one residing inside a particular household
<i>Alankaram</i>	: Metaphor
<i>Aliyasanthanam</i>	: Matrilineal inheritance system that had prevailed in South Canara region
<i>Ambalavasi</i>	: Castes which are traditionally temple functionaries
<i>Amsam</i>	: A land revenue division
<i>Anantharavan</i>	: Nephew
<i>Antakarana vivaham</i>	: Imagined impulsive marriage, need not be real
<i>Antarjanam</i>	: Women belonging to the Namboothiri community, literally 'the one who live inside'
<i>Anuragam</i>	: Romantic love
<i>Aphan</i>	: Younger son of the Namboothiri family Community
<i>Avarna</i>	: A backward or depressed caste
<i>Bhadralok</i>	: A new class of gentle folk who arose in Bengal during the British period
<i>Bhajana Madam</i>	: Prayer hall
<i>Bharya</i>	: Wife



<i>Brasht</i>	: Ostracism
<i>Chakram</i>	: Literally circle or ring ; here the term denotes a lower rank coin
<i>Chala</i>	: Cheruma household
<i>Charitravadi</i>	: Chaste women
<i>Cheri</i>	: Paraya household
<i>Cheruma</i>	: One of the untouchable castes (mainly agricultural serfs)
<i>Desam</i>	: A territorial division
<i>Desavazhi</i>	: Chieftain of a <i>desam</i>
<i>Dharmasastras</i>	: Sanskrit texts on law and conduct
<i>Ettathi</i>	: Elder sister
<i>Ezhava</i>	: A backward caste in South Kerala (belonging to OBC)
<i>Ezhuthachan</i>	: Traditional school teacher
<i>Ezhuthassan</i>	: Traditional school teacher
<i>Ezhuthu Kalari</i>	: Traditional village school
<i>Ezhuthu Palli</i>	: Native vernacular school in Malabar
<i>Gandharva vivaham</i>	: The type of marriage between two consensual parties, devoid of any rituals or the blessings of others
<i>Ghosha</i>	: A kind of veil to seclude <i>antarjanams</i> ; the use of a cadjan leaf umbrella and a cloak which covered the whole body when women went out
<i>Grantasala</i>	: Library
<i>Grihastha</i>	: Eldest member of a Namboothiri <i>illam</i>

<i>Gumasta</i>	: Clerk
<i>Illam</i>	: Namboothiri household
<i>Janmakaran</i>	: Holder of janmam
<i>Janmam</i>	: The term literally means birth. Here denotes hereditary right over land
<i>Janmi</i>	: Landlord, holder of janmam
<i>Jati</i>	: Caste
<i>Jyothisham</i>	: Astrology and Astronomy
<i>Kachery</i>	: Local native courts
<i>Kadukkan</i>	: Earstud
<i>Kaineettam</i>	: usually money or new clothes, given to the younger ones in the family on the day of Vishu.
<i>Kanakkar</i>	: One who holds land on <i>kanam</i> tenure, a tenant
<i>Kanam</i>	: A land tenure under which the tenant holds land by paying a fixed sum or grain in advance or acknowledges the overlordship of the <i>janmi</i> . Depending on the region it assumes the character of lease or mortgage.
<i>Kanyaka</i>	: Virgin girl
<i>Karanavan</i>	: The male head of the joint family
<i>Karyasthan</i>	: A head servant or manager of a rich house
<i>Kathal</i>	: Romantic love in Tamil language
<i>Kavyam</i>	: A Sanskrit term used to designate poetry
<i>Kovilakam</i>	: Royal household
<i>Kshatriya</i>	: Second of the four Hindu Varnas; traditionally constituting the Warrior caste.

<i>Kudiyam</i>	: Tenant
<i>Kudumbini</i>	: Housewife
<i>Kuppayam</i>	: Upper garment
<i>Kuzhikanam</i>	: Tenure on freshly reclaimed lands or land which could be improved
<i>Maattu</i>	: Cloth to be worn for purification after pollution
<i>Maattu mudakkal</i>	: A punishment inflicted by the caste council on those who went against local customs
<i>Maduram Koduppu</i>	: Sweets giving ceremony after marriage among the Thiyya community
<i>Makkathayam</i>	: Patrilineal inheritance system of Kerala
<i>Mana</i>	: Namboothiri household
<i>Mangalyam</i>	: Marriage
<i>Manjalkulikalyanam</i>	: Synonym of <i>thalikettukalyanam</i>
<i>Mannan</i>	: A lower caste traditionally associated with washing of clothes, also known in some places as <i>Vannan</i>
<i>Mappila</i>	: Muslims of Malabar
<i>Marakkuda</i>	: An umbrella to cover the face of Namboothiri women in public
<i>Margam</i>	: Customary law in Malabar
<i>Marumakkathayam</i>	: System of inheritance and descent through the female line.
<i>Maryada</i>	: Customary law
<i>Mattam</i>	: Here refers to a peculiar marriage custom in which a man would marry off his sister to another and accept the other one's sister bride.

<i>Melcharth</i>	: An over lease
<i>Mlechha</i>	: Literally impure people; a term used to denote non-Hindus
<i>Muhurtham</i>	: An auspicious time of a day
<i>Mundu</i>	: Garment worn around the waist in Kerala
<i>Nair</i>	: Traditionally upper caste agriculturists some of whom acted as Warriors in pre-British Malabar
<i>Nalukettu</i>	: Traditional architectural style of Kerala
<i>Nambidi Bhavanam</i>	: Upper caste house, also known as <i>Nambiveedu</i>
<i>Namboothiri</i>	: Brahmin of Kerala
<i>Nayaka</i>	: Leader
<i>Olakkuda</i>	: Cadjan leaf Umbrella
<i>Panthalmangalam</i>	: Synonym for <i>thalikettukalyanam</i>
<i>Panthibhojanam</i>	: Inter caste dining
<i>Paraya</i>	: An untouchable caste
<i>Parishkari</i>	: Someone who is fashionable
<i>Parivedanam</i>	: Younger Namboothiri sons marrying within caste
<i>Pativrata</i>	: Chaste woman
<i>Pativratadharmam</i>	: Duties of chaste woman
<i>Pattom</i>	: Rent on land
<i>Poomukham</i>	: Portico
<i>Pranayam</i>	: Romantic love
<i>Preetibhojanam</i>	: Interdining
<i>Premam</i>	: Romantic love
<i>Pudava</i>	: Cloth handed to the bride during marriage

<i>Pula</i>	: Pollution caused by the birth or death of a relative
<i>Pulaya</i>	: An untouchable caste
<i>Pulikudi</i>	: A ritual observed during pregnancy
<i>Pura</i>	: House
<i>Rakku</i>	: An alcoholic intoxicating drink
<i>Sadanam</i>	: Literally a thing or object; here the term denotes an accused woman during <i>smarthavicharam</i>
<i>Sadya</i>	: The traditional vegetarian meal of Kerala
<i>Sajathivivaham</i>	: Marrying from one's own caste
<i>Samajam</i>	: An official group or organization
<i>Samantha</i>	: Chieftain
<i>Samavarthanam</i>	: A long ritual making the completion of vedic education
<i>Sambandham</i>	: Literally union; denotes the conjugal union among the members of matrilineal joint families.
<i>Sapathnis</i>	: Co-wives
<i>Sathiratnam</i>	: Chaste woman
<i>Savarna</i>	: A higher caste Hindu
<i>Shanti</i>	: Priest
<i>Sheelavathi</i>	: Woman of good character
<i>Smarthan</i>	: A Vedic judge
<i>Smarthavicharam</i>	: A ritual trial conducted by <i>Smarthan</i> when the chastity of an <i>antarjanam</i> was suspected
<i>Sneham</i>	: Love
<i>Streedharma</i>	: Duties of a woman

<i>Sudra</i>	: Fourth Varna; generally applied to non-Brahman castes other than Dalits
<i>Swayamvaram</i>	: The type of marriage where the bride would be free to select her husband from an array of prominent men
<i>Tarawad</i>	: A joint family unit
<i>Tampuran</i>	: In Kerala, a title used to refer to king or lord
<i>Tavazhi</i>	: Literally mother's way- generally used to refer to branches of the household
<i>Thali</i>	: An ornament tied as the symbol of being married and worn by women until widowhood
<i>Thalikettu kalyanam</i>	: Pre-puberty marriage
<i>Thara</i>	: Regional Council of the Thiyyas
<i>Tharka</i>	: Logic
<i>Thekkini</i>	: Eastern portion of the house
<i>Thirandukuli</i>	: Ceremonial bath after first menstruation
<i>Thiyya</i>	: A prominent backward caste in Malabar (belonging to OBC)
<i>Thorthu</i>	: Literally, towel
<i>Thozhil Kendrangal</i>	: Training Centres
<i>Uduppu</i>	: Upper garment
<i>Unninamboothiri</i>	: Namboothiri boy
<i>Upanayana</i>	: Sacred thread wearing ceremony
<i>Vadyaghosham</i>	: Playing of musical instrument
<i>Vaidyam</i>	: Traditional Medicinal system
<i>Vayanasala</i>	: Reading room

- Veli* : Namboothiri marriage within the caste
- Verumpattam* : Lease held by tenants at will
- Vishu* : Traditionally, marking New Year of Hindus in Kerala

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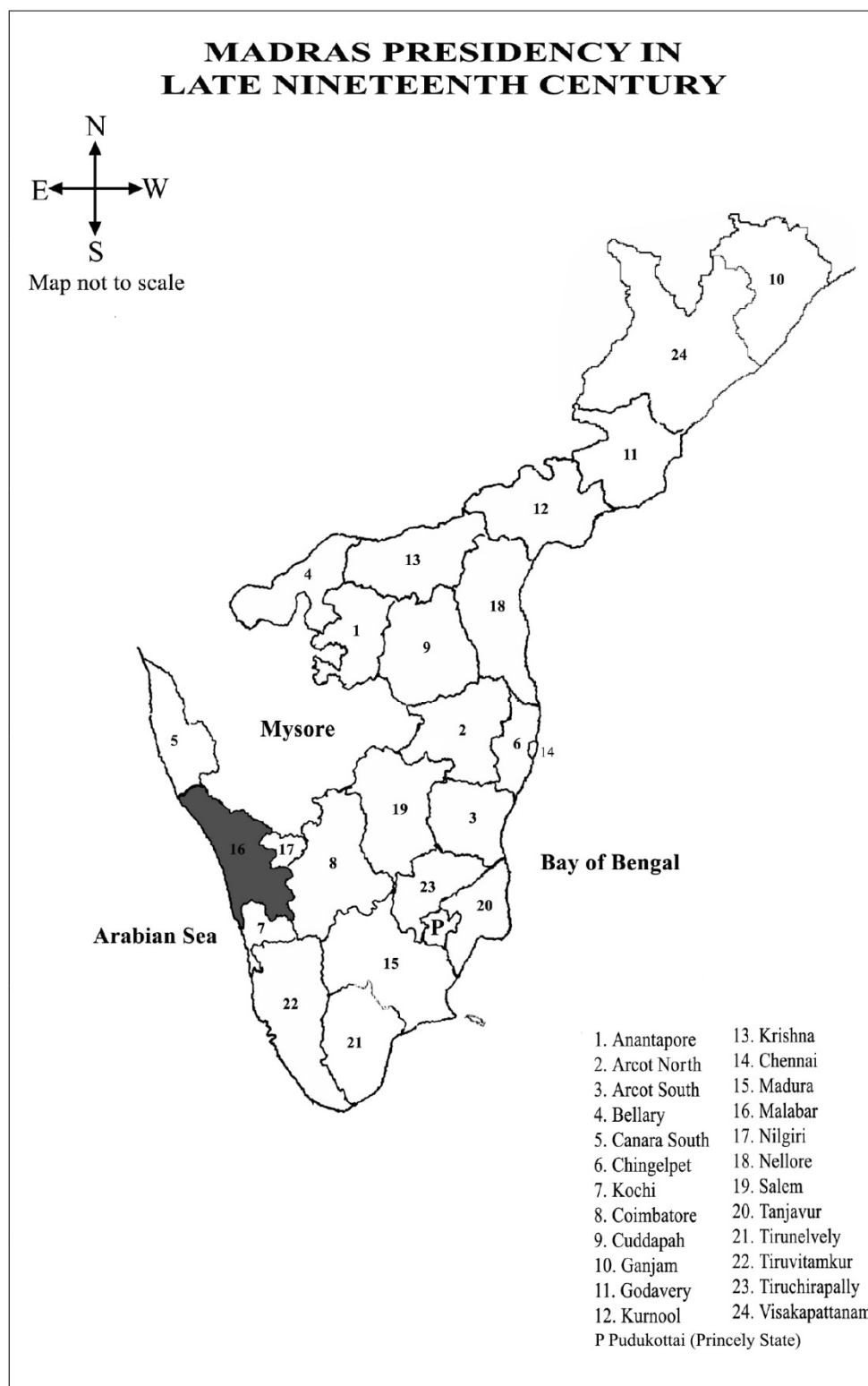
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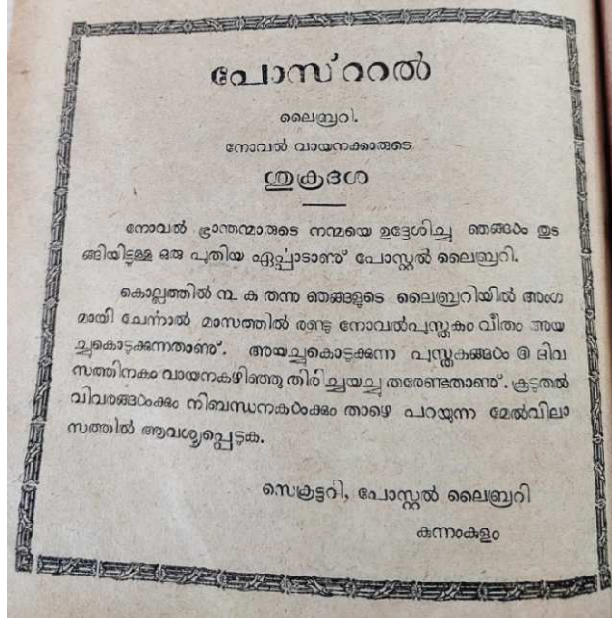


## MAP



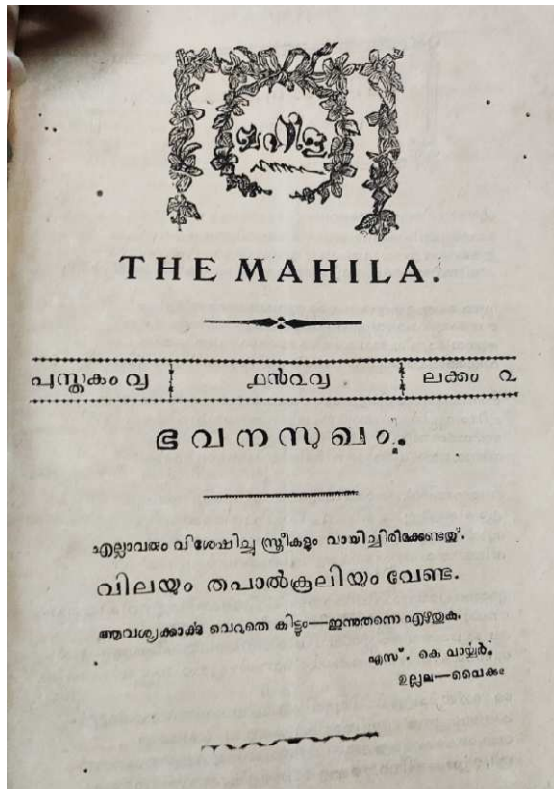
Source: Manual of the Administration, Madras Presidency, Records of Government and the Yearly Administration Report, 1895, Vol. 1, p. 187

**APPENDIX - A**  
**Advertisement of Postal Library**



Source - Mahila, vol.4, issue.9, 1924

**Advertisement of Books**



Source - The Mahila, book.8, issue. 2, 1928

## Advertisement of Novel

# സുഖോചന

അതിഭനോഹരമായ ഒരു നോവൽ

പ്രേമിണി'ത്തിൽ ഖണ്ഡശ്ലോക പ്രസിദ്ധപ്പെടുത്തി വന്നതും, നാല്പത്തിമൂന്നിൽ പരം അദ്ധ്യായങ്ങൾ ഉള്ളതും, മലയാളത്തിൽ എഴുതപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുള്ള നോവലുകളുടെ രാജ്യം എന്തെങ്കിലും സൗഹൃദം ആരും നമ്മുക്കിടയിൽ സുഖോചന' എന്ന പേരിൽ വിട്ടിട്ടു നോവൽ താമസിയാതെ പുസ്തകമാക്കി പ്രസിദ്ധം ചെയ്യുന്നതാണ്. സ്ത്രീ ജനങ്ങൾ ഇതു വിശിഷ്ടമാണെന്ന് കരുതുന്നവർക്കു പാഠനം വേണ്ടതാണ്. നോവൽ രൂപമാണ് ഇതിനു വിധി നിശ്ചയിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. ഒരു മാസത്തിനുള്ളിൽ ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടു മേൽപിടാറും അറിയിക്കുന്നവർക്കു ഒരു രൂപയ്ക്കു കിട്ടുന്ന സുഖോചന അച്ചുകൂടിക്കുന്നതാണ്. മേൽപിടാറും മാത്രം അറിയിച്ചാൽ രൂ. പണം മുൻപേ അയയ്ക്കേണ്ടതില്ല.

എസ്. മാനേജർ,  
'പ്രേമിണി' ബുക്കഡിപ്പോ, ചോട്ടുപുര.

## Appendix - B

### Subscription List

**വരിസംഖ്യ സഭയം അയച്ചു തന്നവരുടെ**  
പേരുകൾ.

രജിന—

(നൂ ത്രുവാ)

ഭക്ത	ശ്രീമതി	പി. ആർ. പാറക്കുട്ടിയമ്മ	എ. അമ്പലക്കുറുപ്പൻ
ആനവു	"	കെ. പാറക്കുട്ടിയമ്മ	"
പ.മു	"	പാവുതി അമ്മ	"
ന	"	മിസസ് എൻ. ശ്രീനാരായണൻതമ്പി	"

പേരുകൾ. വരിസംഖ്യ അയച്ചു തന്നവരുടെ

പ.മ	"	ഗോപാലപ്പിള്ള	"
പ.മ	"	പി. ജി. ഗോവിന്ദപ്പിള്ള	"
ന.ന.ആ	"	കെ. ആർ. പാലക്കാടപ്പിള്ള	"
മുൻ.ന	"	സി. പി. കേശവപ്പിള്ള	"
പ.ആ	"	ഫിലിപ്പ്	"
പ.മ	"	ടി. കുമാരപ്പിള്ള	"
പ.മ	"	ജി. കൃഷ്ണപ്പിള്ള	"
പ.മ	"	കെ. പി. കൃഷ്ണമേനോൻ	"
പ.മ	"	കേശവനാരായണപ്പിള്ള	"
പ.മ	"	കെ. പത്മനാഭൻ തമ്പി	"
പ.മ	"	കെ. ഗോവിന്ദപ്പിള്ള	"
മുൻ	"	ശ്രീമതി എം. നാണിയമ്മ	"
മുൻ	"	പാറക്കുട്ടിയമ്മ	"
മുൻ	"	എൽ. കൊഴിയമ്മ	"
പ.ആ	"	പി. കെ. കാഞ്ചായനിയമ്മ	"
മുൻ	"	എൻ. പാവുതിയമ്മ	"
മുൻ	"	കുട്ടിയമ്മ	"
ന.പ	"	നാരായണിയമ്മ	"
പ.മ	"	പി. ചെല്ലമ്മ	"
പ.മ	"	അമ്മക്കുട്ടിയമ്മ	"
പ.മ	"	കെ. പൊന്നമ്മ	"
പ.മ	"	പി. കൊച്ചുലക്ഷ്മിയമ്മ	"
പ.മ	"	കെ. അമ്മക്കുഞ്ഞു	"
പ.മ	"	എം. മീനാക്ഷിയമ്മ	"
പ.മ	"	കെ. ആർ. ഭദ്രീരമിയമ്മ	"
പ.മ	"	ലക്ഷ്മിക്കുട്ടിയമ്മ	"
ന.മ	"	ലക്ഷ്മിക്കുട്ടിയമ്മ	"
മുൻ	"	ശ്രീമതി പാറക്കുട്ടി അമ്മ	"
പ.മ	"	പാമക്കാടിയമ്മ	"
പ.മ	"	എസ്. ശാരദാമ്മ	"
ന.മ	"	കെ. പാറക്കുട്ടിയമ്മ	"
ന.മ	"	പാവുതി അമ്മ	"
ന.മ	"	എം. ദേവകി അമ്മ	"
മുൻ	"	കെ. പാറക്കുട്ടി	"

(തുടരും)

൧൮	എൻ. കൃഷ്ണൻപിള്ള	11
൧൯	കെ. രാമകൃഷ്ണൻ	11
൨൦	പി. എസ്. മരതനായകൻപിള്ള	11
൨൧	വെങ്കിട്ടപ്പൻ തമ്പുരാൻ	11
൨൨	തേരൂർ സുബ്ബാമണ്യൻപിള്ള	11
൨൩	രോഹിണിതിരുനാൾ	11

(൧൪. രൂപ)

൨൪	കുമാരകൃഷ്ണ വൈജയന്തി വായനശാല	
൨൫	ഡി. ലക്ഷ്മീനാഥൻ അമ്മ	11
൨൬	ഭവാനി	11
൨൭	എൻ. നാരായണി അമ്മ	11
൨൮	മിസസ്. എം. രാജരാജവർമ്മ	11
൨൯	ഇ. ശങ്കരൻ തമ്പി	11
൩൦	എ. ശങ്കരൻ തമ്പി	11
൩൧	കെ. ശങ്കരൻ തമ്പി	11
൩൨	ശ്രീധരൻ തമ്പി	11
൩൩	കൊച്ചുശങ്കരൻപിള്ള	11
൩൪	നാരായണൻ പണ്ടല	11
൩൫	കെ. മാധവൻപിള്ള	11
൩൬	രാമൻപിള്ള	11
൩൭	അമ്മക്കുട്ടി അമ്മ	11
൩൮	ചെല്ലമ്മതങ്കച്ചി	11
൩൯	ലക്ഷ്മിപ്പിള്ള അമ്മ	11
൪൦	മിസസ്. ഗോവിന്ദപ്പിള്ള	11
൪൧	ഗോപാലപ്പണിക്കർ	11
൪൨	ജി. പത്മനാഭപ്പിള്ള	11
൪൩	എൻ. കാഞ്ഞൻപിള്ള	11
൪൪	ശങ്കരപ്പിള്ള	11

(൧൫. രൂപ)

൪൫	കാഞ്ചനയനിയമ്മ	11
൪൬	എൻ. കാഞ്ചനയനിയമ്മ	11
൪൭	എം. ആർ. ലക്ഷ്മിക്കുട്ടിയമ്മ	11
൪൮	മിസസ്. മാധവൻപിള്ള	11
൪൯	രാമൻപിള്ള	11
൫൦	ടി. കെ. നീലകണ്ഠപ്പിള്ള	11
൫൧	കെ. പി. അച്യുതൻ പിള്ള	11

Source - The Mahila, vol.1, issue.4, 1921



പ്ര.നം	പുസ്തക നമ്പർ	പുസ്തകത്തിന്റെ പേര്	പുസ്തകം എഴുതിയ തയ്യരാണ്	കേന്ദ്രം	പ്ര.മു.നം	നി.മു.നം	ദി.മു.നം	പ്ര.നം	പുസ്തകം എഴുതിയ തയ്യരാണ്	പ്ര.നം	പുസ്തകം എഴുതിയ തയ്യരാണ്
588	94	ആഡയം	കെ. ടി. ഗണപതി	തോട്ടി	11-7-42	152	3	7	12	21-7-42	90
589	163	കേരളം II	ഗുണമേധവൻ	തോട്ടി	11-7-42	152	3	7	12	21-7-42	90
590	89	വിജയം	25 കോളി	"	11-7-42	152	3	7	12	21-7-42	90
591	157	കേരളം	എ. എ. എ. ഗോപാലൻ	ചോറ്റു	E.T.L	12-7-42	6	14	100	10-7-42	90
592	202	കേരളം	എ. എ. എ. ഗോപാലൻ	ചോറ്റു	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
593	205	കേരളം	ടി. കെ. നാ. എ. വർഗ്ഗീസ്	കിഴക്കൻ	കേരളം	12-7-42	6	14	100	10-7-42	90
594	104	കേരളം	എ. എ. എ. ഗോപാലൻ	ചോറ്റു	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
595	42	കേരളം	എ. എ. എ. ഗോപാലൻ	ചോറ്റു	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
596	137	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
597	138	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
598	18	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
599	202	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
600	55	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
601	201	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
602	65	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
603	80	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
604	147	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
605	148	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
606	115	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
607	108	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
608	173	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
609	164	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
610	190	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
611	23	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90

പ്ര.നം	പുസ്തക നമ്പർ	പുസ്തകത്തിന്റെ പേര്	പുസ്തകം എഴുതിയ തയ്യരാണ്	കേന്ദ്രം	പ്ര.മു.നം	നി.മു.നം	ദി.മു.നം	പ്ര.നം	പുസ്തകം എഴുതിയ തയ്യരാണ്	പ്ര.നം	പുസ്തകം എഴുതിയ തയ്യരാണ്
612	140	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
613	192	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
614	61	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
615	105	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
616	114	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
617	65	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
618	37	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
619	152	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
620	114	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
621	152	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
622	142	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
623	191	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
624	190	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
625	202	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
626	80	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
627	157	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
628	176	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
629	42	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
630	190	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
631	163	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
632	130	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
633	147	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
634	200	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
635	154	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90
636	171	കേരളം	കെ. എ. വി. വേലായുധൻ	കേരളം	E.T.L	12-7-42	3	7	100	10-7-42	90

Source - Thozhilali Yuvajana Vayanasala and Granthalayam, Chovva, Kannur