

**KERALA SOCIETY AND
CULTURE:
ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL**

V SEMESTER

**B.A HISTORY: CORE COURSE
(2014 Admission onwards)**

**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT
SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

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**B.A HISTORY: CORE COURSE
KERALA SOCIETY AND CULTURE: ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL**

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Module-I

Kerala's Physiographical Features and Early History of the Region

Geographical features

Kerala has had the qualification of being an autonomous topographical and political element from the good old days. It's one of a kind land position and unconventional physical elements have contributed Kerala with a particular singularity. The place where there is Kerala involves the slender waterfront strip limited by the Western Ghats on the east and the Arabian sea on the west in the southern part of the Indian subcontinent. Confusing as it may appear, this geological position has guaranteed, to some degree, its political and social disconnection from whatever remains of the nation furthermore encouraged its broad and dynamic contacts with the nations of the outside world. An investigation of the land component in connection to Kerala history accepts extraordinary centrality. Here we are going to know the more essential physical or topographical components of the area like mountains, streams, backwaters, wind and atmosphere. We might likewise attempt to discover the impact applied by each of these elements on our history and society.

The geographical factors that have influenced and molded Kerala culture may be classified into the following:

1. Position, location and shape of the state 2. Mountains, Hills and Passes. 3. Rivers, backwaters and the sea. 4. Climate, Fauna and Flora.

1. Position, Location and Shape.

Kerala is situated in the extreme south west corner of the Indian Sub- Continent. The land of Kerala comprises the narrow coastal strip surrounded by the Western Ghats in the East and the Arabian Sea in the West. Kerala comprises three natural divisions. They are:

A. The High land – The Western Ghats constitute this region

B. The Low land – it stretches along the coastal plain in the West

C. Mid land – in between the High land and the Low land. It is rich in agricultural products.

Now, let us see how this peculiar position and division influenced our History. Kerala was free from invasions, which shook North India through centuries because of her insular position. This enabled the growth of peculiar social institutions like the Marumakkathayam in Kerala. It was a hindrance for friendly contacts with the North. It took longer time for north Indian religions to penetrate in to Kerala than foreign ones. It enabled Kerala to evolve its own styles of art, architecture and sculpture like Kathakali and Kudiattam. However this did not prevent intellectuals like Sankaracharya to propagate his philosophy outside

Kerala. It was not a hindrance to the Chola, Vijaya Nagar, Mysore and other South Indian powers to raid the Kerala territory. It did not prevent Tamil, Kannada and Tulu languages to influence our dialect and writing languages.

Rivers

There are 44 rivers in the state – 41 west flowing and 3 (Kabani, Bhavani and Pampar) east flowing. The state is rich in water potential, but no long rivers. The major rivers are Nila (Bharata puzha or Perar), Periyar and Pampa; Kunthipuzha, Chandragiri puzha, Korapuzha and Chaliyar. The rivers perform a two-fold function. They provide uninterrupted water transport through the length and breadth of the state. They add to the land area forming backwaters and ports. They make the land fertile and the country prosperous. Inland trade has been mainly through the rivers. They are arteries of trade and communication. The harbours at the mouth of the rivers provide safe anchorage to ships. Kerala rivers have been the cradles of early civilizations. 24 out of the 32 Brahmin settlements are on the banks of rivers. A number of historic and religious temples and churches are situated on the banks of rivers. Most of the literary and artistic forms originated on the river valleys. The rivers have influenced our political and military history. The Periyar flood of 1341 made Muziris useless for trade and brought in to existence the Vaipin Island. The flood of 1789 in the same river forced Tippu Sultan to abandon his further conquest of Thiruvitamkur. Several places of historical and cultural importance are located on the river banks. We have Chittur, Palakkad, Thiruvillamala, Pattambi, Thirunavaya and Chamravattam on the banks of Bharatapuzha. Ayiramalai, Malayattur, Kaladi, Aluva and Kodungallur on the banks of Periyar; Aanmala, Sabarimala, Chengannur, Maramon, Edathwa on the banks of Pamba.

It was on the rivers that major hydro-electric and irrigation projects were constructed in modern times. The hydro-electric projects like Pallivasal, Sengulam, Peringal kuthu and Sabarigiri have quickened the industrialization of Kerala. The irrigation project like Peechi, Malampuzha, Periyar Valley became, to adapt the words of Pandit Nehru, centre of modern pilgrimage.

Mountains

The Sahya Mountains which form part of the Western Ghats is the main mountain range in Kerala. It influenced our history in more ways than one. It provides the 'body' to the state of Kerala. It protected the state from political invasions that hit South India till the 18th century. It guards the eastern frontier. In this sense, Sahya range may be called as the Great Sentinel of the East. It safeguarded the territorial integrity of the land. It was the source of most of the rivers of Kerala. It provided mountain passes for traffic between Kerala and

neighboring states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The forest in the Ghat is a source of wealth to the state. Some of the peaks important from the political and religious points of view are situated in the Western Ghats. The Anamudi peak (8841) in the Ghat represents the highest point in India-south of the Himalayas. The Agastyakutam, the southernmost peak in the Western Ghats figures in the popular legend of Agastya. The Hills are so many in Kerala. From Ezhimala in the north to Mahendragiri in the South, we have innumerable hills. Among the hills, mention may be made of Vavvimala, Vatamala, Puralimala, KalladiKotan, Nelliampathy, Pothundi, Anamala, Elamala, Peerumedu, Sabarimala, Ponmudi, Agastykutam and Aruvamozhi. These hills have influenced our history in more ways than one. Ezhimala was the seat of a flourishing kingdom during the early centuries of the Christian era. As it is jutting in to the sea, it was a well-known land mark for ancient mariners. The Puralimala was the headquarters of Pazhassi Raja for a long time and is hailed as the 'Aravallis of Malabar'. The Brahmagiri in Wayanad is important as Thirunelli temple is located here. The Sabari hills are famous for the Sastha shrine, one of the important centers of Hindu pilgrimage in the state. The Malayattur hills is famous as a centre of Christian pilgrimage associated with St. Thomas.

Passes

The mountains provide a number of passes/gaps to facilitate contacts. There are a number of mountain passes in Kerala which influence our history. The Palakkad Gap is perhaps the major one with its enormous width of 36KMs. Through it, the south west winds bring pleasant moist air and grateful showers to the thirsty plains of Coimbatore. Through it, many a stream from the higher mountains finds their way to the Arabian Sea. The gap is of great economic value to Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The Tamarasseri and Perambadi gaps promote contacts between Kerala and Karnataka. They have also served as routes of invasion. The Perambadi gives access to Coorg while Tamarasseri provide access from Wayanad to Mysore. The Bodinaykannur pass in the Travancore area (Central Kerala) connects Madurai with the High Ranges. Through the Kamban pass was transacted most of the trade from central Kerala (Todupuzha). The Aryankavu pass gives easy access to Tirunelveli. The Tamils used this route for most of their raids and trade to South Kerala. The Arambadi pass (Aruvamoshi), though presently situated outside Kerala is crucial. Early man with his microliths entered Kerala through this gap; this route had been the highway of traffic between Kerala and its eastern neighbors. Many raids and invasions, the last being that of Chanda Saheb in 1740 had taken place through the Arambadi. Numberless battles had been fought in this region. The Arambadi – Kottar region is rightly called the cockpit of Kerala.

Lagoons

Running parallel to the seacoast, Kerala has a chain of lagoons and backwaters. They provide communication between the different parts of Kerala. The more important of the lakes of Kerala are Vembanad, Ashtamudi, Bakel and Kumbla. The Vembanad Lake; its name came from the ancient kingdom of Venpolinad. It is the largest lake in Kerala extending from the south up to Kochi. On its banks are situated Vaikkam, a famous Hindu pilgrim centre, Alleppey, Quilon and Cochin famous ports. The Sasthamkotta Lake is the one and the only one fresh water lake in Kerala. The Azhis in the state like Azikkal, Chettruvai, Neentakara, Kochi, Kodungallur and many bud bays like west Hill provide safe anchorage to ships.

Sea coast

The Arabian Sea has been a permanent geographical factor in our History. In fact Kerala has been the gift of the Arabian Sea. Kerala depended for its prosperity on the sea and the sea borne trade. The Jews, Christian, Muslims and Parsees came here following a sea route and first landed here. The Europeans anchored at Kerala coast. The Portuguese were the first in this endeavor followed by the Dutch, French and the English, all followed a sea route to reach Kerala and landed on the Kerala coast and built their settlements here. The Arabian sea had been the field of activity for the Kunjalis, the Admirals of the Calicut fleet. The imperialists first set their foot here and met with their first rebuff here. The commercial and cultural contacts that Kerala has had in the past immensely benefited the princes and peoples of Kerala. The extensive sea coast of Kerala has provided a number of harbours both in the ancient and modern times. In ancient times we have such ports as Muziris, Tyndis, Barace and Nelcynda. In medieval times we have Kollam, Kozhikode and Kodungallur, and in modern times we have Kochi, Alapuzha and Ezhimala. If Kerala was isolated from the rest of India by the mountains, she was opened to the rest of the world by the sea.

Monsoon

Kerala, which lies in the tropic region, is mostly subject to the type of humid tropical wet climate experienced by most of Earth's rainforests. Meanwhile, its extreme eastern fringes experience a drier tropical wet and dry climate. Kerala receives an average annual rainfall of 3107 mm – some 7,030 crore m³ of water. This compares to the all-India average is 1,197 mm. Parts of Kerala's lowlands may average only 1250 mm annually while the cool mountainous eastern highlands of Idukki district – comprising Kerala's wettest region – receive in excess of 5,000 mm of orographic precipitation (4,200 crore of which are available for human use) annually. Kerala's rains are mostly the result of seasonal monsoons. As a result, Kerala averages some 120–140 rainy days per year. In summer, most of Kerala is prone to gale-force winds, storm surges, and torrential downpours

accompanying dangerous cyclones coming in off the Indian Ocean. Kerala's average maximum daily temperature is around 36.7 °C; the minimum is 19.8 °C
Early human settlements-Paleolithic, Neolithic Periods

Archaeological studies have identified many Mesolithic, Neolithic and Megalithic sites in Kerala. These findings have been classified into Laterite rock-cut caves (*Chenkallara*), Hood stones (*Kudakkallu*), Hat stones (*Toppikallu*), Dolmenoid cists (*Kalvrtham*), Urn burials (*Nannangadi*) and Menhirs (*Pulachikallu*). The studies point to the indigenous development of the ancient Kerala society and its culture beginning from the Paleolithic age, and its continuity through Mesolithic, Neolithic and Megalithic ages. However, foreign cultural contacts have assisted this cultural formation. The studies suggest possible relationship with Indus Valley Civilization during the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age.

After 1974 discovery of Palaeolithic tools, many discoveries in Kannur, Wayanad, Calicut, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kottayam and Thiruvananthapuram. They used small pebbles as tools these small stone tools were very primitive in nature, which were used for hunting purpose. Stone tools were excavated at Kanjirapuzha, Nilambur, thenkara etc.. These discoveries proved that Kerala had a fabulous Palaeolithic culture in almost all parts of Kerala.

Archaeological findings include dolmens of the Neolithic era in the Marayur area. They are locally known as "muniyara", derived from *muni*(hermit or sage) and *ara* (dolmen). Rock engravings in the Edakkal Caves in Wayanad are thought to date from the early to late Neolithic eras around 5000 BCE. Historian M.R. Raghava Varier of the Kerala state archaeology department identified a sign of "a man with jar cup" in the engravings, which is the most distinct motif of the Indus valley civilisation.

New Stone Age was more advanced than the Mesolithic. The changes in atmosphere and consequent rise in temperature brought early man out of the caves. Neolithic people used well shaped and well ground tools of smooth surfaces. They invented agriculture. No Neolithic habitation site has ever been identified anywhere in Kerala. We have no reliable archaeological evidence to talk about the nature culture in Kerala. Philip Lake, William Logan and Faucet discovered minor Neolithic evidences in Wayanad area. How and axes were discovered at Thamarasseri, Puthadi and Parambikulam etc.. These axes were made on granite rock that was locally available. Archaeologists says that some of the artistic representation on rocks of the rock shelters of Edakkal, Maryur are the products of the Neolithic culture

Iron Age in Kerala/Megalithic Culture

The Megalithic Culture of South India is mainly represented by burial monuments. Monument types such as Urn burials are not huge stones or 'Megaliths' in the literal sense. In this work, the term Megalith is identified as a socio-religious expression of burying the deceased in a grave, which may or may not have lithic appendage. Since the use of iron broadly coincides with this period, it forms an adjunct of this culture and this culture is also referred to as the Iron Age culture. Different types of material remains of the Iron Age Culture have been reported from sites in various parts of Kerala Apart from the burial monuments, artifacts made of terracotta and metals such as iron, copper, bronze and gold were also found. The details of these are given in this chapter which can give a better picture of the material milieu of Iron Age culture in Kerala.

Several scholars have worked on the chronology of the Megaliths in Kerala The Iron Age culture in Kerala has been broadly dated from 1000 B.C. to AD 100 based on the earliest and the latest dates available for habitation at Mangad in Kollam district (Satyamurthy 1992). In accordance with this, temporal variations are also vast A few types of monuments such as Rock Cut Caves are unique to Kerala and seem to have evolved architecturally over a long period. The Iron Age culture has a wider distribution in Kerala when compared to the preceding Prehistoric cultural periods but, the lack of dating evidence makes this periodization flimsy at the empirical level (Gurukkal and Varier 1999) Thapar (1952) pointed out that, although many surveys have been carried out, a comprehensive chronology for Kerala is yet to be prepared. The initial attempts at explaining the origin of Iron Age culture in Peninsular India These include theories on diffusion of Megalithic elements from Mediterranean and from the Indo-Iranian region as propounded by Allchins (1968), which was developed by Parpola (1973) Childe (1948) and Renfrew (1981) observed that the European Megalithic group migrated to Mediterranean and slowly spread to India Thus, it seems that, parallels were drawn irrespective of spatial and temporal disparities to suggest a unilinear evolution model. This model had to be discarded later with the arrival of new evidences and more excavations.

A significant feature of the Iron Age Culture in Kerala as well as in Peninsular India is the presence of huge burial monuments known as Megaliths. Various types of monuments are found in the Iron Age sites of Kerala. Monuments such as Dolmens and Cists share some parallels in typology with the monuments found throughout Peninsular India. The first attempt at devising a suitable typology for Megalithic monuments by incorporating European terms was made by Wheeler

at Brahmagiri (1948). It was further developed by Krishnaswami (1949), Leshnik (1974), Sundara (1979), Allchins (1982), McIntosh (1985) and Moorti (1994).

Cist is an underground box like structure made of granite and gneiss and is found in the foothills and hilly regions. It usually has a porthole on the eastern side, which is closed with a small stone. In the plains, it is surrounded by Stone Circle. Grave goods are kept inside the Cists in neatly arranged pots on rock benches suggesting similarity with Rock Cut Caves. Cists are encircled with granite or laterite boulders in several sites in the districts of Trissur, Palakkad, Kannur and Kottayam. Cists are reported from almost all districts in Kerala. A clustering of this type is found in Palakkad district. Dolmens are similar to Cists in architecture except that they are above the ground and resemble a table. These are usually found in the hill tops of the eastern mountainous region with granite, gneiss and chamockite outcrops. It has five orthostats of which four are supports and the fifth is a capstone. These slabs are 6-8" in thickness and are placed in swastika pattern for stability. They are usually oriented towards east. Some of them have a porthole of the eastern orthostat. The inner surfaces of these monuments are smooth, indicating slab-quarrying (Krishnaswami 1949:38). Dolmens are found mostly in the hilly regions of Trissur district and Devikulam and Udumbanchola taluks of Idukki district. Some of the Dolmens are found in the wildest parts of Ranni and Marayur deep inside the forests.

Rock Cut Caves are subterranean cells made of laterite. They are static, cannot be transported, and are constructed in a very ingenious way. First, a rectangular pit is sunk into a laterite rock. Then a small entrance was cut. Through this narrow entrance, the laterite is scooped out resulting in a cave. Steps led to this entrance. In certain cases, the steps are rudimentary while in other cases the entrances are well carved. The floor of the caves is 1-2 feet lower than the entrance. Some have benches about 2 feet high on the sides. Most of the caves are circular or oblong in plan. In addition, the vault is dome shaped. A pillar is sometimes found in the centre of the cave. Sharma (1956) has classified the Rock Cut Caves in Kerala into four categories. These are (i) the caves with a central pillar, (ii) caves without a central pillar, (iii) caves with a top opening; and (iv) multi-chambered caves. Rock Cut Caves are found in seven districts namely, Kasargode, Kannur and Kozhikode in North Kerala; Malapuram, and Trissur in Central Kerala and Pathanamthitta and Trivandrum in Southern Kerala. In the multiple monuments sites in Malapuram and Kozhikode districts, Rock Cut Caves are found occurring along with Umbrella stones, Dolmen/Cists and Urns. Sharma (1956) observed that the multichambered cave might have evolved later. He also noticed differences between the caves in Malabar and the Trissur. In some of the caves the central pillar

is not strong enough to serve as a support and is probably for decoration. The benches inside suggest a modification from the Cists found in the hilly regions.

Umbrella Stones are known for their architectural splendour and occupies a distinct position in the research carried out so far on the Iron Age culture of Kerala. These were known as Kudakal among the people and translated as Umbrella Stone by Babington (Knda means umbrella in Malayalam). It has four orthostats and a domical capstone resting on it. It is made of finely dressed laterite. Umbrella Stones are limited in distribution as compared to other monuments. These are found profusely in the districts of Trissur, Palakkad and Malapuram in Central Kerala and Kozhikode and Kannur districts in North Kerala. The majority of the Iron Age burials in Malapuram belong to this type.

Urn is a commonly found Megalithic type in Kerala. It is distributed widely over thirteen districts in Kerala. These are kept in a pit and are generally covered with a stone slab. Three types of Urn burials are found in Kerala. These are (i) the Four Legged Jars or the Three Legged Jars; (ii) Pointed Urn or Pyriform Jar and (iii) The Globular Pot with a wide mouth. The distribution of legged jars is largely confined to North and Central Kerala. Sarcophagus is found in association with Rock Cut Caves. Pyriform jar and the globular pot is the most prominent form of Urn burials in South Kerala. It is found profusely at Mangad in Kollam district. Pyriform jars are also reported from Central Kerala and North Kerala. Urns are found along with other monuments in Multiple Monument sites Sarcophagus, which is a distant variant of Urn burial, found within Rock Cut Caves in Kerala. The iron tools have been reported from Urn burials along with Black and Red Ware. These are known under various names such as Chadi, Kkadi, Plav, Thazhi, Manchadi, and Muthumakkachadi in different parts of Kerala.

Megalithic sites

A series of megalithic monuments have been discovered from different parts of Kerala. Most of them are found erected out of large blocks of stones as funerary edifices. Hence they are associated with the cult of the Dead. The important megaliths found in Kerala are the Dolmens, Cists, Menhirs, Kutakallu, Toppikkallu and rock cut chambers. The important megalithic sites of Kerala are Edakkal, Kuppakkolli, Marayur, Sinturuni, Porkalam and Eyyal. Edakkal caves contain interesting carvings and inscriptions. Researches done by the Deccan College, Pune have revealed stone artifacts on the riverbeds in Palakkad. Kerala megaliths are ascribed to the period 10th BC to 1st AD.

Megaliths are monuments built of granite rocks erected over the burials. The uses of megaliths have corresponded with the use of iron and the Black and Red ware pottery (BRW). Hence megaliths belonged to the Iron Age culture. The origin of the megalithic burials can be traced back to the passage chamber tombs. Kerala megaliths are developed from the passage chamber tombs. This was followed by the rock cut chamber tombs, porthole cists and umbrella stones. These chambers are found scattered in many places in Malabar. Cist burials with pot holes are found in Marayur and other parts of Idukki district. Port-hole cists are also found in Porkkalam. The cap stones are found concentrated between river Nila and Periyar. The antiquity of the Megalithic culture of Kerala and its relations with other cultures elsewhere are points of debate. As Kerala megaliths show a close resemblance with those of the Deccan, Scholars suggest an iron using people from the south as its makers. Anthropologists suggest that the megalithic builders were a people of Mediterranean origin who came to the west coast by sea, entered south and spread northward. However H.D.Sankalia relicts the new by stating that both chronologically and culturally, the European megaliths are found far removed from its south Indian counterpart.

Sankalia has expressed the view that the megalithic builders of Kerala represent a fairly and well established social organisation. They dug irrigation tanks indicating the prevalence of agriculture. However evidences of agriculture are limited to a few ploughshares. But it is doubtful whether they knew the plough technology. Hence it seems that they adopted paternalism and nomadic life with some amount of subsistence farming. It has been suggested that Kerala megalithic builders were hunters. The use of metals seen in burial sites indicates contact with other places and some sort of exchange. Numerous iron weapons point to frequent wars and plunder. There were wars between tribes and even within tribes. It is also suggested that the iron using cultures subjugated the earlier Neolithic societies. In course of time, the tribes transferred themselves from hunting and pastoralism to agriculture.

Most of the megalithic in Kerala seems to be the developed South Indian megaliths. Megalithic sites are found scattered, but a few were clustered as near Edakkal caves where 200 megaliths are found in 1500 acre ground. The discovery of microliths from Calicut and Cochin shows that Kerala had become the abode of man as early as the Neolithic age. The pre-historic caves scattered all over Kerala show that their makers were familiar with tools and implements of iron. Babington has mentioned two caves in Kannur while Sewell recorded 160 primitive caves in Malabar. According to Y.A.Sharma, these caves were the remnants of Buddhist and Jain influence in Kerala.

Kerala as a part Tamilakam

3rd century BCE to 4th century CE has been argued as the period of Sangam in which entire southern tip of India was part of Tamilakam. In which three prominent dynasties ruled they were called as Muventas comprising Chera, Chola and Pandya.. There were also a few independent chieftains, the Velirs. During the time of the Maurya Empire in North India (c. 4th century BCE – 3rd century BCE) the Cheras, the Pandyas and the Cholas were in a late megalithic phase on the western coast of Tami akam. The earliest datable references to the Tamil kingdoms are in inscriptions from the 3rd century BCE during the time of the Maurya Empire.

The Pandyan dynasty ruled parts of South India until the early 17th century. The heartland of the Pandyas was the fertile valley of the Vaigai River. They initially ruled their country from Korkai, a seaport on the southernmost tip of the Indian Peninsula, and in later times moved to Madurai. The Chola dynasty ruled during the Sangam period (3rd century BCE) until the 13th century in central Tamil Nadu. The heartland of the Cholas was the fertile valley of the Kaveri. The Chera dynasty ruled from before the Sangam period (3rd century) until the 12th century over an area corresponding to modern day western Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Sangam Literature:

Ancient Kerala was part of Tamilakam. The sangam works explains the social, cultural, political and economic life of ancient Kerala. The Tamil literary works of the Sangam Age provide valuable information of the life of the people in the early centuries of the Christian era. They reflect the picture of a settled society. The sangam anthologies comprises 2381 poems by 473 poets. Of the sangam works, the most valuable for the historian of Kerala are the Pathittupattu, Akananuru, Purananuru and Nattinai, besides the two epics Cillappadikaram and Manimekhalai. The Pathittupattu is a group of 10 poems each in praise of a Chera king by a poet. It is the most valuable work for the reconstruction of the political history of early Kerala as each decade of the work eulogises the achievements of a Chera king. Akananuru is a collection of 400 poems on love and romance dealing with maters Akam (Heart).Purananuru is another collection of 100 poems dealing with Puram (external) matters like war and diplomacy. The Kuruntokai and Nattinai also yield some historical information. The Muthollayiram refers to the Chera capital Vanchi. Of the post Sangam works Silappadikaram deals with the exploits of Cheran Chenkuttavan. Besides being the story of Kovilan and Kannaki, this work of Elanko Adikal, (the Chera crown prince) is considered as the Bible of the Kannaki cult. It mentions Kunavayirkottam, the Jain centre and corroborates the evidences from Roman writings. Manimekhalai of Sathanar continues the story of the early epic, as its heroine is the daughter of Madhavi. The celebrated songs of

Auvaiyar, Parinar and Kapilar deal with Kerala life and society. The hymns of Nayanars and Alvars mentions some of the holy shrines of Kerala. The Perumal-Thirumozhi of Kulasekhera Alvar gives information of the Chera kingdom, besides the spread of Vaishnavism. The Thiruvaimozhi of Nammalavar gives details of the Vaishnava shrines of Kerala. The Periya Puranam of Sekkilar describes the story of Cheraman Perumal.

Pathittupathu

The 'ten tens' consists of ten long poems divided into ten sections. It is a puram work praising the valour of the Chera kings. The work is valuable for reconstructing the history of the early Chera rulers

The Paththupattu is a collection of ten long poems. Out of them, five belong to the arrupatai class in which a bard directs another to a person/king for the acquisition of wealth.

They are: 1) *Tirumurukarruppatai*: A bard directs another to the abode of Lord Muruga, to acquire spiritual wealth. All the important shrines of Lord Muruga are described in this work. It was composed by Nakkirar.

2) *Porunararruppatai*: It praises the valour of the Chola king Karikala. It was composed by Muttatamakanniyar.

3) *Ciruppanarruppatai*: In this work, the bard directs the minstrel to the court of Nalliyakotan, a chieftain. While describing his kingdom, the work also portrays the capital cities of three major kingdoms, namely, the Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas. It was written by Nattattanar.

4) *Perumpanarruppatai*: This arrupatai is in praise of the ruler of Kanchi, written by the poet Uruttirakkannanar. Administration of the city of Kanchi and its trading activities are widely described in this work.

5) *Mullaipattu*: The shortest of ten idylls, containing 103 lines was composed by Naputtanar. This work deals with the akam concept.

6) *Maturaikanci*: The longest of ten poems, contains 782 lines. Mankuti Marutanar praises the valour of the Pandya king Netunceliyan and describes in detail the trade, commerce and administrative aspects of the Pandya Kingdom.

7) *Netunelvatai*: This puram work was written by Nakkirar in praise of Netunceliyan, the Pandya ruler.

8) *Kurincipattu*: Kapilar's work deals with akam concept.

9) *Pattinapalai*: In praise of the Chola ruler Karikala, this work was composed by Uruttirankannanar. This work deals with the trade relations between ancient Tamil country and foreign countries.

10) *Malaipatakam*: Composed by Perumkaucikanar, the work is an arrupatai, directing the fellow bard to the kingdom of Nannan.

Akananuru

It contains 401 stanzas of poems composed by nearly 145 poets. All the songs deal with love theme. A classical Tamil poetic work, is the seventh book in the anthology of Sangam literature (600 BCE - 300 CE), namely *Ettuthokai*. It contains 400 *Akam* (subjective) poems dealing with matters of love and separation. Other names for *Akananuru* include *Neduntogai* or *Nedunthokai* ("the long anthology"), *Ahappattu*, *Ahananuru*, and *Agananuru*.

Purananuru

The *Purananuru* (Tamil *Pu an u*) is a Tamil poetic work in the *Ettokai*, one of the eighteen *melkanakku noolgal*. It is a treatise on kingship: what a king should be, how he should act, how he should treat his subjects and how he should show his generosity. Sangam Collection is classified into *Pati e m lka akku* and *Pati e k ka akku* and each classification has eighteen collections, as an anthology of Tamil literature, belonging to the Sangam period. It is dated between 7th century BCE and 5th century BCE.

The *Purananuru* is one of the eight books in the secular anthology of Sangam literature. The secular anthology is entirely unique in Indian literature, which nearly all religious texts during this era. The *Purananuru* contains 400 poems of varying lengths in the *akaval* meter. More than 150 poets wrote the poems. It is not known when or who collected these poems into these anthologies.

The *Purananuru* is a source of information on the political and social history of prehistoric Tamil Nadu. There is information on the various rulers who ruled the Tamil country before and during the Sangam era.

Kerala's maritime contacts

Kerala was a major spice exporter as early as 3000 BC, according to Sumerian records so maritime activities were too old. Its fame as the land of spices attracted ancient Babylonians, Assyrians and Egyptians to 'Muziris' in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE. Arabs and Phoenicians were also successful in establishing their prominence in the Kerala trade during this early period. Muziris in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, an itinerarium showing the road network in the Roman Empire.

According to Sumerian records and Kerala still referred to as the "Garden of Spices" or as the "Spice Garden of India". Kerala's spices attracted ancient Babylonians, Assyrians and Egyptians to the Malabar Coast in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE. Arabs and Phoenicians established trade with Kerala during this period. The Land of Keralaputra was one of the four independent kingdoms in southern India during Ashoka's time, the others being Chola, Pandya, and

Satiyaputra. Scholars hold that Keralaputra is an alternate name of the Cheras, the first dominant dynasty based in Kerala. These territories once shared a common language and culture, within an area known as Tamilakam.

In the last centuries BCE the coast became important to the Greeks and Romans for its spices, especially black pepper. The Cheras had trading links with China, West Asia, Egypt, Greece, and the Roman Empire. In foreign-trade circles the region was known as *Male* or *Malabar*. Muziris, Berkarai, and Nelcynda were among the principal ports at that time. The value of Rome's annual trade with the region was estimated at around 50,000,000 sesterces; contemporary Sangam literature describes Roman ships coming to Muziris in Kerala, laden with gold to exchange for pepper. One of the earliest western traders to use the monsoon winds to reach Kerala was Eudoxus of Cyzicus, around 118 or 166 BCE, under the patronage of Ptolemy VIII, king of the Hellenistic Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt. Roman establishments in the port cities of the region, such as a temple of *Augustus* and barracks for garrisoned Roman soldiers, are marked in the Tabula Peutingeriana; the only surviving map of the Roman *cursus publicus*.

Merchants from West Asia and Southern Europe established coastal posts and settlements in Kerala. The Jewish connection with Kerala started in 573 BCE. Arabs also had trade links with Kerala, starting before the 4th century BCE, as Herodotus (484–413 BCE) noted that goods brought by Arabs from Kerala were sold to the Jews at Eden. They intermarried with local people, resulting in formation of the Muslim Mappila community. In the 4th century, some Christians also migrated from Persia and joined the early Syrian Christian community who trace their origins to the evangelistic activity of Thomas the Apostle in the 1st century. Another Christian migration from middle east to Kerala was of the Knanaya community. Mappila was an honorific title (Mapillai is a Tamil word for bridegroom, because foreign male partner married to local woman, they have been called Mapillai community) that had been assigned to respected visitors from abroad; Jewish, Syrian Christian, and Muslim immigration account for later names of the respective communities: Juda Mappilas, Nasrani Mappilas, and Muslim Mappilas. According to the legends of these communities, the earliest Saint Thomas Christian Churches, Cheraman Juma Masjid (629 CE)—the first mosque of India—and Paradesi Synagogue (1568 CE)—the oldest active synagogue in the Commonwealth of Nations—were built in Kerala by Cochin Jews.

Megasthenes, the Greek Ambassador to the court of Emperor Chandragupta Maurya (4th Century BC) mentions in his work Indica on many South Indian States, including Automela (probably Muziris), and a Pandian trade centre. Ancient Roman Natural philosopher Pliny the Elder mentions in his *Naturalis*

Historia (N.H. 6.26) Muziris [4] in Kerala as India's first port of importance. According to him, Muziris could be reached in 40 days' time from the Red sea ports in Egyptian coast purely depending on the South West Monsoon winds. Later, the unknown author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* notes that "both Muziris and Nelcynda are now busy places".

After the arrival of The Babylonians, The Assyrians The Egyptians, The Greeks, The Romans, The Jews (Jewish), The Arabs, The next arrival was of The Portuguese and The Dutch directly from Europe completely through a sea route from Europe to Kerala discovered by Vaso Da Gama to lead the spice trade from Kerala.

Pattanam (trade centres)

Pattanam were trade centers as per medieval Kerala inscription and literature. And there are number of inscriptions as well as place names either prefixing or suffixing pattanam. It is also associated with trade guilds also. The early trade centers were later turned in to a bigger trading center and have its own administering structure in which there has been lesser state control. The excavated site at 'Pattanam' (Muziris) is one such site in Ernakulam district.

Internal trade mechanisms

The agricultural tracts produced food-grains and sugarcane but it had to depend on the coastal areas for salt and fish. The coastal area produced considerable surplus in salt and fish, but rice, the staple food, had to be brought from the areas of paddy cultivation. The hill ranges were rich in timber, spices etc. but they had to depend on agricultural tracts and coastal areas for food grains and salt. The result of this kind of interdependence was that exchange relationship had come to exist among the various geographical regions. Some of the articles available in south India were highly in demand in other parts of the sub-continent and even by other countries and civilizations. Contacts were established through land-routes or sea-routes by those distant countries and the necessary articles were procured. Thus we can identify three levels of trade: i) Local trade ii) Long distance overland trade, and iii) Long distance overseas trade.

Barter was the most common mode of transaction in the context of local exchange. Most of the items of barter were for immediate consumption. Salt, fish, paddy, dairy products, roots, venison, honey and toddy were the regular items of barter in the far C south. Salt was exchanged for paddy; paddy was exchanged for milk, curd and ghee; honey was given for taking fish oil and liquor; rice flakes and sugarcane were given for venison and toddy. Very rarely, luxury items like pearls and elephant tusks also appeared as items of barter.

The foreign travelers like Sulaiman and Masudi who visited Kerala in the 11th Century have testified to the economic activities and the consequent financial soundness of the kingdom. The economic prosperity was mainly achieved from the extensive foreign trade with West Asia and China. The hill products from the Western Ghats carried down by the many rivers to natural harbours readily secured a market in West Asia and Europe. A number of Jewish, Christian and Muslim traders exploited the situation to their own advantage. As they possessed much wealth in gold, the native chieftains were prepared to overlook differences in faith and race and extended to them a warm welcome.

Kerala had a flourishing overseas trade with China during the period. China purchased articles like pepper, ivory, cinnamon, teakwood and pearls from this part of the country. They sold fishing-nets, procclain goods and silks. The Chinese introduced trade articles such as Cheenavala, Cheena Bharani and Cheenachatti and Cheena Otam, articles which exist even today.

Module-II

Polity and Society in the Perumal Era

Sources

Sources are the raw materials to reconstruct the past. Here we shall describe the vast range of source materials available to rebuild and reinterpret the history of Kerala. We shall begin with a critical survey of the legendary or traditional sources, and then pass over to a discussion on archaeological and literary sources with special emphasis on monumental, inscriptional, and numismatic evidence. The Sources of Kerala History may be classified into 1.Traditional and non-traditional 2.Primary and Secondary 3.Literary and Archaeological

Inscriptions

Inscriptions are one of the reliable sources of Kerala history. Compared to the Tamil country, Kerala can boast of a very limited number of inscriptions. For the early period, we have to rely chiefly up on Tamil Brahmi inscriptions. The Pallava-Pandya-Chola inscriptions of the 7th-8th centuries mention the Cheras. Inscriptions are found in abundance from the 9th century.

Inscriptions are found mainly in temples, forts and palaces of Kerala. The Mampally plate of SreeVallabha Kotha and Vazhapally inscription of RajarajaVarman are famous inscriptions. The Paliyam Coper Plate of Vikramaditya Varaguna gives the donation of land to the Budhist temple at Srimoolavasam. The Terresapally copperplate of Venad King Iyen Adikal Tiruvadikal is famous among the inscription. The inscriptions at Sucheendram, Koodalmanikkam, Kilimanoor, Trichur, Trikkodithanam explains religious rituals and religious practice. There is an Arabic inscription at Madayi Mosque and Hebrew inscriptions at the Synagogue at Paravoor and Chennamangalam. They are dated in Kali, Kollam, Parthivapuram and Puthuvaipu eras. Their language is Tamil, Malayalam and sometimes Sanskrit. Their script is Vattezhuthu, Kolezhuthu, Brahmi and Devanagari. They provide dates, symbols and astronomical details. Inscriptions furnish valuable materials for the reconstruction of the dynastic history of various kingdoms. They throw light on the political social and cultural life of the people. They give us insight into the working of local assemblies, management of temples, tenant-lord relationship, organisation of agrarian settlements, functioning of trade-corporations and the working of ancient educational institution. They also indicate the emergence of an agrarian society. They help us to solve many a puzzle in Kerala history.

There are about more than 150 inscriptions discovered and deciphered relating to Kerala History so far. Their full texts and translations have been published in such works as the Travancore Archaeological series (TAS) 1910,

annual report of the Cochin Archaeological Dept (1927), Rama varma research institute but later scholars like Dr.Sundaram Pillai, Gopinath Rao, K.V.Subrahmanya Ayyar, Elamkulam and Dr.M.G.S.Narayanan tried to unravel the mystery behind Kerala inscriptions.

Terisapalli Copper Plate

The Tharisappalli Copper Plates (849 AD) are a copper-plate grant issued by the King of Venadu (Quilon), Ayyanadikal Thiruvadikal, to the Saint Thomas Christians on the Malabar Coast in the 5th regnal year of the Chera ruler Sthanu Ravi Varma. The inscription describes the gift of a plot of land to the Syrian Church at Tangasseri near Quilon (now known as Kollam), along with several rights and privileges to the Syrian Christians led by Mar Sapir Iso.

The Tharisappalli copper plates are one of the important historical inscriptions of Kerala, the date of which has been accurately determined.^[3] The grant was made in the presence of important officers of the state and the representatives of trade corporations or merchant guilds. It also throws light on the system of taxation that prevailed in early Venad, as several taxes such as a profession tax, sales tax and vehicle tax are mentioned. It also testifies to the enlightened policy of religious toleration followed by the rulers of ancient Kerala.

There are two sets of plates as part of this document, and both are incomplete. The first set documents the land while the second details the attached conditions. The signatories signed the document in the Hebrew, Pahlavi, and Kufic languages. The Tharisappalli copper plates are kept at Poolatheen Aramana (Thiruvalla) of Malankara Marthoma Syrian Church

It is an important epigraphic document useful to the study of Kulasekhara society. The grant consists of two sets of plates, the first set consists of three plates.

Literature

The literary sources are of two kinds - indigenous and foreign. The indigenous sources are chiefly found in Sanskrit, Tamil and Malayalam languages. Perumal period is famous for Attaparakaram and Kramadeepika, Aadi Sankara's works, Many Sanskrit dramas etc...

Sanakanarayaneeyam

The beginning of Malayalam language took place during the Perumal period. It also marked the growth of Kerala as a separate political entity from the earlier Tamilakam.

Sankaranarayana was the royal astronomer and mathematician in the court of Sthanu Ravi, the perumal ruler of 844-885. It is believed that the first astronomical observatory was established by Sankaranarayana under the patronage

of Sthanu Ravi. Sankaranarayaneeyam is a Sanskrit astronomical work written by Sankaranarayana during the Perumal period.

Tamil Bhakti Literature

The Tamil literary works of the Sangam Age provide valuable information of the life of the people in the early centuries of the Christian era. They reflect the picture of a settled society. The sangam anthologies comprises 2381 poems by 473 poets. Of the sangam works, the most valuable for the historian of Kerala are the Pathittupattu, Akananuru, Purananuru and Nattinai, besides the two epics Cillappadikaram and Manimekhalai. The Pathittupattu is a group of 10 poems each in praise of a Chera king by a poet. It is the most valuable work for the reconstruction of the political history of early Kerala as each decade of the work eulogises the achievements of a Chera king. Akananuru is a collection of 400 poems on love and romance dealing with matters Akam (Heart).Purananuru is another collection of 100 poems dealing with Puram (external) matters like war and diplomacy. The Kuruntokai and Nattinai also yield some historical information. The Muthollayiram refers to the Chera capital Vanchi. Of the post Sangam works Silappadikaram deals with the exploits of Cheran Chenkuttavan. Besides being the story of Kovilan and Kannaki, this work of Elanko Adikal, (the Chera crown prince) is considered as the Bible of the Kannaki cult.It mentions Kunavayirkottam, the Jain centre and corroborates the evidences from Roman writings.Manimekhalai of Sathanar continues the story of the early epic, as its heroine is the daughter of Madhavi. The celebrated songs of Auvaiyar, Parinar and Kapilar deal with Kerala life and society.The hymns of Nayanars and Alvars mentions some of the holy shrines of Kerala.The Perumal-Thirumozhi of Kulasekhera Allwar gives information of the Chera kingdom, besides the spread of Vaishnavism.The Thiruvaimozhi of Nammalavar gives details of the Vaishnava shrines of Kerala.The Periya Puranam of Sekkilar describes the story of Cheraman Perumal.

Arab and Chinese Accounts

The Arab travelers and geographers give us valuable information of Kerala society from 9th C onwards. The first notable Arab writer is Sulaiman, the merchant who gives a description of the Kollam as the most important port in India touched by the Chinese ships. Ibn Khurdabbeh, another Muslim writer mentions Malabar Coast as a centre of export of rice. The Arab writers of the 10th century like Ibnul Faquib, Ibn Rusta, Abu Zaid and Masudi repeat the statements of Sulaiman. Alberunian, illustrations, the Muslim traveler of the medieval period is the earliest writer to call our region as Malabar. Idirisi gives information of the coastal towns of Malabar. Other travellers like Al Kazwim and Rashiuddin refer to Kollam, Kolathunad and Mt. Eli respectively. Ibn Batuta who visited Calicut more

than seven times gives us valuable accounts of Calicut, its King, people and port. He mentions Kollam as one of the finest cities of Malabar. The most objectives of all the Arab writers, Batuta's account is more reliable than of his predecessors.

The Chinese accounts of Wang Ta Yuan and Ma Huan yield historical information. Hieuen Tsang the Chinese pilgrim seems to have referred to Malabar as Molokuch, the land of hills. Wang Ta Yuan provides eye witness account Ezhimala and Calicut (description of the barbarian of the Isles) Ma Huan a Chinese Muslim merchant (15th C. A.D) gives in interesting description of the port and town of Calicut and its people. He is the first foreign traveler to mention Kochi – its rulers and people.

Monuments

Kerala is very rich in historical monuments, because of long lasting foreign contacts through trade, migration, political conquests and colonialism which provided a rich heritage and also influenced the cultural and architectural style of Kerala. The massive forts and palaces some turned in to museums stand as the past glory of this region

Tiruvanchikulam temple

Mahadeva Temple or Thiruvanchikkulam Temple Temple is situated in Kodungallur in Thrissur district . Constructed in the Kerala style of architecture, the temple is believed to have been built during the Chera period in the 8th century. Shiva is worshiped as Mahadeva and his consort Parvathi as Umadevi.

The presiding deity is revered in the 7th century Tamil Saiva canonical work, the *Thevaram*, written by Tamil saint poets known as the Nayanmars and classified as *Paadal Petra Sthalam*, one of the 276 temples that find mention in the canon. It is the only temple in Kerala in the list.the ten-day Vaikasipournami Brahmotsavam festival celebrated during the Tamil month of *Vaikasi* (May - June) being the most prominent.

This is the only Thevaram Paadal Petra Shiva sthalam in Kerala. Shiva is the family god of the Cochin Royal Family (Perumpadapu Swaroopam after they came to power following the decline of Chera Empire). The temple has very good mural paintings and is a protected monument by the Archaeological Survey of India. The temple has the oldest reference in history in Thevaram Hymns sung by Sundara Murthi Nayanar (also known as Sundarar in Tamil), one of the four Saiva Acharyas. The images of Sundara Murthi Nayanar, and of Cheraman Perumal Nayanar can also be seen in the temple premises. It is one of the oldest Shiva temples in South India, where Shiva is said to live along with his whole family. It was from here, Sundara Murthi Nayanar reached Kailash by sitting on an white elephant, sent by Lord Shiva on Adi Swathi day (July/August). The temple is

associated with Chidambaram temple in Tamil Nadu. It is believed that the capital city of the Kulasekharas, Mahodayapuram, was built around the temple; it was protected by high fortifications on all sides and had extensive pathways and palaces. The temple was rebuilt by Paliath Achan of Perumpadappu Swaroopam

Cheraman Masjid

The Cheraman Juma Masjid is a mosque in Kodungallur Taluk, Thrissur District. The Masjid is located in the Paravur - Kodungalloor Road Built in 629 AD, it is the first mosque in India. It is believed to be built by Malik Ibin Deenar, an Arab propagator of Islam and a follower and contemporary of Islamic Prophet Muhammad. It is believed that this mosque was first renovated and reconstructed in the 11th century AD.

Since ancient times, trade relations between middle east and India were active. Even before Islam had been established in Arabia, Arab traders visited the Malabar region, which was a major link between the ports of India and Southeast Asia.

With the advent of Islam, the Arab merchants became carriers of the new religion and they propagated it wherever they went. According to legend, Cheraman Perumal, the Chera king, went to Arabia where he met Muhammad and embraced Islam. In the 7th Century, a group of Arabs led by Malik Bin Deenar and Malik bin Habib arrived in Thrissur District, constructed a Masjid at Kodungalloor, naming it after their contemporary Cheraman Perumal.

The mosque has an ancient oil lamp which always burns and which is believed to be more than a thousand years old.

Brahmin Migration to Kerala

Kerala Brahmins were called as Namputhiris who were one of the predominant elite communities of Kerala. Though few in number, the Namputhiris have wielded great power and influence throughout our History. Here we shall ponder over their migration and settlement in Kerala. In the course of the analysis, we shall look in to their antiquity, culture and influence. From where they came, where were they settled in Kerala, the influence exerted by them on the ruling community, what impact they made on the social and cultural history of Kerala

Advent of Nambuthiries.

The advent of the Namputhiris was a slow and steady process spreading over several centuries from 3rd BC to 12th AD. It finally ended in the final submission of the local population to the superior intelligence and administrative skill of the Namputhiri Brahmins. It was carried out in a subtle manner not by the force of arms, but by the arts of peace. An advanced alien culture finally swept away the old tribal society.

Nature of Aryanisation

The advent of the Namputhiri Brahmins is not an isolated movement. There are four major views regarding their advent to Kerala. 1. Military Conquest: William Logan has viewed the arrival of the Namputhiris due to military conquest of the tribal population by the superior Brahmin. 2. Caldwell and K.P. Padmanabha Menon suggests superior intelligence as the force behind Aryanisation. 3. A third view regards the Aryan Brahmins as refugees of Muslim onslaughts on North India. The Aryans were forced to leave their original north Indian abode and crossed the Vindhya and finally settled in the South. 4. However, the real motive behind Aryanisation was agrarian technique. The Brahmins were 'land hungry' and they migrated to the South carrying with them Hindu culture in its embryonic form. Later, they established temple oriented villages and began to dominate the whole land. In this process, the Namputhiris functioned as exploiters and agents of a higher civilization. In course of time, they became localised and began to play the role as trader, counselor, priest, ambassador, poet and moralist using his skills in language, astronomy and polity to his own advantage. The present day historians are keen to accept this economic interpretation, discarding the theories of military conquest, refugee theory and superior intelligence.

Date of Migration

The date of Aryan migration is a much-discussed one. The land of Kerala was known to the North from very early times as is evidenced from Puranic references. Asokan edicts, Greco-Roman accounts, Tamil Brahmi cave label inscriptions etc. The Sangam anthologies allude to the presence of Brahmins in the courts of local chieftains. Some of the poets were Brahmins. Chellur, the earliest Brahmin settlement was a centre of Vedic religion during the Sangam Age. Hence Aryan influences were at work in Kerala society even during the early centuries of the Christian era. The Kadamba interregnum witnessed the settlement of the Brahmin immigrants in Kerala. By the 6th, 7th and 8th centuries, the process continued as is evidenced in the Panniyur Chokiram factions, representing Vaishnava Chalukya and Saivaite Rashtrakuta conflict. During the age of the Perumals, the settlement continued to grow and multiply. The vazhapilly inscription suggests that the village was an Upagrama of Thiruvalla, the Southernmost and greatest settlement of the Brahmins in the 9th Century. By the 8th, 9th Century, Brahmin settlements had come a vital force in society. This has been one of the causative factors for the emergence of the second Chera kingdom. The power of their settlement was expressed through the king's council (Naluthali) at the Chera capital.

The Routs.

The Brahmins who came to Kerala adopted either a Western or an eastern route. Most of them had chosen the Western route from Aihole (Ahichatra) of the Chalukyas to Saurashtra, Konkan, Tulu regions and finally reaching North Kerala. Others followed the eastern route beginning from Kalinga, Andhra, Vijayanagar and Chola countries, finally reaching Southern Kerala. A sea route from the mouth of the Indus to Gujarat and from there to Kerala is also suggested.

Identification: There were originally 32 Brahmin settlements in Kerala. Of the 32, settlements, 10 were in between Perumpuzha and Karumanpuzha, (Perumchellur, Chokiram and Panniyuru, Thrissur and Peruvanam). 12 settlements between Karuman Puzha and Churni (Irinjalakuda, Avittaputhur, Ayiranikkulam and Muzhikkulam, Kuzhur, Chengamanad and Uliyannur) and 10 between Churni and Pampa (Kumaranallur, Thiruvalla, Kaviyur and Niranam). Almost all the 32 settlements were identified; 22 of them have yielded inscriptions and 03 are mentioned in literary works' 6 comes down to this day with their temples and settlements; and one remain unidentified.

Basic Features.

These settlements have certain basic features: Most of the settlements were located, placed, situated on the banks of rivers and on the fertile plains. (9 in Pampa. 13 in Periyar and 5 in Churni). They were essentially temple centred and temple was synonymous with Brahmin settlement. They had become a vital force in society. A few settlements are found in clustered groups. The concentration of these settlements on river beds is based on the type of soil for paddy cultivation - up on which the Brahmins depended. The spread of Brahmin settlement could be related to the origin and extension of paddy cultivation. The emergence of a Brahmin settlement signified the growth of a new society based on exploitative social relations. Brahmin settlement emerged with the help of the Naduvazhi who gave them lands and settled them.

Impact of Aryanisation.

The Namputhiris, as the representative of the Aryans, made a deep and profound impact on early Kerala society and culture. In the social sphere, they introduced the caste system on a casteless society. After securing the support of the ruling and trading classes, they created and popularised the myth of superiority of the ruling classes over the toiling class. The social status of a person came to be determined as the basis of occupation. There was a corresponding decline of the status of women. The regulations framed by the Namputhiris resulted in many social evils of later days such as Sambandham, Devadasi system, Smartha - Vicharam etc. In the economic field, Aryanisation paved the way for the evolution of landlordism (Janmi system) in Kerala. The Parasurama legend was incorporated to strengthen the economic position of the Namputhiri. The legend of Parasurama

originated in Surparaka (Gujarat), moved along with the moving people, Kerala being the last link in the chain of Brahmin migration. Keralaolpathi legend designed to glorify the Naduvazhi shows that it was a matter of honour for the chieftain to grant lands to the Namputhiris. The control over Brahmaswams and Devaswams enabled them to control the entire land area. This led to the rise of landlordism in Kerala. In the religious sphere, the Aryan influx leads to the decline of Jainism and Buddhism on the one hand and the rise of Hindu temples on the other. In the process, old Buddhist and Jain shrines were either demolished or converted as Hindu centers of worship. On Aryan practices, deities, rituals and worship were adopted. Temples with Sanketams became a force to be reckoned with. In the political field, the Namputhiris began to yield enormous influence. They became counsels of the kings. The 'Perumals of Kerala' owes their rise to power to the Namputhiris. In the cultural sphere, the Namputhiris made a profound impact. They founded Salais to impart education. To Sanskrit and Malayalam languages, the Namputhiris contributed a lot. They were experts in philosophy, and medicine, and astrology and astronomy. Their influence is profound in Malayalam script and language. (Arya Ezhuthu) .Some of the drawbacks of Aryan impact is the increased rigidity of the caste system, the deplorable condition of the lower classes, the exploitation of the landed gentry etc.

Perumals of Mahadayapuram

A new epoch in the history of Kerala began in the 9th C. AD with the establishment of the second Chera kingdom and the rule of the Perumals. The rulers of the kingdom were called as the Perumals or at sometimes as Kulasekharas. They were an illustrious line of kings and ruled over Kerala from 800 AD to 1124 AD. They had founded their capital near the ancient city of Vanchi, close to the old harbour city of Muciris or Muziris, the present day Kodungallur. It was called Makotai or Mahodayapuram in Sanskrit works, Muziri by travellers and Muyirikode in inscriptions. Built around the great Siva temple of Tiruvanchikulam, the only pilgrim centre of the Saivaite Nayanars in Kerala, Mahodayapuram became a great metropolis, the seat of the Perumals who revived the glory of the early Cheras of Makotai and hence are called as the later Cheras and their kingdom as second Chera kingdom. They were used to be called Kulasekharas as the founder of this dynasty seems to be one Kulasekhara. "With the rule of the Kulasekharas of Mahodayapuram, Kerala emerged in the full limelight of history as the distinct political and cultural entity" The revival of the Chera kingdom in the 9th century may be regarded as a by-product of the Aryan Brahmin settlement and the symptom of the socio-political dominance that they had established.

The foundation of the Chera kingdom and the rule of the Perumals have to be linked with the growth of an agrarian society. The Brahmin settlements of Kerala were aided and supported by the local Naduvazi's (Chieftains). It resulted in the growth of a new social and economic relation which is quite unsuitable for the existing tribal social order. The distribution of Brahmin settlement and their interaction with one another created a situation of a 'state within a state' or a system outside the purview of tribal polity. A new form for political authority was the need of the hour. The Perumals were invested to fulfill this role-i.e. to ensure the consolidation of the Brahmins as land owners, ritual authority over the people. The new land owners were to be brought under the political control of the new rulers.

Features of administration

Monarchy was the most important political institution of the Chera kingdom. There was a high degree of pomp and pageantry associated with the person of the king. The king wore a gold crown studded with precious stones. The king was an autocrat, but his powers were limited by a counsel of ministers and scholars. The king held daily *darbar* to hear the problems of the common men and to redress them on the spot. The royal queen had a very important and privileged status and she took her seat by the side of the king in all religious ceremonies.

Another important institution was the *manram* which functioned in each village of the Chera kingdom. Its meetings were usually held by the village elders under a banyan tree, and helped in the local settlement disputes. The manrams were the venues for the village festivals as well. In the course of the imperial expansion of the Cheras the members of the royal family set up residence at several places of the kingdom. They followed the collateral system of succession according to which the eldest member of the family, wherever he lived, ascended the throne. Junior princes and heir-apparents (crown princes) helped the ruling king in the administration.

The Cheras had a well-equipped army which consisted of infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots. There was also an efficient navy. The Chera soldiers made offering to the war goddess Kottavai before any military operation. It was traditional when the Chera rulers were victorious in a battle to wear anklets made out of the crowns of the defeated rulers.

Trade guilds and land grants

The foreign travelers like Sulaiman and Masudi who visited Kerala in the 11th Century have testified to the economic activities and the consequent financial soundness of the kingdom. The economic prosperity was mainly achieved from the extensive foreign trade with West Asia and China. The hill products from the

Western Ghats carried down by the many rivers to natural harbours readily secured a market in West Asia and Europe. A number of Jewish, Christian and Muslim traders exploited the situation to their own advantage. As they possessed much wealth in gold, the native chieftains were prepared to overlook differences in faith and race and extended to them a warm welcome.

Kerala had a flourishing overseas trade with China during the period. China purchased articles like pepper, ivory, cinnamon, teakwood and pearls from this part of the country. They sold fishing-nets, proclaim goods and silks. The Chinese introduced trade articles such as Cheenavala, Cheena Bharani and Cheenachotti and Cheena Otam, articles which exist even today.

A remarkable feature of the age was the pivotal position occupied by the mercantile corporations and merchant guilds in the socio-economic life of the country. The most important of such merchant guilds were Manigramam, Anchuvannam and Valanchiyar. Manigramam was an association of merchants who transacted in Diamonds. Anchuvannam was a body of merchants who traded in five different commodities. Valanchiyar was an organisation, which carried on overseas trade. Inscriptions record the existence of such guilds. Manigramam is mentioned in the Chola inscription as a unit of Disai Aiyirathi Ainuttuvar, an international merchant network. Manigramam is mentioned first in Teresappalli copper plate where it is referred to as one of the Karalar of Kollam. The Panthalayini inscription, Thazhakkad Church inscription, Irinjalakuda inscription, Viraraghava Pattayam (1225) Payyannur Pattola (14th C)-all mention Manigramam. These records indicate that their activities spread to a vast area from Kollam to Ezhimala. From the Teresappalli copper plate, it may be inferred that Manigramam was an organisation of the Christians as Sapir Iso was a Christian. Anchu Vannam is also mentioned for the first time in Teresappally inscriptions. Along with Manigramam, it was the Karalar of Kollam. Jewish copper plate mentions Joseph Rabban, the Jew as the leader of Anchuvannam. The origin and development of this corporation is unknown.

These trade corporations functioned actively and contributed to the economic prosperity of the land. Even in the public life of the kingdom, they played a very important role. Their leaders like Mar Sapir Iso and Joseph Rabban came to the rescue of chera kings in times of war. Their status as leaders of corporations received official recognition from the ruler. They were not only exempted from taxation, but were granted many privileges, which they enjoyed in hereditary succession. Kerala inscriptions mention a number of other guilds such as Nanadesikal, Nalpathennayiravar, Patinenbhoomi, Disai Ayirathi Ainnuthavar and Patinettu Pattanatter. Nanadesikal and Valanchiyur were mentioned in the Eramam inscription of Bhaskararavi. Patinenbhoomi is mentioned in the Peruvemba inscription. Alathur and Thazhakkad inscriptions refer to Nanadesikal and others.

The Pantalayini inscription mentions Nalanjiyar. These guilds might have acted as itinerant units crossing the Western Ghats to the major ports of trade and producing centres. They formed into large caravans as a protective measure. Temples were the major nodal points for the activities of these corporations. They were the largest consumers for the products.

There was frequent interaction of Kerala merchants with other parts of the world. They made offerings to various temples in Tanjavur, Arcot and other places. It is recorded that a merchant hailing from Makotai built a Vishnu temple at Pagan (Burma). These show the migration of people from Kerala as members of the mercantile corporations. As much of the trade transactions were through immediate exchange, the use of coins was restricted. The major medium of exchange was Dinaram. Donations to temples were made in gold. Gold was exchanged for land also. Kalanju and Kanam were the normal measures of gold. Kasu, Achu and Palankesu were coins referred to in inscriptions.

It was a feudal society with a graded hierarchy with hereditary occupations and well defined duties and responsibilities that existed during the period under review. Proprietorship of land was closely related to political power and administration. In this period, Kerala was chiefly a land of agricultural villages. The scattered Brahmin settlements were better organized and more prosperous than the villages. The pyramidal structure of tenants, sub tenants, artisans, and serfs remained the same as in the Brahmin village. The tenants were expected to pay all sorts of dues to the land lord like Alkasu (slave money), Manayira (roof tax), Menippon (capitation fee), Iravucoru (to maintain a soldier), Talaivila (head price). They have also to pay customary dues like Onanel (Onam Dues), Patayani nel (dues for military tournament), skilled workers have to pay professional tax. The toddy tappers had to pay Talaikkanam and Enikkanam for the right of using the fether and the ladder. The oil mongers had to pay Kutanazhi. The merchants paid Ulkku (sales tax). There was also Pakudam (vehicle tax), Tulakkuli (weight tax), Thattarakuly (for godowns), Pantalkanam (for temporary sheds). Additional taxes were to be paid to erect ornamental arches and additional storeys. The state collected taxes even for wearing turbans, carrying palanquins, procession lamps and instruments for music. There was the universal system of Kazhcha.

Anchuvannam

The origin of this organization is not known it is said that they traded in five different items. And they were mentioned in the Teressapalli inscription along with manigramam.

Manigramam

Manigramam flourished in Tamil Nadu in the Pallava and Chola periods and was active in South-east Asia. It was an association of merchants who transacted in

diamonds, perhaps the term only means 'the great guild' and it traded in many commodities.

Valanchiyar

The Valanchiyar an organization which carried on trade transaction mainly with foreign goods

Nannadeshikal

The Nanadesi guild: were a group of various merchants. They find mention in the 14th century Tamil inscription recording the assurance of fair treatment by a local chief named Annapota Reddi. The Nanadesi guild and the Manigramam guild later joined the Ayyavole-500 guild

Nuttuvar

Nuttuvar is group of hundred and its multiples and the army was counted in this style. And there is reference of hundreds being maintained by local chieftains and traders. The Perumals had a well equipped army and navy. He had a capital force (Maulasainya) consisting of 1000 Nairs under Patamal Nayar (Captain). Each of these captains had 10 soldiers (Chekons) under his control. Similarly the Naduvazhis had 300,500,600 or 700 soldiers under them with the same type of organisation. These feudal forces raised from the cultivating classes were used for protection of property and supervision of local administration. To consider such bodies to be democratic assemblies is far from the truth. Epigraphic records clearly state that they formed an organised militia characteristic of the feudal age. The groups of nair and Thiyya soldiers known as Changatam might have risen out of such bonds. There were also chavers, suicide squads who made their first appearance in the course of the Chola Wars. There were military gymnasiums (Kalaris) to train the youths in the art of warfare. The Perumals also had a navy which cooperated with the army in times of military operations. The Chola inscriptions testify to the effective role of the Chera navy in times of war.

Uralar

Uralar were normally Brahmins having the sole authority in temple administration and its lands and they looked after the entire temple activities. The temple during medieval Kerala is concerned it acted in many roles. It was the center of power and center of production and distribution and acted as the royal treasury. The Janmi System is one of the most dominant features of Kerala society during the medieval period. The medieval Kerala society was dominated by the land owning Brahmin class who worked as an imperium in imperio. The origin of the word Janmi, There is no such word in Sanskrit having the connotation of land owner. According to Sankarasmruti, the word 'Janmam' is derived from the word Jalman which in turn is derived from the root Jal. This view is not accepted by modern historians. According to Prof. Elamkulam the word Janmi is derived from the word Janmam right meaning life time. Before the trusteeship of temples became

hereditary, there was an interim period when that position was held by a person during his Janmam or life time. It was from that Janmam right that the term Janmi was derived. The right of trustees over the property under their control was limited to their Janmam or life time.

The origin of the Janmi system can be traced back to the Sangam Age. The Sangam works allude to the existence of private property but not to the complex Janmi System of later days. The traditional view says that the system was created by Parasurama who bestowed all the land on the Brahmins. This view is not accepted by modern historians. Elamkulam ascribes the origin of landlordism to the Chola Chera war of the 11th Century. The war led to a situation in which the Brahmins came to acquire a dominant position in the socio-economic life. As the people were preoccupied with war, the Namputiris as Uralars of the temple began to manage temple affairs. In the meantime the land owning tenants transferred their land to the Brahmins and the temple. Such lands enjoyed freedom from devastation by the enemy forces in times of war. In the above circumstances the Namputiri Brahmins acquired over lordship over both Brahmaswam and Devaswam lands. They came to acquire the status of wealthy and powerful landlords or Janmis. The origin of the Janmi system is attributed to the above development.

Such owners of land were known as Uralars and those who took up land for cultivation were known as the Karalar. The Uralar and the Karalar formed the feudal society of Kerala during the medieval period. The Uralar-Karalar dominance became strengthened during the age of anarchy that followed the decline of the Perumal kingdom. With the feudal social formation, a hierarchical social structure of Uralar Karalar, middlemen, the actual cultivator and craftsmen emerged in the society. When the material status was joined with the customary social status, the feudal relations achieved a new dimension. The centres of worship were centralised in to agrarian economy. Thus the term feudal is being used to characterise the medieval Kerala society. The production relation that developed with land as the chief productive force paved the way for the formation of the feudal society. However the term feudalism as applied in the European or Indian context cannot be applied to Kerala. In the absence of a better term, historians (D.D Kosambi, R.S. Sharma) still uses the term even to denote social formations in Kerala. There were no land grants in Kerala as elsewhere. There was the Namputiri-Nair alliance here. Prof. Elamkulam has characterised the medieval Kerala society dominated by these two castes as Janmi system.

Karalar

Kerala's agrarian structure was the result of the mutual relationships of Uralar, Karalar intermediaries, hereditary occupational groups and ryots and their rights on resources of production and commodities. The term Uralar is used to describe the land owning class while the word Karalar is used to describe the

temple tenants. Uralar is the head of the Ur. Families of large land owners are also called Uralar. Uralars are mostly Brahmins. The villages in which they live and assemble are called Ur. A person becomes Uralar by membership of this body. Uralar also functioned as the managing body of the temple centre in the Ur. Uralar gave land on rent (pattam) to Karalar. Karalar is expected to give a fixed sum of the produce of the land to Uralar. Karanmma right cannot be transferred. It naturally could go to the descendant.

The land of temple functionaries other than Uralars called viruti would also be held as Karanma. The Karalar had under him a number of labouring groups such as Izharar and Thachar. However they have no rights over the land. Land lord-tenant relations were complete with Uralar and Karalar. Temples are vested with the ownership of lands. They earned huge income as Pattam. Such incomes were redistributed among temple functionaries for expenses connected with offerings, feedings etc. The Karalar had to bear the burden of all these expenses.

Bhakti saints

The south Indian bhakti movement was an attempt to counter the growth of Jainism and Buddhism in South India with the support of Royal families like Pandya, Kadampas and Chalukyas. In Kerala the movement started with the Perumals. The Saivite Nayanars set up 'Tali' or purified temples. Earlier they used Tamil and Sanskrit and later Malayalam to propagate their ideas. Epics became popular in Kerala. And they were able to defeat the Jain and Buddhist monks in discussions. The Bhakti Cult was one of the major ideological features of the emerging society of South India during the Age of the Perumals. The Perumals, unlike their predecessors in the Sangam Age were dedicated Hindu devotees to Vishnu and Siva. Absolute devotion to the Supreme God was considered the major means to attain personal bliss and the devotion came to be concentrated around the emerging temples. Hindu gods like Vishnu and Siva were the objects of devotion. The Bhakti movement brought the cultural transformation of South India in many ways. It replaced or absorbed the popular cults in general and the Tinai – centred ritual forms in particular. It provided the ideological framework for the growing authority of temples and also new forms of worship and ritual. It helped in decreasing the influence of Buddhism and Jainism in South India. It helped in the establishment of the authority of the temples over the rulers.

One of the twelve Alvars and two of the thirteen Nayanars hailed from Kerala. Kulasekhara Alvar the founder of Kulasekhara kingdom was a famous saint. He was a scholar in Tamil and Sanskrit. The mukundamala and perumal thirumozhi are belongs to him. Cheraman Perumal Nayanar also worked in this field; his story is narrated by Sekkilar in his work Periyapuram. Viralminda Nayanar was also a Keralite.

Alvars and Nayanars

The alvars, also spelt as alvars were Tamil poet-saints of South India who espoused bhakti (devotion) to the Hindu Supreme god Vishnu or his avatar Krishna in their songs of longing, ecstasy and service. They are venerated especially in Vaishnavism, which regards Vishnu or Krishna as the Supreme Being.

Many modern academics place the Alvars date between 5th century to 10th century CE, however traditionally the Alvars are considered to have lived between 4200 BCE - 2700 BCE. Orthodoxy posits the number of alvars as ten, though there are other references that include Andal and Madhurakavi Alvar, making the number twelve. Andal is the only female saint-poet in the 12 Alvars. Together with the contemporary sixty three Shaiva Nayanars, they are among the most important saints from Tamil Nadu.

The devotional outpourings of Alvars, composed during the early medieval period of Tamil history, helped revive the bhakti movement, through their hymns of worship to Vishnu and his avatars. They praised the Divya Desams, 108 "abodes" (temples) of these Vaishnava deities. The poetry of the Alvars echoes bhakti to God through love, and in the ecstasy of such devotions they sang hundreds of songs which embodied both depth of feeling and felicity of expressions. The collection of their hymns is known as Divya Prabandha. The Bhakti literature that sprang from Alvars has contributed to the establishment and sustenance of a culture that broke away from the ritual-oriented Vedic religion and rooted itself in devotion as the only path for salvation. In addition they helped to make the Tamil religious life independent of a knowledge of Sanskrit. As part of the legacy of the Alvars, five Vaishnava philosophical traditions (sampradayas) have developed at the later stages

Alvars are considered the twelve supreme devotees of Vishnu, who were instrumental in popularising Vaishnavism in the Tamil-speaking regions. The alvars were influential in promoting the Bhagavata cult and the two Hindu epics, namely, Ramayana and Mahabharata. The religious works of these saints in Tamil, songs of love and devotion, are compiled as Nalayira Divya Prabandham containing 4000 verses and the 108 temples revered in their songs are classified as Divya desam. The verses of the various azhwars were compiled by Nathamuni (824 - 924 AD), a 10th C Vaishnavite theologian, who called it the "Dravida Veda or Tamil Veda". The songs of Prabandam are regularly sung in all the Vishnu temples of South India daily and also during festivals.

The saints had different origins and belonged to different castes. As per tradition, the first three alvars, Poigai, Bhutha and Pey were born miraculously.

Tirumizhisai was the son of a sage; Thondaradi, Mathurakavi, Peria and Andal were from brahmin caste; Kulasekhara was a Kshatria, Namm was from a cultivator family, Tirupana from Tamil Panar community and Tirumangai fromkashwar community. Divya Suri Saritra by Garuda-Vahana Pandita (11th century), Guruparamparaprabavam by Pinbaragiya Perumal Jiyar, Periya tiru mudi adaivu by Anbillai Kandadiappan, Yatindra Pranava Prabavam by Pillai Lokacharya, commentaries on Divya Prabandam, Guru Parampara (lineage of Gurus) texts, temple records and inscriptions give a detailed account of the alavars and their works. According to these texts, the saints were considered incarnations of some form of Vishnu.

According to traditional account by Manavala Mamunigal, the first three azhwars namely Poigai, Bhoothath and Pey belong toDwapara Yuga (before 4200 BC). It is widely accepted by tradition and historians that the trio are the earliest among the twelve azhwars. Along with the three Saiva nayanmars, they influenced the ruling Pallava kings, creating a Bhakti movement that resulted in changing the religious geography from Buddhism and Jainism to these two sects of Hinduism in the region

The Nayanars were another group of 63 saints (also saint poets) in the 6th to 8th century who were devoted to the Hindu god Shiva . They, along with the Alvars, influenced the Bhakti movement in Tamil. The names of the Nayanars were first compiled by Sundaranar. The list was expanded by Nambiyandar Nambi during his compilation of material by the poets for the Tirumurai collection, and would include Sundarar himself and Sundarar's parents

The list of the Nayanars was initially compiled by Sundarar (Sundararmurthi). In his poem, Tiruthonda Thogai, he sings, in eleven verses, the names of the Nayanar saints up to Karaikkal Ammeiyar, and refers to himself as "the servant of servants". The list did not go into the detail of the lives of the saints, which were described in detail in works such as Tevaram.

In the 10th century, king Raja Raja Chola I collected Tevaram literature after hearing excerpts of the hymns in his court. His priestNambiyandar Nambi began compiling the hymns into a series of volumes called the Tirumurai. He arranged the hymns of three saint poets Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar as the first seven books which he called the Tevaram. He compiled Manikkavacakar'sTirukovayar and Tiruvacakam as the eighth book, the 28 hymns of nine other saints as the ninth book, the Tirumandiram ofTirumular and 40 hymns by 12 other poets as the tenth book. In the eleventh book, he created the Tirutotantar Tiruvanthathi (also known as Tirutontar Antadi, literally Necklace of Verses on the Lord's Servants), which

consisted of 89 verses, with a verse devoted to each of the saints. With the addition of Sundarar and his parents to the sequence, this became the canonical list of the 63 saints. In the 12th century, Sekkizhar added a twelfth volume to the Tirumurai called Periya Puranam in which he expands further on the stories of each of 63 Nayanars.

The Nayanars were from various backgrounds, including Channars, Vellalas, oilmongers, Brahmins, and nobles. Along with the twelve Vaishnava Alvars, they are regarded the important saints from Tamil Nadu.

Proliferation of temples

Kerala has no gigantic structures or paraphernalia. Kerala temples are noted for their simplicity and unadulterated forms of worship. In medieval times the temple played a constructive role in society. The temple is a unique institution in Kerala. They began to emerge in Kerala round 8th Century AD. The earliest temples were cave temples, cut in to single rock. Such cave temples could be seen in places like Irunilamkod, Thrikkur, Kallil, Kaviyur, Thirunandikkara, Vizhinjam and Chitral. In these temples, images are made on the walls of small chambers, cut into a single rock. The sculpture in the rock cut temples of Kerala resembles those of the Pallavas and the Pandyas. The structural temples came to be erected by the 10th Century. These temples were built of laterite or granite and have elaborate structures. They began to emerge by 9th-10th centuries. The major temples of this category were Thrichambaram, Tirumittakod, Tirunelli, Thirunavaya, Ayranikulam, Thiruvanchikulam, Thrikkakara, Thiruvalla, Thrikkodithanam, Perunna. These temples have a common architecture style. They consists of a Grabha-Griha, Mukhamandapam, Thidappilly, Chuttampalam Vatilmadam and Kuthampalam. These temples emerged to serve as the ritualistic and social centres of the emerging agrarian society.

Medieval Kerala Temple have manifold functions to perform and activities to engage. **Ritualistic Functions:** The temple has to perform ritualistic function. The ritual offering and ceremonies were made to fulfil the primary needs of an agrarian society like the control of climate and seasons. These ritualistic functions are monopolised by the Brahmins who alone are permitted to enter into the Sanctum Sanctorum where such rituals were performed. Another function of the temple was normal worship through chanting of hymns and prayers. The function of preparing Nivedyam is performed in the Thidapilli (Temple Kitchen). Mulayara prepared the items of the various festivals inside the temple. The Kuthampalam provided space for various performing arts. Thus temple became an assembly of social relations, a system in which the agricultural production and distribution was ensured through ritual means: Redistribution of the surplus products was made among the Brahmins. Ideological function was ensured through devotional forms, festivals and

performances which are the means of self expression of the society. Thus the main functions of the temples were ritual and redistribution of the surplus.

Temples also functioned as educational centres. This function of the temple is mentioned in the inscriptions of Parthivapuram, Kanthalur, Thiruvalla and Muzhikkalam. Temples also functioned as money lending centres and nodal agencies of trade. They also functioned as dispensaries or Athura Salais. In short medieval Kerala temples had manifold functions such as ritual, worship, feeding centre, educational and cultural centre, money lending and trading centre and also as redistribution centre.

Medieval Kerala temple has an important role as the biggest landowner. The temple has vast property. The ownership of vast agricultural cultivable land is vested in temples. Such lands are known as Devaswam lands.

Many a medieval Kerala temple acted as an employer. The hierarchy of authority in temples and the ownership of vast areas of land and other forms of wealth enabled the temple to offer employment to many. The Karalars were actually workers under the temple. While the Uralars functioned as controllers of temples. Such persons as the Perumal, Koyil Adhikarikal and Nadu Vazhis were associated with temples. There were various kinds of temple servants. They are Bhattas, officials, artists and menial servants. Bhattars were learned teachers proficient in the Puranas. The officers performed rituals and conducted the management of the temple. The performance of rituals is the duty of Tantri. Melsathi and Kilsant. The managerial functions were performed by such officials as Putuval and Variyar. They appear in all major decisions of the temple. The temple also employed dancers, drummers and their artists. Women dancers too were mentioned. The Chokur and Nedumpuram Tali inscription give information about them. The Chakkiyars and Nangiyars performed Kuthu and Kudiyattam while the drummers performed in five instruments (Chenda, Timila, Chengala, Kaithalam and Kahalam (Kuzhal)). Menial servants are also employed. They include guards, sweepers, leave gatherers, dish washers.

However, the main function of the temples was the redistribution of the surplus. They served as the distributive centre of the emerging agrarian society. The primary need of an agrarian community was fulfilled by the rituals and ceremonies in the temple. The temples received huge income from land. The surplus was redistributed to the needy in the form of feeding centres. The temple thus became an agency, which ensured the agricultural production and redistribution. Redistribution of the surplus product was made among the Brahmins. "Thus the temple became an assembly of social relations, a system in which the agricultural production and distribution was ensured, ideological function was ensured through devotional forms; festivals and performances provided means of self expression of the society".

The temples were also centres of cultural activities. Koothampalam was designed to be the centre of performing arts. They are theatres in temples where Koothu is performed. They are specially constructed in the temple premises. The members of the Chakiyar family alone have the right to perform Koothu in temples. It is a performing art peculiar to Kerala. It is performed in temples. Drawing his themes from the Puranas, the Chakiyar assumes the role of all the characters and impress the audience with appropriate actions movements and gestures. The Koothu is marked throughout by humour, satire and Sarcasm. In the course of exposition of Puranic stories the Chakiyar draws parallels from contemporary life. The Chakiyar has the privilege of immunity from interruptions and prerogative of criticising even high dignitaries.

There are three forms of Koothu-Prabandham Koothu, Nangiyar Koothu and Kudiyattom. Prabandham Koothu is pure narration with explanation while Nangiyar Koothu is pure acting. Koodiyattom is a theatrical representation. Its peculiarity is that both Chakiyar and Nangiyar act together.

Devadasi system

Devadasi system means the dedication of young girls to the service of god in temples. The Sanskrit term devadasi or Tamil term devaradigal means dancing girl. Malley- “Modern India and the West” (Oxford 1968) devadasi’s are a profession of holy women dedicated to the service of god, to whom they were united in symbolic marriage and before whom it is their duty to sing and dance. There was a ritualistic marriage between the God and dasi. In the presence of Priest and members of her family a tali was around her neck which was already tied round in idol or a sword for a special puja. Edgar Thurston (Delhi 1975) the marriage was known as Pottu Kuthu’ in Tamil regions. After marriage she became the property of the temple.

Attention to the studies of the devadasies was emerged in south India by the end of 19th Century. The British scholars were interested in the discovery of sisters and monks similar to the monastic system in Kerala. The socio religious reform movement in south India gave special attention to the attack on devadasi system. The Bharatha Dharma samaj, Theosophical Society, Women’s Federation of India etc.. Wrote and thought against the system many old magazine also propagated against this. Mahatma Gandhi wrote several articles against this. His swarajya and Harijan created an awareness regarding this.

The first reference to dancing girls in temples is found in Kalidasa's "Meghadhoot". It is said that dancing girls were present at the time of worship in the Mahakal Temple of Ujjain. Some scholars are of the opinion that probably the custom of dedicating girls to temples became quite common in the 6th century CE,

as most of the Puranas containing reference to it have been written during this period. Several Puranas recommended that arrangements should be made to enlist the services of singing girls for worship at temples.

By the end of 10th century, the total number of devadasis in many temples was in direct proportion to the wealth and prestige of the temple. During the medieval period, they were regarded as a part of the normal establishment of temples; they occupied a rank next only to priests and their number often reached high proportions. For example, there were 400 devadasis attached to the temples at Tanjore and Travancore.

Local kings often invited temple dancers to dance in their courts, the occurrence of which created a new category of dancers, rajadasis, and modified the technique and themes of the recitals. A devadasi had to satisfy her own soul while she danced unwatched and offered herself to the god, but the rajadasi's dance was meant to be an entertainment.

The popularity of devadasis seems to have reached its pinnacle around 10th and 11th century CE. The rise and fall in the status of devadasis can be seen to be running parallel to the rise and fall of Hindu temples. Invaders from West Asia attained their first victory in India at the beginning of the second millennium CE. The destruction of temples by invaders started from the north-western borders of the country and spread through the whole of the country. Thereafter the status of the temples fell very quickly in North India and slowly in South India. As the temples became poorer and lost their patron kings, and in some cases were destroyed, the devadasis were forced into a life of poverty, misery, and, in many cases, prostitution.

Many scholars maintain that the devadasi system is not described in the holy scriptures of Hinduism as the scriptures do not refer to any form of sacred prostitution or *temple girls*. Whether the devadasi girls engaged in sexual services is debated, however, as temple visitors touching or speaking to the girls was considered an offence.

Another theory for the practice of parents dedicating their daughters to a temple is the belief that they would receive moksha or salvation

Traditionally, no stigma was attached to the devadasi or to her children, and other members of their caste received them on terms of equality. The children of a devadasi were considered legitimate and devadasis themselves were outwardly indistinguishable from married women of their own community. Chakyar-s and Nangyaramma-s of Kerala, who performed similar duties, for example, have enjoyed good social status.

Furthermore, a devadasi was believed to be immune from widowhood and was called *akhanda saubhagyavati* ("woman never separated from good fortune"). Since she was wedded to a divine deity, she was supposed to be one of the especially welcome guests at weddings and was regarded as a bearer of good fortune. At weddings, people would receive a string of the tali (wedding lock) prepared by her, threaded with a few beads from her own necklace. The presence of a devadasi on any religious occasion in the house of an upper caste member was regarded as sacred and she was treated with due respect and was presented with gifts.

The Hindu revival movement consciously stepped outside the requirements of state electoral politics and western scientific traditions. The movement received strong support from the Theosophical Society of India, whose anti-official stance and strong interest in Indian home rule bound them with the revival of dance and music.

Pioneers like Madam H.P. Blavatsky and Colonel H.S. Olcott, the founders of the Theosophical movement, had undertaken an extensive tour of South India and propagated the revival of devadasi institutions and the associated art of sadir. They gained support from some sections of the native elite by their public denouncement of western Christian morality and materialism. In 1882, the Theosophical Society of India had set up its headquarters in Adyar, Chennai with the set goal of working towards the restoration of India's ancient glory in art, science, and philosophy.

The support later given to a revival of sadir as Bharatnatyam by the Theosophical Society was largely due to the efforts of Rukmini Devi Arundale, an eminent theosophist, and E. Krishna Iyer. Arundale, trained in ballet, sought to reappropriate the devadasi dance traditions and bring them into a context which could be perceived as respectable. She did this by changing the dance repertoire to exclude pieces perceived as erotic in their description of a deity. She also systematized the dance in a way that incorporated the extension and use of space associated with dance traditions such as ballet. The product of this transformation was Bharatnatyam, which she then began to teach professionally at a school she established in Madras called Kalakshetra. Bharatnatyam is commonly propagated as a very ancient dance tradition associated with the *Natyasastra*. However, in reality, Bharatnatyam as it is performed and known today is a product of Arundale's endeavour to remove the devadasi dance tradition from the perceived immoral context of the devadasi community and bring it into the upper caste performance milieu.

The Theosophical Society Adyar provided the necessary funds and organization to back Arundale as the champion for India's renaissance in the arts, especially Bharatnatyam. The revivalists tried to present the idealistic view of the institution of devadasi. According to their view, it was the model of the ancient temple dancer as pure, sacred, and chaste women, as they were originally.

They stressed that the dance of devadasi was a form of "natya yoga" to enhance an individual's spiritual plane. The revivalists wanted to preserve the traditional form of sadir dance by purifying it. As a consequence of purification, some modifications were introduced into the content of the dance, which was strongly criticized by dancer Balasaraswati and other prominent representatives of the traditional devadasi culture. The revivalists mostly belonged to Brahmin dominated Theosophical circles. Many Brahmin girls started to learn the dance from devadasis.

Sankaracharya

Sankaracharya is the greatest philosopher India has produced since Gautama the Buddha. This great Advaita philosopher gave a great impetus to Hindu religious activity during the Perumal age. A younger contemporary of Kulasekhara Alwar and an elder contemporary of Cheraman Perumal, Sankara lived in the 8th-9th Century (788 – 820 AD). He was born as a Namputiri Brahmin at Kaipill Iellam in Kalady on the banks of Periyar. The full details of Sankara's life are not known, but a few landmarks are available. His father Sivaguru died when Sankara was five years old. His widowed mother Aryambal had send him to Bhattarmana and Udayatungeswaram. But Sankara was not satisfied with the system of Kumarila and Prabhakara. His sensitive mind was pained at the sectarian controversies that degraded religion. Burning with a passion to discover the truth, Sankara declined king Rajasekharan's offer of gold and position. He left Kerala at the early age of 16, to undertake a pilgrimage to all centres of Hinduism. In the course of this itinerary, he came in to contact with Govindapada. After knowing the four cardinal truths from the Guru, Sankara went to Benares where he discovered the truth that he had been seeking". That which is experienced through the senses is not real: "That alone is real which remains unchanged: while one is awake, asleep or dreaming, and which is found in all, from the highest Brahmin to the lowest ant". In the light of this discovery, Sankara wrote a commentary on the Brahmasutras.

Now Sankara started on his Dig Vijaya, Proceeding to Prayag, he met Kumarila-Bhatta and then Mandana Mishra (at Mahishamati). Later he proceeded to Srisaila, Gokarna, Mookambi and Sringeri. At Sringeri, Sankara built his first mutt called Saradapitha. Returning to Kerala, he met the Perumal and continued his journey visiting Rameswaram, Madurai, Jambreswaram, Chidambaram and Kanchi. At Kanchi he laid the foundation of Kamakotipitha. Then he moved to

Tirupati, Vidharbha and Karnataka. In the course of these journeys, he defeated Mandana Mishra, the Bhairavas, Virasaivates and others. Proceeding to Saurashtra, he established the Kalikapith Math at Dwaraka. Proceeding to Ujjain he won over the Karmavadis and Madhyamika Buddhists. He also visited Assam and Nepal, Kosaala, Anga and Vanga and founded the Vimalapith Math at Puri.

Having won all rivals, Sankara planted the banner of Vedanta in the temple of Saraswathi at Kashmir. He defeated the followers of Kanada with their atomic philosophy of Gautama of Kapila, the formulator of the Sankhya System of Budha's teachings of Kumarila Bhatta and Prabhakara, the Jains and the Pashandas. Finally Sankara ascended the throne of Universal Learning at Kashmir and established the Jyothirpith madh at Badarinath. Returning to the land of his birth Sankara died at Thrissur at the age of thirtytwo. Sankara propagated his philosophy of Advaita Vedanta. The cardinal point of this philosophy was that there is nothing real in this world except Brahman, the all pervading cosmic force. Sankara looked up on the human soul as part of the Brahman and all material objects as mere illusions or Maya. The Advaita Vedanta has its roots in the Upanishadic teachings. Advaita reconciles the Puranic religion with the grant truth of the Upanishads.

Sankara was a great reformer of Hinduism. He gave the organisational set up to Hinduism. He borrowed some of the popular features of Buddhism like monasticism. He laid the foundation of a strong Brahmanical papal organisation by setting up four Hindu Madhs in four corners of India - Badari in the north, Sringeri in the South, Puri in the East and Dwaraka in the West. In Kerala too he founded for Mudhs at Thrissur. The first Presidents of these Mudhs were his principal disciples. To propagate his teachings, Sankara organised a regular body of missionaries (Sanyasins). His ideas were carried to Europe by Max Muller in the 19th century. And by Vivekananda to America in the early 20th century.

Sankara was a remarkable devotional poet as well as a perceptive commentator of the classic religious texts of Hinduism. In his works, he developed the doctrine of Advaita Vedantha with its monotheism. He was also responsible to establish the pre-eminence of the Namputiris and in doing so solidified the pyramidal structure of the caste system. To the historian, Sankara's religious reforms are more important than his philosophy. His teachings provided the intellectual basis to Hinduism. The mudhs he founded provided Hinduism with an effective organisational frame work. It provided Hinduism with a machinery to protect it, a fortress to guard it. Sankara is great in all respects. As a poet he is yet to be surpassed in the sublimity and music of his effusions: As a linguist par excellence, he has no parallel; as a debater, he was invincible. As a thinker, he even surpassed the Buddha. The genius of Kerala for cultural synthesis found its expression in the philosophy of Sankara". His was an attempt to reconcile the best

elements of Hinduism and Buddhism. Sankara has been the manifestation of a movement for religious revival. One sees in him a youth on fire, an intrepid debater, a shrewd political genius, a calm philosopher and a mystic.

Disintegration of Perumal kingdom

The disintegration of the second Chera kingdom had taken place during the 12th Century. This had been attributed to two main factors. The continuous Chera Chola war resulted in the disintegration. The Chera Chola conflict weakened the Chera power and a central authority was rendered difficult. The story of the Hundred Years War is not tenable. The Cholas only conducted intermediary raids over parts of Kerala. The Cheras later accepted the overlordship of the Cholas. The raid of Kulothunga Chola was confined only to the southern extreme of Kerala and could have effected the rest of the kingdom.

Tradition attributes the decline to the partition of the kingdom by the last of the Chera rulers. The Cheraman legend has it that the last Perumal viz. Cheraman partitioned his country and there after proceeded to Mecca to embrace Islam. The Cheraman story is not tenable. There is nothing to show that the Perumal exercised absolute authority of the land in order to divide the kingdom. Perumal held the position at the apex of a complex system of land relations and thus could be sustained only in so far as the land relations required it.

The disintegration had taken place due to the factors associated with the growth of agrarian society. The spread of Brahmin settlements, rise of new temple Sanketams, growth of the Naduvazhis and their association with local chieftains, overseas trade and its impact on the fortunes of the governing class, role of the local assemblies in preserving the agrarian order – these and other factors were linked to the Chera disintegration. In fact the weak central authority of Cheras was replaced by the stable local authority of the Naduvazhis who became the centre of the new agrarian order.

Module-III

Age of Naduvazhis

Formation of Nadus and Swarupams

The Age of Swarupams and Naduvazhis comprising the middle ages in Kerala (1100 – 1800) began with the disintegration of the second Chera kingdom. The age witnesses the emergence of localised rulers of different Nadus and their original families known as Swarupams. The Chera inscriptions mention a few such Naduvazhis. The political scene of Kerala was dominated by these local chieftains. The most important of such Nadus were Venad, Kochi, Kozhikode and Kolathunad. These chieftains had an important position in the newly introduced system of government.

Swarupams ruling houses that control the Nadus. They were large joint families. Their political authority was organised on the basis of Kuru (Sincerity). The Chera inscriptions allude to the existence of Kuruvazhcha. As big landlords, the swarupams received dues from their land, and tolls from trading centres. The Swarupams ruled the Nadus. In course of time new Swarupams developed and they brought in to being new Nadus (Eg Desinganadu, Vettathunad). The important Swarupams, however were Thrippappur (Venad), Perumpadappu (Kochi), Nediyruppu (Kozhikode), Kolam (Kolathunad) and Arangoth (Valluvanad).

Although the Perumal was the overlord of Kerala, (Keraladhinadha) he did not administer the entire kingdom directly. For administrative convenience, the kingdom was divided into a number of Nadus (provinces). Each Nadu had its own hereditary or nominated governor known as the Naduvazhi. Thus the great feudatories were the hereditary governors of the 14 Nadus in to which the kingdom was divided. The 14 Nadus were Kolathunad, Purkizhnadu, Kurimbranad, Eranadu, Valluvanad, Kizhmalainadu, Vempolinad, Venad, O danad, Nantuzhinad, Munjinad, Kalkarainadu, Nedumporayurnadu and Polanad. In time of war, the feudatories were called to the capital for counsel and assistance. They led their own contingent of soldier in battle. None of these governors seem to have an independent status as they were generally appointed by the Perumal. The Naduvazhis were controlled in their domains by local assemblies called Munnuttavar and Arunuttavar, besides the Koyil Adhikari from the centre. These local assemblies seems to have a decisive voice in the administration of the Nadus. Each Nadu was subdivided in to a number of Desam was under a Desa vazhi. The Desavazhi were controlled by the local kuttams. The lowest territorial unit of the kingdom was the Kara. It was under the control of village Panchayats

The rule of the Naduvazhis marked the end of Kerala as a politically unified state. The Naduvazhis and Swarupams exerted a powerful influence in the newly emerged polity. The Age also witnessed the emergence of the Janmi system the

ascendancy of the priestly class. Politically sterile and culturally unfruitful, the Naduvazhi era witnessed the swansong of the old order, pushing Kerala to the lime light of modern history.

Venad

Venad was one of the most powerful kingdoms that arose following the disintegration of the Chera kingdom of Makotai. Venad means the land of Vel Chieftains. They controlled the agrarian tracts from Kollam to Nanchinadu. During the early Sangam age, Venad was part of the Ay kingdom. In the Perumal age, Venad had the status of a feudatory power. It got an independent status only after the 12th Century. During this period, they shifted their power from Kiliperur to Thripparappu. They shifted that centre with the object of controlling the resources of Thripparappu which was already a mercantile town. They have also acquired control over the economically important temple of Padmanabha at Thiruanantapuram.

Ayyan Atikal Tiruvatikal was the first prominent ruler of Venad. The Teresappally copper plate (849 AD) had immortalised his name in History. Sri Vallabhakotha, another Venad ruler is associated with the Mampalli copper plate (974 AD). The Thrikkodithanam temple inscription and the Jewish copper plate (1000 AD) mention Govardhana Marthanda as the third ruler of Venad. Venad passed through a period of stress and strain during the Chera-Chola conflict.

Rama Varma Kulasekhara, the last of the Perumals of Mahodayapuram was the first ruler of the Venad royal house. He shifted his headquarters from Kudangallur to Kollam. His successors Vira Kerala Varma and Kotharavi conquered Kottar and Nanjinad from the Pandyas and established the supremacy of Venad. Their successors Vira Ravi Varma and Aditya Varma introduced a good system of government. The inscriptions of the time – Kilimanur, Manalikkara and Vellayani – mention the name of the successors. By their time the Pandyas established their supremacy over Venad. It was left to Ravi Varma Kulasekhara to set his house in order and to assert his authority over adversaries.

Ravi Varma Kulasekhara (1299 – 1314)

Ravi Varma Kulasekhara is the most outstanding king of Venad. His reign is remarkable for innumerable conquests, settled administration, economic prosperity, religious development and cultural ethos. The inscriptions of his reign found scattered in such places as Trivandrum, Kanchi, Poonamalle and Srirangam give us information about his achievements. Ravi Varma ascended the throne at a time when the Pandyas were dominating South Indian politics and Malik kafur was attempting the first Muslim inroads in to South India. Ravi Varma began his conquests by attacking the Pandyas and ascending as the emperor of South India at Kanchi (1312). Ravi Varma undertook the South Indian conquests mainly to prevent a repetition of the Muslim invasions of South India. In effecting his

conquests, he played the role of Defender of the Hindu Faith against Islam, a role that the Hoysala Ballalas and Vijayanagar Rayas played later. He was not only firm in battle (Sangramadhira), but also a patron of scholars and poets. He patronized the authors of Unnunilandesam and Lilathilakam. He is called “Dakshina Bhoja”, Samudrabandhu and Kavibhushana attended his court. A devout Hindu, he patronised temples. Venad attained economic prosperity under him and also social progress. Kollam became the premier port of trade on the West Coast. In short, both in war and peace, Ravi Varma proved his metal. He shoots across the political horizon of South India like a flashing meteor and he had a lasting place among the most illustrious rulers of Venad.

We get a glimpse of the political, social and religious conditions of Venad from the accounts of foreign travelers and also from inscriptions. The king had vast powers, but restricted by local assemblies and customs. He had a cavalry force and minted coins as is testified to by Ma Huan. Venad rulers held a vast area from Tovala to Kallada and beyond, to Tamil areas. Marco Polo (13th C) had testified to the economic prosperity of the land. Sulaiman the merchant describes Kollam as the most preferred port in South India as it traded in spices like pepper and ginger. It was an age of Brahmin domination and temples and Salais speak of other religious atmosphere in the kingdom. Thus Venad enjoyed benefits of liberal administration, social progress, material prosperity and religious harmony.

Expansion of agriculture

More land was brought under cultivation in medieval Kerala and better techniques were used in the process of agricultural production, both in cash crops and food crops. As a result of the growth of the production capacity the production also increased. In the absence of a central authority, developing regional powers granted landed areas to military leaders, by way of service tenure. The military leaders in the local areas were mainly Nair with their sub caste like Nambiar, Panikkar, Kurup, Nayanar, Menokki, Achan etc. These military leaders were given the power to exercise military administrative and judicial functions, in their respective areas. These Nair military had control and command over the peasants belonging to lower castes, who had worked in the former's land. So it was the expansion of agriculture, both in terms of extent and productivity that helped for the growth of local power centres. Since the consolidation of the agricultural village system without any fundamental changes, except the proliferations of sub caste caused by the developing divisions of labour, the caste mechanism functioned as a political structure

Emergence of village communities

Along with the growth of swarupam and Nadus in the medieval period, there occurred a shift of power centres from the earlier royal courts to the regional and local areas in Kerala. During this period, a wide variety of political structures and

power units came up in the various parts of the state. These local power centres had different organisational forms and nomenclatures. The names of these local centres are often confusing as their powers are usually over-lapping. However the predominant local power centres were the 'Desom' and 'Thara' and 'Taravad' as the family unit.

The local power centres had an agrarian base as the resources derived from the agricultural base was the significant factor for the growth of the local centres. In fact the strength of the local power centres depended upon the ability of these centres in mobilizing wealth from the agricultural field and other resources. In the process of the mobilization of wealth an alliance was formed between the Naduvazhis, the Brahmin and the intermediary class, usually the Nairs.

The household unit known as the 'Taravad' was the basic local power centre in medieval Kerala. Taravad was a joint family in which the members of the blood relations lived together. Most of the Nair Taravad had vast areas of both Parambu and paddy fields. The Taravad property was held collectively and no individual member had any right to claim his or her share in it. The head of the Taravad was called 'Karanavar' who being the eldest male member of the joint family. The eldest female member of the joint family or the Taravad was known as the 'Karanavathi'. Though Karanavar was the power centre in the Taravad, the Karanavathi had her own part in the affairs of the Taravad.

The Karanavar kept the entire agricultural product and other wealth of the Taravad under his custody and it was he who decided the ratio of food grains, oil, cloth and other amenities of life to the members of the Taravad according to their position in the family hierarchy and grade. In fact the picture of the Karanavar in the Taravad in the traditional set up was absolute. He was legally responsible for all the junior members of the joint family. In extreme cases he had the power to inflict corporal punishment on the members of the Taravad. He was the authority to decide on all 'Sambandham' partners who came to the Taravad. No marriage took place between the members of the Taravad as they were considered as related by blood. Some of the bigger Taravad had their own temples or 'Kavu' attached to their own household units. The deities of the kavu included not only the tribal gods and local heroes but the ancestors of the concerned Taravad also. The kavu was the sacred place for the members of the Taravad and also for the people of the locality. Each Taravad was linked to other similar Taravads having same status for purpose of social intercourse. In reality Taravads existed as isolated economic and political entities within the society. Taravads as the local power centres began to decline by the 18th century.

The Village settlements in Kerala unlike the other parts of India were in a scattered form instead of the clustered nucleated villages. All castes of high and low status found in these villages, including various occupational groups. The

non-brahmin localities had an assembly called 'Thara', which was another local power centre in medieval Kerala. Thara was not organised on the basis of any geographical extent of the village. It was local organization of various Nair family units. Nair warriors who had fought for the maintenance of the security of the people in the earlier period had been regarded as the masters.

The Nair military leaders received vast areas of land attached to their Taravad. As the property rights developed each Thara had a 'Yajamana' who naturally was a Karalar Nair. Being the Karalar were Nairs their dominance was visible in the Tara. In fact, the Tara functioned as a civil and municipal body in the respective locality and acted as the local power centre above the Taravads. The Assembly of the Tara was called the 'Tharakuttam' dominated by the Nairs. The Tharakuttam was represented by the elder members of the Nair Taravads within the locality. The Tharakuttam managed the affairs of the Tara.

The Tharakuttam usually met on a high platform or under the banyan tree near the local temple. Almost all the Taravads of the locality had a place in the organization and function in the Tharakuttam. The Thara functioned as a specific community; coordinating and serving different interests of the people related with the Thara. Hereditary functionaries like carpenter, washerman, barber, blacksmith, astrologer, and physician rendered their services to the people of the Thara, under the direction and supervision of the Tharakuttam. Kalari's were organised as a part of the Thara, where younger Nair boys were provided armed training. In due course, separate Kalaries were formed for some of the lower castes also.

The affairs of the Thara and its members were conducted on the basis of customs and traditions' 'Ambasamudram Inscription' of Adityavarman belonging to the 15th century records that different local issues were decided in the joint meeting of the local assemblies' in the presence of 'Karyasthan' of the Naduvazhi. In southern Kerala 'Kara' is the name for Thara.'Uru' was the assembly of the Nambutiris. 'Ara' was the temple centre and 'Thara' was the port centre. 'Desom' was yet another local power centre existed in medieval Kerala. 'Desathalavan' was the head of the Desam and usually he was a Nair chief. He showed nominal loyalty to the Naduvazhi. Desom was based on the geographical extent normally ranging upto 10sq.kms. Logan says there had 126 Desoms and 72 Tharas in Malabar. It could be assumed that the Desom was a part of the village. Many Desoms formed a Nadu and several such Nadus formed a swarupam or regional kingdom. John P Mencher considers desom as a unit of military organisation and its area was determined by the number of soldiers, it was required to provide to the Naduvazhi. In fact the geographical extent of the Desom varied according to the density of population in the respective localities. The Desathalavan was assisted by 'Pramanis' in the administration of the Desom. He collected the dues for the

Naduvazhis and he had the power to impose fines. He decided petty suits and was responsible for the establishment of law and order in the respective Desom.

Sanketams

Sanketham was an important institution that existed in Kerala during the medieval period. It is an independent institution governed by its own members, but presided over by an elected member. All important temples in Kerala used to have their own Sanketams. The Sanketams possessed independent sovereign authority in their domains. To guard against encroachment, the Sanketams chose a secular leader. But they never gave up their right of ownership. With the help of the ruler, they managed the temple lands and tracts.

The Sanketam was almost a state within a state with its own organs of government. The ruling sovereign (Naduvazhi) had no effective control over them. In fact they provided the ruler with a safe place for asylum in times of invasion, war or internal disorder. The Sanketan enjoyed protection from the enemies attack. In view of the importance of Sanketams there was a regular seramble among the rulers to acquire Melkoyma rights over them. Thus the rulers of Kochi, Palakkad and Kozhikode acquired control over Tiruvilavamala Devaswam; the Cochin Raja over the temples of Haripad and Tiruvalla; the Raja's of Vadakkumkur and Parur over Thrissur and Peruvanam and the king of Venad over Vaikkam temple. In course of time, due to political uprisings in the country, the Sanketams lost their significance with the rise of secular power, they declined. In its hey day the Sanketam possessed almost sovereign powers. They had the right to punish even the sovereign. It possessed the right to collect taxes. It is a self governing unit, self working and self contained community recognising no sovereign

Manipravalam Literature

Manipravalam is the name given to that form of literature in Malayalam, which came in to existence during the 9th – 14th Century. It is a curious mixture of Malayalam, Tamil and Sanskrit. From the 11th Century onwards, a number of literary works appeared in Manipravalam pattern. Tolan was one of the earliest poet in Malayalam who composed works in Manipravalam style. However the first full-fledged work in Manipravalam was Vaisika Tantram of the 11th Century. Most of the manipravalam works have Devadasis as their heroine. Of the works in this category may be mentioned Unniaticharitam, Unniachi Charitam and Unnichirutevi Charitam. They depict the life of ease and indolence of the leisured class in society. They reflect the social conditions of the age such as the Devadasi system, Sambandham system of a decadent society. However they are valuable for the social historian of Kerala.

Sandeshakavyas- Unnineeli Snadesham

Literary works in Malayalam are available from the 12th C. They may be classified as Sandesa Kavyas, Manipravalam works, Ballads or Pattukal. The celebrated Unnunilandesam is the most important from the historical points of view. It is written in the form of a message from Aditya Varma the prince to his sweet heart Unnunili. The work draws lively sketch of medieval Kerala and also the wars and achievements of Venad rulers. Anantapuram varnanam also gives glimpse of local traditions and customs, besides giving a description of Trivandrum and Kantalur Salai. Chandrotsavam throws light on the social and cultural life of the age. It portrays the life style of the upper classes, besides several customs and ceremonies. The Sandesa Kavyas in general give geographical features of Kerala and portrays the life of the people.

Charitam-Unniyadi Charitam

Manipravalam is a mixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit. This form of literature was the predominant trend during the medieval period (9th-15th C). Among the numerous types of Manipravalam works, those written as eulogies to Devadasis are historically valuable. Among them the Unniachicharitam and Unnichirutevi charitam contain detailed accounts of the Devadasis and throw light on the political and social life of Kerala. The latter is of particular significance as it describes Kurumatsaram, the struggle of the two Brahmin villages. The Unniacharitham describes the early history of the Cochin royal family.

Champu- Bhasha Naishadham Champu

The feudal age produced a series of philosophical and devotional works in Malayalam. The Gathas and Champus come under this category. Krishnagatha of Cherusseri was the typical Gatha. Its theme is the story of Krishna. It was written under the patronage of Udaya Varman of Kolathunad. The Ramayanam Champu of Punam Namputiri and Bhasha Naishadham Champu of Mahishamangalam were produced during this age. If the early Champus depicted the Devadasis of the day, the later Champus drew their themes from the Puranas and depicted contemporary social life.

Lilathilakam

Lilathilakam is a work on grammar and rhetoric written in 14th century. It points out that the rules of Sanskrit prosody should be followed in manipravalam poetry. It was Lilathilakam which made necessary rules and regulations for Manipravalam literature.

Chinese trade and Arab trade

The accounts of foreign travellers who visited Calicut during the reign of the Zamorins give us valuable and interesting glimpses of the trade relations at Calicut port. Ibn Batuta, the earliest of them to mention Calicut describes the city as one of the greatest ports in Malabar where merchants from all parts of the globe are

found. The African traveller, in particular, mentions the large fleet of Chinese merchant vessels that lay anchored at the port. Ma Huan the Chinese merchant describes Calicut as a great emporium of trade frequented by traders from all over the world. Adbur Razzack described Calicut as a perfectly secured harbour which brings together merchants from every city and every country. Precious articles brought from Zansihar, Abyssinia and other countries were found in the city. Nicolo Conti (1444) and Athanasius Nikitin (1468-74) alludes to the rich trade in pepper, ginger, cinnamon and other spices at Calicut. Varthema (1503-08) describes Calicut at great length and confirms the view of earlier writers.

Calicut became one of the nodal points for long distance trade under the Zamorins. During the period (11th to 15th C). Arab and Chinese traders were frequenting Calicut and other ports of trade. They exported pepper, ginger, cardamom and cloves and several medieval plants from Malabar. The Arabs controlled a major part of overseas trade with the west from Calicut. A number of Arab traders came to Calicut and settled there. Merchants from Baghdad flocked to this port of the country. From the Muslims a strong merchant class developed. They operated mainly from Calicut, Pantalayani, Puthuppanam, Valapattanam and Matayi. They erected mosques for worship such as Muccunti Palli. The extent of Arab trade is portrayed in a number of Arab sources from Sulaiman to Ibn Batuta (9th to 14th C).

The presence of Chinese merchants in Calicut is also alluded to by medieval travellers. Wang Tuan, a Chinese merchant visited the Coast (14th C) and left a description. Zheng Ho, another sailor travelled to West Coast during the 15th Century and came to Calicut in 1407. Ma Huan the Chinese merchant who visited Malabar during the 15th C gives details about the coastal trade. He records that pepper was grown for

Medieval Angadies.

There were many exchange centres in the early medieval period which later developed into *angadis* or market places. The rise and growth of these *angadis* are detailed in the contemporary travel accounts and other literary sources. The foreign travelers like Ibn Batuta and indigenous literature like Unnineeli Sandesam give ample references on port cities like Kollam and Kozhikode. Chinese ships were reached in Kollam port mainly for collecting spices. Near to the ports, there developed angadis where commodities were exchanged. Muchandi, Puthidam, Pantalayani Kollam, Puthupattanam, Valapattanam, Kodungallur, Trikanamathilakam are some of the leading angadis of medieval period.

Module IV

Advent of Europeans

The advent of the Europeans (Portuguese, Dutch, French and the English) marked the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Kerala. It put Kerala firmly on the political map of India. The arrival of Vasco da Gama at Kappad near Calicut in May 1498 inaugurated the Da Gama Epoch in the history of Asia. It was an epoch of European domination over Asiatic countries. It lasted for more than five centuries (1498 – 1947). No event during the middle Ages had such a far-reaching repercussions on the civilised world as the opening of a sea route of India, says the Cambridge History.

Kerala on the eve of the Advent of the Europeans presented the tragic picture of a feudal polity with its evils and weaknesses. There was no central power in the country. Kerala was divided into a number of petty principalities: Each of them under a Naduvazhi but owing allegiance to none. There was the total absence of a unifying central power. Only three rulers possessed somewhat independent authority. They were the rulers of Kolathunad (Kolalthiri), Kozhikode (Zamorin) and Venad (Tiruvadi). Of them Kozhikode and Venad were the major powers. Kolathunad and Kochi had already come under the influence of the Zamorin. There were minor chieftains like the Rajas of Tanur, Mangat, Kodungallur, Edappalli, Vadakkumkur and Kollam. The authorities to the Naduvazhis were controlled by the Nair nobles and Namputiri chieftains. The Nair chieftains exercised effective authority in their domains. They provided the rulers with fighting forces. The Namputiris were dominating the land with their religious and spiritual authority. Thus at the time of European advent; Kerala was in a distracted political condition with a number of petty feudal chieftains engaged in endless feuds.

Situation of Kerala at the time of the coming of Portuguese

Kerala during this time was ruled by three prominent ruling families viz Thiruvithamkur in the south, Perumbadappu in Cochin and Zamorin in Calicut. And they have political differences and enmity between Cochin and Calicut, this rivalry was utilized by the Portuguese.

Zamorin

The kingdom of Calicut was an important principality of Kerala in the Middle Ages. It became independent after the fall of Perumal kingdom. The ruler of Calicut is known as Samudiri or the Zamorin. He was the central figure in Kerala history in the middle Ages. His rise and fall synchronises with the beginning and end of the Middle Ages. But for the arrival of foreigners like the Portuguese and the Dutch the Zamorins could have been able to unit the whole of Kerala under one sceptre.

The Jewish copperplate refers to Zamorin as Eralnad Utayavan. Ibn Batuta was the earliest writer to call the ruler as Samutiri. The word Samudiri is a truncated form of Swami Tirumulpad. As he was the chief of Eralnad, he was called Erlathiri. The ruling house of Samutiri is known by the name Nediyrrippu Swarupam after the original house of the Eratis at Nediyrrippu in Eralnad. Therefore he is referred to as Nediyrrippu Muppan. He was called Punturakkon after Calicut, which became a puntura, a great port of trade. As the Zamorin's authority extended over both hill and sea, he is called as Kunnalakonathiri, the lord of hills and waves in Malayalam and Shailabhadhiswaran and Samudragiriraja in Sanskrit. Barbosa refers to him as Samudiri, lord of the Ocean. As he belonged to Eralnad, the Zamorin is also known as Erati. The origin and early history of the Zamorins are enveloped in mystery. Keralolpathi ascribe their origin to Manikkan and Vikkiran, the two Erati brothers, who received from the Perumal a small Desam where the cock crows, a thorny jungle and an injunction to 'die, kill and annex'. They also received the broken sword (Otinja Val), the broken Conch (utanja Sankh) and the land that was still left after partition (Ullanad) and a faithful (Panikkar) commendant. Barbosa, Shaik zain-Ud-dhin and the Mamankom Kilippattu repeat the legend with minor variations.

The Jewish Copper plate of Bhaskera Ravi and the Kottayam copper plate of Viraraghava (Syrian Christian copper plates) mention the Zamorin. Keralamahathmyam refers to him as a feudatory prince. The Dutch writer Visschier and Muens and the Cochin Grantha Vari also mention the Zamorin. The ancestors of the Zamorins came and settled in Eralnad with headquarters at Nediyrrippu in the 3rd Century AD says Krishna Aiyar, the historian of the Zamorins. The rise of Calicut may be assigned to the period after the 13th Century. By the 11th Century, the Eralnad Utaivar came to be known as Nediyrrippu Muppan. It remained as a regional Nadu throughout under the Perumals. When Perumal's authority disintegrated, Nediyrrippu Swarupam declared its independence. It became a necessity to North Swarupam to extend its boundaries for economic existence. The Nediyrrippu ruler was in dire need of a port city for over-sea trade. Hence he tried to acquire Calicut, which was under the domain of Porlathiri. The Eratis were landlocked in their domain and they wanted to get an outlet to the sea through Polanad. The Polanad chief turned down their request for the Chullikkad at the mouth of the Kallayi River and the adjoining Kozhikode hill. Thereupon the Eratis attacked Polanad and through treachery and bribery acquired Kozhikode and made it their capital. The city around the Siva temple came to be known as Koil Kotta (fortified palace) which in course of time became as Calicut. The exact date for its foundation is not known. Calicut is

unknown to writers before Batuta. Calicut had become a busy city by the time of Batuta. The city was founded in 1042 AD, says a Sanskrit chronogram. Ma Huan and Abdul Razack suggest a date around 1050 AD. In course of time Calicut became the greatest and the most famous port on the Kerala Coast. Its rise and prosperity were due to its position as the capital city of an expanding empire and as the waterway that gave access to the upper country. It was also due to the character and policy of the Zamorins, which induced the Arab and Chinese merchants to flock to this port of trade. Calicut soon became the Chief emporium of trade. It was the brisk trade carried through Calicut port that filled the coffers of the Zamorin and fired him with the political ambition to be the overlord of the whole of Kerala.

Kunjali Marakkar

The Kunjali Marakkars were the Admirals of the Zamorins fleet. They dominated the waves for almost the century and helped the Zamorin in his epic fight against the Portuguese. The Marakkar family had some of the most remarkable naval captains whose prowess makes the name of 'Malabar Pirates' resound still in history.

The origin and ancestry of the Marikkars is a subject of controversy. They were regarded as the descendants of Mohammed, a Moplah merchant of Kochi who settled at Ponnani. The Marakkars were descendants of the Arab merchants. It seems the Kunhalis hailed from Pantalayini Kollam, moved first to Thikkodi and then to Kottakkal and Puthupathanam. The term Kunjali is an honourific title conferred on the admirals by the Zamorin. The word Marakkar is an adaptation of the Tamil word Marakkalam (Captain of a ship). The sea going folk of Malabar is called Marakkar. Altogether there were four Kunhalis who figures in the history of Kerala, besides Kutti Ali and Pattu Marakkar.

Kunjali I was the Admiral of Calicut fleet from 1507. He organized naval defences against the Portugues on a sound basis. A brilliant strategist, he avoided pitched battles and inflicted heavy casualties on the Portuguese possession in Ceylon. He chose Kutty Ali as his successors. Using light and fast moving armed vessels, Kutty Ali used to attack the Portugues ship by his 'hit and run' tactics. He was captured as prisoner by the Portugues governor Sampayo. Thereupon the fleet was re-organised under Pacchachi Marakkar, Kunjali II and Ali Abraham. After Kunjali I and II, Kunjali III directed the naval operations against the Portugues. He modernised the navy, manufactured arms and ammunitions locally, erected observations posts to watch the movement of the enemy ships throughout the coast. His name became almost the terror to the Portuguese as he began to control the Indian Ocean from Persian Gulf to Ceylon. This forced the Portuguese to compromise with the Zamorin by surrendering Chaliyam. The fall of Chaliyam sealed the fate of the Portuguese in Kerala. In recognition of these services, the Zamorin conferred upon Kunjali III several rights and honours including the right

to erect a fort at Puthuppattanam which became famous as Marakkar Kotta (1572). Kunhali IV became the Zamorin's Admiral after the death of Kunhali III. His relation with the Zamorin was not however cordial. The Zamorin's action of permitting the Portuguese to build a fort at Ponnani was not liked by the Admiral. Kunhali infuriated the Zamorin by strengthening the fortifications at Kottakkal and by styling himself as 'King of the Moors' and 'Lord of the Seas'. He showed discourtesy to his master by cutting the tail of the state elephant and ill-treating a Nair noble. The overbearing attitude of the admiral forced the Zamorin to ally with the Portuguese to crush him. A joint expedition was organized against Kunhali, his Marakkar Kotta was sieged (1800) and finally Kunhali was forced to surrender. He was captured by the Portuguese who took him to Goa and after the mockery of trial put him to death. It is an Irony of history that Kunhali who had always been a pillar of strength of the Zamorin in his fight against the Portuguese had to be crushed by an unholy opportunistic alliance between his master and traditional enemy. The tragic end of Kunhali invested his name with halo of martyrdom glory and honour to Kerala. The history of the Kunhalis thus occupy an important phase in the history of resistance movements of the natives against foreigners.

The Dutch

The Dutch were the first Protestant nation of Europe to establish trade contacts with Kerala. Established in 1592, the Dutch E.I. Company dispatched missions to the local rulers to secure trade privileges. Van Hagen the Dutch Admiral had concluded a treaty with the Zamorin (November, 1604) to expel the Portuguese from India. It also secured them trade facilities at Calicut. The treaty is important as the first political agreement entered into between the Dutch and an Indian power. The treaty was renewed in 1608 and the Dutch were given freedom of trade in the Zamorin's domain. The treaty of 1610 stipulated to pay customs duty to the Zamorin. The 1625 agreement gave the Dutch permission to build a factory in the Zamorin's domain. Similar treaties were signed with Purakkad (1642), Kayamkulam and Venad (1662) to have warehouses in the respective domains and monopoly of pepper trade. Thus by the early decades of the 17th Century the Dutch had emerged as a serious rival to the Portuguese.

The crowning achievement of the Dutch was the capture of Kochi in 1663. The Dutch period of Kerala History actually begins with this event. The Dutch were able to intervene successfully in the dispute between the Mutha Tavazhi and Elaya Tavazhi, two factions in the Cochin royal family. They succeeded in installing the prince of their choice on the Cochin gaddi. In the course of conflict between the Dutch and the Portuguese to capture Kochi, the Dutch leader Van Goen laid siege to the Mattancherry Palace. In the fierce battle that was fought in front of the 'Dutch Palace', the Raja with two princes and ministers were killed. Rani Gangadhara Lakshmi who was watching the battle from the palace was

captured prisoner by Van Rheeде and she was forced to recognise the Mutha Thavazhi prince as the ruler of Kochi. The capture of Kochi inaugurated the era of Dutch supremacy on the Kerala Coast.

The Dutch success at Kochi was followed by the capture of Fort St. Angelo, Kannur from the Portuguese and by treaties with the rulers of Kayamkulam, Purakkad, Martha and Kollam. The Dutch entered in to agreement with other powers like Tekkumkur, Vatakkumkur, Karappuram and Kannur. By 1728, they became dominant in Kerala. However they were forced to give up their claims in the face of opposition from the rulers of Thiruvitamkur, Mysore and the English E.I. Company. The Dutch defeat at Kulachal (1741), the Mysorian occupation of Chettuvay (1776) and the English capture of Kochi (1795) sealed their fate in Kerala.

Like the Portuguese, the Dutch contact produced results beneficial to Kerala. They revived Kerala trade. New products and scientific techniques of cultivation were introduced. They gave encouragement to coconut cultivation on commercial basis. They promoted indigo and paddy cultivation. New industries like salt farming and dyeing were introduced. Although they never built seminaries or colleges, the memoirs, letters and accounts left by the Dutch men like Visschier, Nieuhoff and Van Rheeде are of inestimable value for the reconstruction of Kerala history.

Hortus Malabaricus

The greatest achievement of the Dutch in the cultural field was the compilation of Hortus Malabaricus, a monumental botanical work on the medicinal plants of Kerala. It was compiled under the patronage of the Dutch governor Van Rheeде. With this project were associated such stalwarts like Mathaeus the Carmelite monk; Appu Bhat, Ranga Bhat and Vinayak Bhatt, the three G.S. Brahmins and Ithi Achan (Itti Achutan), an Ezhava physician. It took many years to complete the work and it was finally published from Amsterdam between 1678 and 1703 in 12 volumes.

Martanda Varma

The Dutch dream of the Conquest of Kerala was shattered when Marthanda Varma, the ruler of Travancore inflicted a severe defeat on them in the famous battle of Kolachal (1741). He annexed almost all the states with whom the Dutch had established relations. The Dutch establishments of Kollam, Marta Kayamkulam and Purakkad were absorbed in the kingdom of Thiruvitamkur. By the treaty of Mavelikkara (1753), the Dutch agreed to be neutral in wars to be fought by Travancore with native powers. This treaty marked the complete humiliation of the Dutch and their eclipse as a political power in Kerala.

The Dutch failed to establish an enduring dominion in Kerala because of unforeseen political developments. (a) The rise of Travancore under Marthanda Varma in the South and the Mysorean invasions in the North upset the balance of power in Kerala. (b) The rise of other European powers like the English and the French who were superior in the seas upset the plans of the Dutch. The fall of the Cochin fort and Tankesseri to the English in 1795 gave the coup de grace to Dutch domination over Kerala.

The French

The French too entered Kerala with the purpose of trade. They arrived near Thalassery in 1725 and occupied Mahe. They had already established their superiority over Pondicherry, and Mahe was captured as per the directions of Pandy Governor. With this a new European power also came to the Kerala Coast to take part in the struggle for power – The French East India Company.

Anglo- French Conflict.

Before long, the English had to face the rivalry of the French. In 1725, the French captured Mahe from Kadathanad. The French possession of Mahe was a potential danger to the English at Thalassery. The English also had to face threat from the Dutch and also from the Ali Rajas of Kannur. However, the English rose to the occasion, ousted the Ali Raja from Dharmadam and obtained that island. When the French at Mahe provoked the English during the Canarese Wars (1732-36), they captured Mahe, but had to return Mahe soon after the close of the Anglo- French conflict

The English

The English and the French came to Kerala mainly for commercial purposes, but later had political ambitions. They built up and consolidated their rule in the land and began to rule over an empire vaster than the American colonies.

Ralph Fetch was the first Englishman to reach the shores of Kerala (1583). Capt. Keeling who followed him concluded a treaty with the Zamorin in 1615 in order to expel the Portuguese from Malabar. During the last days of Portuguese rule (1635-35), the English secured access to all Portuguese Ports in Kerala and they began to export pepper to England from 1636. In 1644, the English obtained permission from the king of Venad to build a factory at Vizhinjam. In 1664, the Zamorin granted them permission to erect a factory at Calicut. In 1684 the Rani of Attingal gave them permission to build a factory at Anjengo substantially increased English influence. Fort Anjengo soon became the most important English possessions on the West Coast, next only to Mumbai.

Revolt of Anjengo.

The grant of concessions to the English at Anjengo provoked a revolt of the local people in 1697. The overbearing conduct and corrupt practices of the English were the reasons for the outbreak. The local people revolted, attacked the factors

and massacred all Englishmen. They attempted to capture the fort, but failed. Following its failure, the Rani of Attingal granted the monopoly of pepper trade and the right to erect factories to the English. The Revolt of Anjengo is remarkable as it is the first organized revolt of the natives against the British authority in Kerala.

Treaty of Travancore (1723).

In the meanwhile the English entered in to a treaty with Thiruvitamkur. It permitted the English to erect a fort at Kulachal (Colachal). It was signed by Prince Marthanda Varma and Alexander Orme. This is the first treaty negotiated by the English Company with an Indian state. This treaty laid the foundation of friendship between Travancore and the English E.I. Company, a friendship that lasted for several decades.

ENGLISH IN MALABAR

Along with building their influence in South Kerala, the English took steps to safeguard their interests in North Kerala. With the permission of the Kolathiri, they set up a factory at Thalassery (1694). When the English companies were united in 1702, Thalassery along with Karwar, Calicut and Anjengo became the affiliated factories of Bombay. When English had to face opposition from the natives who raided the company's warehouses and inflicted heavy damages (1704-05), the English built a fort at Thalassery in 1708 and secured monopoly of trade in pepper from Kolathiri.

Establishment of British supremacy witnessed the beginning of a new epoch in our history. It was an epoch of challenge and response, an epoch of domination and resistance. The native chieftains and people responded to the British challenge with a firm resolve to throw the foreign yoke, but in vain. But the attempt itself is remarkable. The resistance movements organised and led by such stalwarts as Kerala Varma in Malabar, Velu Thampi in Thiruvitamkur, Paliath Achan in Kochi, the Kurichiyas in Wayanad and the Mappilas in Eralnad and Valluvanad. The early risings were led by such diverse elements as dispossessed local princes, feudal chieftains, aggrieved peasants and tribal communities. Kathleen Gough, the anthropologist has classified these early uprisings in to five types restorative, religious, social banditry, terrorist vengeance and armed insurrection.

British Occupation of Malabar.

The retreat of Tippu was the signal for the collapse of Mysorean authority over Kerala. The Zamorine and the Raja of Kochi declared them selves to be in favour of the company. The company's forces entered Malabar and captured the strategically important Palakkad fort (1790). The Mysorean were cleared off from the region from Chavakkad to Kannur. The remnant of the Mysorean forces under Mahabat Khan was put to flight. The Kannur fort was besieged and Arakkal Bibi was forced to surrender. By the beginning of 1791 the British became the masters

of the whole of Malabar. Thus the Mysorean attempt to establish hegemony over Kerala ended in the establishment of British supremacy.

The withdrawal of the Mysore troops from Kerala opened the doors to British entry in to the whole of Malabar. By the treaty of Sriranga Pattanam (1792) the whole of Malabar except Wayanad and Coorg were ceded to the British. As a result of the last Mysore wars, South Canara (Kasargod-Hosdurg) area too passed to the British. Gradually the British brought Malabar under their direct control. The District of Malabar, as part of Madras Presidency was formed on May 21, 1800. Mr. Macleod became the first collector of the Dist of Malabar (1st October, 1800) in the newly formed district administrative and social reforms were undertaken, though not as spectacular as those of the Princely states. The British administrators introduced the Cornwallis code in 1802 to evolve a judicial system for Malabar. Under this system, judicial and executive functions were separated. It was followed by the establishment of district and provincial courts.

British Administrative Settlement in Malabar.

The British never kept their word that the exiled Chieftains would be restored to their territories after Tippu's expulsion. The British directly took charge of the administration of Malabar. An interim arrangement was provided by appointing two commissioners-Mr Farmer and Major Dow-to effect the political and administrative settlement of Malabar. The commissioners negotiated settlements for the collection of revenue with the local powers and evolved a new system of administration for Malabar. Accordingly Malabar was divided in to two administrative divisions each under the control of a superintendent. They were supervised by a chief magistrate with headquarters at Calicut. The commission was abolished and Malabar was formed as a district with the collector as its head (1st October, 1801).

The company entered into fresh treaties with Kochi and Thiruvitamkur. By the treaty of 1791, the Kochi Raja became a vassal of the English and in 1800 Kochi was placed under the control of othe Madras government. By the treaty of 1795, the Travancore Raja accepted British hegemony. By the treaty of 1805, the state became a subsidiary ally of the British and accepted British protection. The treaties specified the appointment of a Resident and Col. Macaulay became the British resident of Tiruvitamkur and Kochi. It further granted to the Company to interfere in the internal affairs of the two states.

Mysorean Interlude

The Mysorean interlude was a period of stress and strain for the English in Malabar. During this period, the Thalasseri factory faced many a crisis. In 1764, Haider secured the neutrality of the English in the event of a Mysore-Kerala conflict. However Haider Ali came in to open clash with the English in 1773 and attempted to capture Thalasseri. The Anglo-Mysore hostilities were renewed under

Tippu Sultan. The English actively aided the Zamorin and other local powers to throw off the Mysorean yoke and Thalasseri factory offered an asylum to many of them. When Tippu attacked Thiruvitamkur in 1789, the English supported their protected ally. The fall of Seringapattam (1790) and the consequent withdrawal of Mysorean forces from Kerala opened the doors of British entry into Malabar. The treaty of Seringapatam (1792) secured to the British the whole of Malabar except Wyanad and Coorg. They also secured South Canara after the last Mysore War. In course of time, the English brought Malabar under their direct rule while Thiruvitamkur and Kochi became Vassal states

The Mysorean invasion of Kerala by Haider Ali and his son Tippu Sultan represents a brief interlude, a watershed in our long and chequered history. It put an end to the Middle Ages in Kerala and inaugurated the modern period of our History.

Political Condition of Malabar.

The Mysoreans were tempted to invade Malabar mainly because of the political atmosphere that prevailed in the country in the first half of the 18th Century. Kerala presented the picture of the 'house divided against itself'. In the words of N.K. Sinha "North Malabar was in a state of anarchy, a sea of intrigue, conflicting interests and mutual jealousies". The expansionist policies of the Zamorins sparked off a series of conflicts, which created favourable conditions to Haider Ali. The mutual jealousies of the local chieftains like the Kolathiri, Ali Raja, Kadathanad, Iruvazhinad and Kottayam Rajas prevented them from offering a united front to the 'foreign' enemy. Ali Raja in fact offered help to Mysore in the event of an invasion. The European powers tried to fish in the troubled waters for their trading interests. Since the Kunjali episode, the Muslims were not in good terms with the Zamorin and they preferred a Muslim invasion. Haider's desire to have an access to French Mahe though Malabar also was there.

HAIDER ALI'S CONQUEST.

First Invasion:

Haider Ali intervened in Malabar affairs thrice, first as Faujdar of Mysore, then as ruler of Mysore twice. His first intervention took place in the Palakkad region. When Zamorin annexed Naduvattam belonging to the Palakkad Raja in 1756, the Raja appealed to Haider who was then the Faujdar of Dindigal for help. Haider intervened and the Zamorin was forced to withdraw and to pay an indemnity to Haider. When Haider became the ruler of Mysore, he turned to Malabar in order to get the promised indemnity from the Zamorin and to have an access to Mahe. Haider also had the intention to teach a lesson to the Raja of Thiruvithamkur who declined his support earlier. He invaded Malabar from the North in 1761, conquered the Bednore Kingdom (1763), Nileswaram and other northern principalities. He defeated the Kolathiri, the Kottayam Raja, Kadathanad

chieftain and the ruler of Kurumbranad. Advancing further South, Haider reached the borders of Calicut. The attempt of the Zamorin to avert the crisis by offering all his treasure and property failed. The Mysoreans army humiliated Zamorin committed suicide by setting fire to the palace. The extinction of the Zamorin left Haider master of Calicut. Appointing Madanna as the civil governor of the conquered provinces, Haider returned to Mysore. Haider's second invasion (1763) was necessitated by the revolt of the local chieftains and Nairs of Kadathanad, Kottayam and Calicut. Haider suppressed these rebellions with an iron hand. In his second invasion of Kerala in 1773, the Mysoreans forces under Srinivasa Rao and Syed Khan descended on Malabar. The Kerala chiefs offered no serious resistance. The reigning Zamorin who expected French and Dutch help was forced to fly first to Kodungallur and later to Thiruvithamkur. As his ultimate aim was the conquest of Thiruvithamkur, Haider began with the invasion of Kochi. Sirdar Khan captured Chavakkad and Thrissur and he returned when the Cochin Raja offered him a big sum as bribe. The refusal of the Dutch to open a passage to Haider through their territories to invade Thiruvithamkur resulted in a conflict, which ended with the surrender of Pappinivattam and Chettarvai to Sirdharkhan.

EFFECTS.

By this time, Haider's policy in Malabar underwent a profound change. Instead of sending military governors from Mysore to rule over the conquered territories. Haider tried to utilise the services of friendly chieftains for the purpose. Thus Kolathiri became Haider's representative in Malabar. The experiment was extended to other parts of Malabar as well. In the mean while, the Carnatic War had broken out between the English and Haider. In the course of the war Sirdar Khan had besieged Thalassery of the English. The English forces, supported by the Kottayam Raja, defeated Sirdhar Khan, advanced to Palakkad, the last Mysorean stronghold in Malabar. The local Rajas seized the opportunity to recover their dominions. These reverses prompted Haider to send his son Tippu to restore Mysorean authority in Kerala. Though Tippu came and attacked the English, but before he could achieve any decisive result, Haider passed away (December, 1782) and Tippu was obliged to leave for Mysore to secure his succession to the throne.

TIPPU'S CONQUEST.

Tippu Sultan continued the expansionist policies of his father. After becoming ruler of Mysore, he came to Kerala and re-conquered the whole of Malabar up to Kotta river. He could not advance further because of the opposition of the English. However by the treaty of Mangalore, which concluded the 2nd Anglo-Mysore War, the company gave up its claims on Malabar tacitly recognising Tippu's suzerainty over the region. When there was opposition to Tippu's reform. Tippu himself descended on Malabar, marched towards Kozhikode, drove the Zamorin out of the city and established a reign of

terror. Visiting Kannur, he celebrated the betrothal ceremony of his son with the daughter of Arakkal Bibi. Attack on Thiruvithamkur, Tippu's target of attack was Thiruvitamkur. The Raja's policy of giving asylum to the rebel chieftains of Malabar, the construction of the Travancore lines, the purchase of the forts of Pallippuram and Kodungallur from the Dutch-all antagonized the Sultan who demanded the surrender of Kodungallur and Pallippuram forts, the demolition of the Travancore lines and expulsion of Malabar Chieftains from his kingdom. His attempt for peace with the Raja was foiled when the latter came closer to the English, the traditional enemy of the Sultan. Hence as he was left with no alternative, Tippu invaded Kochi, camped at Thrissur and began attacking the Travancore Lines. He captured Kodungallur, Kuriappilly and Pallippuram forts, subdued Alangad and Parur and encamped at Aluva. It seemed as if the way was opened for the total subjugation of Thiruvitamkur. However the conquest was averted by the outbreak of monsoon and the English declaration of war on Tippu and their march to Srirangapattanam. Realising the gravity of the situation, Tippu abandoned his campaign and rushed back to Mysore, Mysorean invasion of Kerala virtually ended.

However a series of progressive steps were under taken by Tippu in his administration of Malabar. He established a new capital at Farukabad (Feroke) and built the first road system in Malabar. He introduced a new variety of coinage in Malabar. As a social reformer, he issued the proclamation of 1788 severely condemning the system of polyandry. He investigated the conditions of the farmer and remitted one third of their tax.

IMPACTS OF MYSOREAN OCCUPATION.

The Mysorean conquest of Malabar produced political, economic and social results.

Political.

The feudal system of administration of Malabar was replaced by a centralised system of government. The Nairs and Naduvazhis of feudal Kerala lost their position of pre eminence.

Administrative.

The Mysoreans introduced an administration based on modern and progressive ideas. Tippu introduced a system of land revenue based on the actual produce of the land. Land tax was collected directly from the tenant. It was based on the actual produce of the land. Assessment was made after a proper survey. This raised the dignity of the tenant. Tippu opened a net work of roads connecting different parts of Malabar "Tippu projected, and in a great part, finished an extensive chain of roads that connected all the principal places in Malabar". Tippu is often regarded as the pioneer of roads in Malabar. From the social point of view, the Mysorean invasion sounded the death knell of the old social order in Malabar. It

ushered in a new era of social change. The privileged status enjoyed by the upper castes earlier was lost. Haider and Tipu showed scant respect to old customs and time honoured privileges. They broke the myth of the racial superiority of the upper classes and instilled a consciousness of dignity and status among the lower classes. In fact the Mysorean invasion administered a shock treatment to the traditional Kerala society. It also saw the emergence of a new middle class.

In the economic sphere, the Mysorean rule was not a blessing. The continuous raids resulted in the economic ruin of the country. Agriculture was destroyed. Peasant took refuge in jungles. Trade was hampered. The decline of trade and agriculture crippled the economy. The old ports became centers of desolation. It was a period of economic depression. In the cultural field; it was a period of stagnation. The flight of Kshatriyas and Nambutiris who were the traditional patrons of culture, retarded cultural activities. The Mysorean invasion gave a death blow to communal harmony. It brought a cleavage between the Hindus and the Muslims. The local Muslims often sided with the Mysoreans in temple looting and destruction. The privileged status enjoyed by the local Muslims was not recognised by the British which resulted in the Moplah riots of the 19th and Mallabar Rebellion of the early 20th Centuries. The Mysorean interlude is important as a link between the ancient regime and the new era. It has wiped out the middle ages in Kerala. The old regime has ended and it was a new society based on sound principles that replaced it.

Subsidiary Alliance

During the 18th century, Kerala was politically divided into three parts, namely, Thiruvithamkur, Kochi and Kozhikode. Among these three states Kozhikode was part of Madras presidency and under direct control of the British. Whereas Thiruvithamkur and Kochi was controlled by the British through Subsidiary alliance. Subsidiary alliance was introduced by Lord Wellesly as part of his policy of expansion. This was an indirect domination over Indian native states. The Kochi joined subsidiary alliance in 1791 and Thiruvithamkur in 1795. By joining the alliance, these kingdoms received the military protection from external aggression. For this these states have to maintain a huge British army by meeting its expenses. A British resident was posted at the court of these kingdoms. The king could not make any alliance or engage war with other kingdoms without the consent of the resident. Thus, by joining subsidiary alliance, both Thiruvithamkur and Kochi lost their sovereignty.

Malayalam Bhakthi Literature and Structuring of Malayalam Language
Literary works in Malayalam are available from the 12th C. They may be classified as Sandesa Kavyas, Manipravalam works, Ballads or Pattukal. Manipravalam is a mixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit. This form of literature was the predominant trend during the medieval period (9th-15th C. Among the numerous types of

Manipravalam works, those written as eulogies to Devadasis are historically valuable. Among them the Unniachicharitam and Unnichirutevi charitam contain detailed accounts of the Devadasis and throw light on the political and social life of Kerala. The latter is of particular significance as it describes Kurumatsaram, the struggle of the two Brahmin villages. The Unniaticharitham describes the early history of the Cochin royal family. The celebrated Unnunilandesam is the most important from the historical points of view. It is written in the form of a message from Aditya Varma the prince to his sweet heart Unnunili. The work draws lively sketch of medieval Kerala and also the wars and achievements of Venad rulers. Anantapuram varnanam also gives glimpse of local traditions and customs, besides giving a description of Trivandrum and Kantalur Salai. Chandrotsavam throws light on the social and cultural life of the age. It portrays the life style of the upper classes, besides several customs and ceremonies. The Sandesa Kavyas in general give geographical features of Kerala and portrays the life of the people.

The pattu form of literature is the genuine literary form in Malayalam. To this category belongs the works of Ezhutachan (Kilipattu), Cherusseri (Krishnagatha), Puntanam (Janappana), Vatakkann Pattukal, Thullal works of Kunchan Nampiyar, the moplal songs of the Muslims, Kalyana pattukal of the Jews etc. The Patappattu (War Songs) describes the conflict between the Zamorin and the Cochin Raja and the intrigues of the Portuguese and the Dutch. They corroborate the official records. The Mamankam Kilipattu describes the events during the reign of Manavikrama and also a description of the Mamankam festival. The Chaver Songs like the Kandan Menon Pattu and the Ramacha Panikker pattu deals with the exploits of Valluvanad hero. There are also ballads describing the exploits of Kerala Varma Pazhasi Raja, Marthanda Varma, Raja Kesavadas, Kunjali Marakkar and Tippu Sulthan, which corrects British records. The Thullal Works of Kunchan Nambiar allude to several social customs prevalent in the 18th C. They reflect the changes that were taking place in contemporary society. The structural aspect of Kerala society including caste, occupation, economic activities, polity and the cultural impact of the Europeans are all well portrayed in the Thullal songs. The Margam Kilippattu, Kalliana pattukal, Palli pattukal of the Syrian Christians, the Moplal songs of the Malabar Muslims and the Jewish wedding songs also yield historical and sociological material. The Margam Kilippattu reflects the St. Thomas tradition. The Thiruvarangu kilippattu mentions Thomas of Cana. Folk songs constitute another major untapped source. The songs associated with Theyyam, Thira and other local art forms are a mine of information for social history

Thunchathu Ezhuthachan

Ezhuttacchan was one of the most outstanding figures in the history of Malayalam literature. He liberated Malayalam from the clutches of Tamil and

Sanskrit and made it popular. He is rightly regarded as the Father of modern Malayalam language. He was a pioneer in the socio-religious movement of the time. Ezhuttacchan appeared at a time when there was anarchy and degradation in the political and cultural fields. In a period of gloom, anarchy and violence, Ezhuttacchan appeared as a man of destiny.

Tunchatt Ramanujan Ezhuttacchan was born in a Nair family at Thrikkandiyur. He left Kerala to the Tamil country for higher studies. Returning to the native land, he established an Ezhuthupally (school) to teach children. He devoted his time to literary pursuits and composed devotional works. During his last days, Ezhuttacchan left Thrikkandiyur. He (Tirur) for Chittur where he established a Mutt and a temple on the banks of the river. Ezhuttacchan's contributions to Malayalam are everlasting. He inaugurated the 'Kilippattu form of literary expression in Malayalam. He rendered in to Malayalam the great epics Ramayana and Mahabarata. His adaptation of Ramayana is unique as it had a spiritual and religious connotation. He was also credited with the authorship of Harinamakirtanam and Irupathinaluvrutham. These works shows his genius for synthesis. In fact, the history of Malayalam poetry begins with this savant.

In the devotional and religious sphere, Ezhuttacchan revived the Bhakti cult in Kerala. His 'Adhyatma-Ramayana' is the finest literary expression of the Bhakti Cult which became popular in Kerala during the medieval period. He composed his work with supreme emphasis on Bhakti or devotion to God in the form of Rama in a style and language that appeals to the heart rather than brain. The devotional songs in this work are considered to be the best in Malayalam poetry even today. In the social sphere too, Ezhuttacchan made his mark. Though a non-Brahmin, he studied the Vedas and the Sastras and exposed the Aryan myth that they alone could master the sacred knowledge. Ezhuttacchan also began the system of imparting primary education through Ezhuthupalli. In the words of Dr. Ayyappa Panikkar. "With his absolute sincerity, skill and total dedication to poetry and religion, Ezhuttacchan was able to create and establish, once and for all, a language, a culture and a people. He is thus a magnificent symbol of our great cultural movement".

Kilippattu

The pattu form of literature is the genuine literary form in Malayalam. To this category belongs the works of Ezhutachan (Kilipattu), Cherusseri (Krishnagatha), Puntanam (Janappana), Vatakkann Pattukal, Thullal works of Kunchan Nampiyar, the moplal songs of the Muslims, Kalyana pattukal of the Jews etc. The Patappattu (War Songs) describes the conflict between the Zamorin and the Cochin Raja and the intrigues of the Portuguese and the Dutch. They corroborate the official records. A number of pure Malayalam songs in praise of Gods and heroes appeared; symbolizing the dawn of Kilipattu literature. The

Mamankam Kilipattu describes the events during the reign of Manavikrama and also a description of the Mamankam festival. The Margam Kilippattu reflects the St. Thomas tradition. The Thiruvavangur kilippattu mentions Thomas of Cana.

Kunchan Nambiar- Thullal

The Thullal Works of Kunchan Nambiar allude to several social customs prevalent in the 18th C. They reflect the changes that were taking place in contemporary society. The structural aspect of Kerala society including caste, occupation, economic activities, polity and the cultural impact of the Europeans are all well portrayed in the Thullal songs

Poonthanam- Jnanappana

Poonthanam was another important poet in Malayalam of the 16th century. He lived in the Kizhattur village near Perinthalmanna in today's Malappuram district. His most important work is Jnanappana which is more philosophical than the works of Ezhuthachan. This work is a devotional poem in the form of a prayer to guruvayurappan. It was written in simple Malayalam as a part of Bhakthi literature. Jnanappana is considered as the Bhagavat Gita of Malayalam.

KERALA SOCIETY AND CULTURE: ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL

Module-I Kerala's Physiographical Features and Early History of the Region

Geographical features-rivers-mountains-passes-lagoons-sea coast-monsoon
Early human settlements-Peleolithic, Neolithic Periods
Iron Age in Kerala-Megalithic Culture-Megalithic sites
Kerala as a part Tamilakam
Sangam Literature: Pathittupathu, Akananuru and Purananuru
Kerala's maritime contacts-Pattanams (trade centres)-internal trade mechanisms

Module-II Polity and Society in the Perumal Era

Sources

Inscriptions- Terisapalli Copper Plate

Literature-Sanakaranarayaneeyam- Tamil Bhakti Literature- Arab Chinese accounts

Monuments-Tiruvanchikulam temple- Cheraman Masjid

Brahmin Migration to Kerala

Perumals of Mahadayapuram

Features of administration

Trade guilds and land grants –Anchuvannam –Manigramam -Valanchiyar,-

Nannadeshikal- Nuttuvar- Uralar, Karalar.

Bhakti saints- Alvars and Nayanars

Proliferation of temples-Devadasi system

Sankaracharya

Disintegration of Perumal kingdom

Module-III Age of Naduvazhis

Formation of Nadus and Swarupams- Venad

Expansion of agriculture

Emergence of village communities

Sanketams

Manipravalam Literature

Sandeshakavyas- Unnineeli Snadesham

Charitam-Unniyadi Charitam

Champu- Bhasha Naishadham Champu

Lilathilakam

Chinese trade- Arab trade- Medieval Angadies.

ModuleIV Advent of Europeans

Situation of Kerala at the time of the coming of Portuguese

Zamorin- Kunjali Marakkar

The Dutch- Hortus Malabaricus- Martanda Varma

The French

The English-

Mysorean Interlude

Subsidiary Alliance

Malavalam Bhakthi Literature and Structuring of Malayalam Language

Thunchathu Ezhuthachan- Kilippattu

Kunchan Nambiar- Thullal

Poonthanam- Jnanappana

Maps

1. Important Centres of Megalithic Culture

2. Distribution of the Inscriptions of Perumals

3. Important Nadus

4. Centres of Colonial Settlements

BOOKS FOR STUDY

Module I

1. A. Sreedhara Menon, A Survey of Kerala History

2. M. G. S. Narayanan, Foundations of South Indian Society and Culture

3. Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, Studies in Kerala history

4. Rajan Gurukkal and Raghava Warriar, *Kerala Charitram*

5. K. N. Ganesh, *Keralatthinte Innalekal*

