

**A LINEAGE SYSTEM IN TRANSITION :
PATTERNS, PROCESSES AND SYSTEMIC ADJUSTMENTS**

CASE STUDIES FROM KSHATRIYA MATRILINY

*Dissertation submitted
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Philosophy of
the Jawaharlal Nehru University*

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I hereby declare that the research for this dissertation titled " *A LINEAGE SYSTEM IN TRANSITION: PATTERNS, PROCESSES AND SYSTEMIC ADJUSTMENTS - CASE STUDIES FROM KSHATRIYA MATRILINY* " being submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy was carried out entirely by me at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum.

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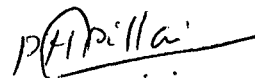
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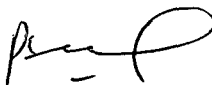
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

Family, kinship, inheritance system and production relations are often been suggested as clues to a clearer comprehension of the processes of change in the socio-economic organisation of the society at large. This study makes use of this suggestion.

Kinship and Economy : Linkages

Labour Force Regeneration

There are atleast two ways in which the kinship structure and economy are inter-related. In the modes of social organisations in lineage based societies, kinship structures dominate not only in the logical system of reproduction of the clan, but also in ensuring its immediate survival, on the plane of economic production. Given that one of the functions of matrimonial relations was the reproduction of labour force, it can be legitimately deduced that physical reproduction was one of the major imperitives that the clan had to encounter in the course of its evolution.

Property Rights

Secondly, and perhaps more vital than labour force regeneration is the economic role of property rights. Kinship patterns have a significant role in determining the control of resources - especially, land and other assets in pre-industrialised societies.

Situation-Specificity

However, what concrete forms of socio-economic organisation have

been assumed by Kinship structures depends on the conditions which the group had to deal with in the arrangement of its material life. Thus the method of devolution, whether patrilineal or matrilineal and the rationale to be respected in matrilineal arrangements, constitute the systems which maintain the equilibrium between the productive forces and the means of production. Thus, each clan, produced original structures in its particular situation.

Of central importance, in this context is an analysis of lineage systems. The two major system lineages identified by anthropologists are, Patriliney - Lineage from Father to Son and Matriliney - Lineage from Mother to children. However, the nature of organisation of kinship structure in these two types, have shown diverse patterns. In this study, we would focus on the Matriliney system of inheritance as it existed among a section of Caste Hindus in Kerala, the Kshatriyas. Kerala, as D.D.Kosambi (1954:22) has pointed out, is a society that transformed itself into the plough economy at a later phase in history compared to other regions in India, which according to him explained the protracted existence of the system down to the 20th century.

Matrilineal Kinship : The Kerala Case

1

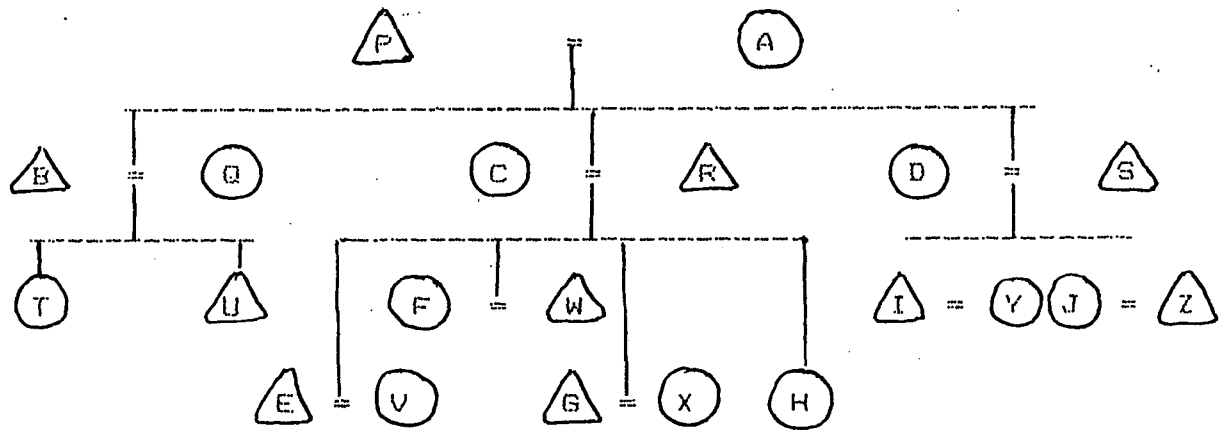
Adoption of Marumakkathayam , a form of Matrilineal kinship among certain communities in Kerala could have been in response to such socio-economic compulsions in specific point of times. The most characteristic feature of matrilineal kinship is the matrilineal inheritance system that ensures the succession of property through the female line. While in substantial part of

the world, matrilineal inheritance system has been substituted by patrilineal inheritance system (System of inheritance through the male line), its survival in the Marumakkathayam system of Kerala has received universal academic interest (Engels 1884, Gough 1961, Aberle 1961, Mencher 1965, Fuller 1976, Puthenkulam 1977, Moore 1985).

The term Marumakkathayam literally means the system of inheritance through the sister's children. The central concept is that Tharavad the matrilineal homestead², is impartible. Although all sons and daughters of a Tharavadu are notionally heirs to the yield of family property, in the next generation, a certain selectiveness is introduced. Thus the children of the daughters, with their maternal uncles and aunts were coparcenaries to their Tharavad while the children of the sons, be they male or female, had no such rights (Refer Chart I). The children of the sons, in their turn, belong to the group of property holders of their mother's Tharavad

Chart I represents the lineage in an imaginary Tharavad. Female 'A' has one son 'B' and two daughters 'C' and 'D'. Both son and daughters have children, but only A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I and J are co-parcenaries to the Tharavad. F, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y and Z do not belong to the Tharavad. The stylisation of the illustration follows the codes normally adopted by anthropologists.

CHART - I.1

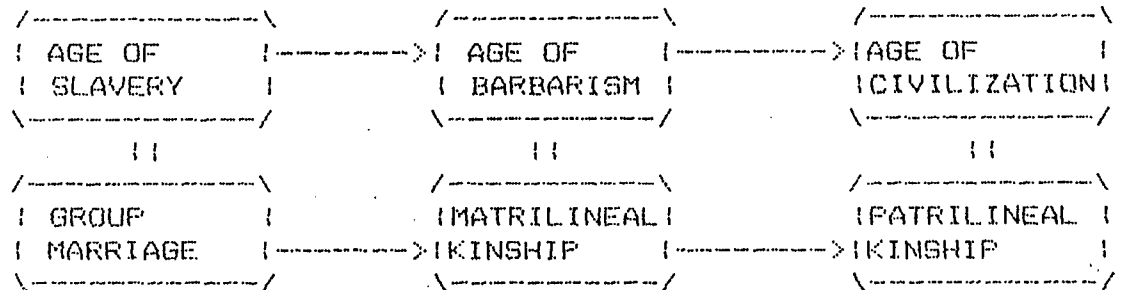


KEY: "○" - Female ; "△" - Male ; "=" -denotes marriage

A Stage in Evolution

One of the most pervasive influences on literature on Matriliney has been the evolutionary role ascribed to it by western theorists. Mc Lennon (1876), Morgan (1877) and Engels (1894) opine that matrilineal kinship was a primitive precursor to what they call the 'more cultured system' of patriliney. From the early condition of promiscuous man-woman relationships, a kind of institution, generally termed 'group marriage' emerged. Group marriage denotes a relationship in which whole groups of men and whole groups of women commonly belong to one another. In such situations, paternity was more or less an undetermined factor. This meant that succession and inheritance could be traced only through the mother. Morgan and Engels consider 'group marriages' as a peculiar characteristic of the 'age of savagery' which preceded the 'age of barbarism'. The sequence of evolution, as postulated by them could be diagrammatically represented as in Chart I.1

CHART 'I'
Stages in the Evolution of Kinship Patterns
Mc Lennon - Morgan - Engels Model



Initially, individual right of ownership was recognised neither in the instruments of production nor in the production and distribution of goods. With increased co-habitation between single pairs and the subsequent development of monogamous marriage, paternity could be asserted. Both Morgan (1887:345) and Engels (1884:56) argue that it was particularly the development of material wealth that gave man a more important status in the family which ultimately made him appropriate the resources and overthrow matriliney.

Change in Means of Production

Nearly a century later, Alberle's vivid phrase 'Cow is the enemy of Matriliney' (1961:680) and Holy's analysis of Tika tribe of Zambia (Holy:1980, as quoted in Saul:1992:344) which depicts 'the Plough' as the 'Enemy of Matriliney' shows indelible influence of Morgan. Both Alberle and Holy reflects Morgan's conclusion that proliferation of divisible and self-generating property such as domesticated animals and the control by men of the principal tools of production such as ploughs are likely to have encouraged shifts away from matriliney.

Descent Theory in Matriliney

Gough's study (1952a, 1952b, 1961) has been the largest anthropological enterprise in using cross-cultural data to formulate a rationalised frame of comparison to matrilineal societies. She employs the descent theory of Forbes (1953) to explain the order in which geneological units expand and contract while remaining the same. For instance, in the case of Marumakkathayamin Kerala, Gough's definition of a Tharavadis as a group of people who "believed themselves to be descendants of common ancestors", and whose developmental cycle follows a geneological logic' (Gough:1961:323-343). By splitting her discussion of the Tharavad so as to consider it as a clan, a lineage and a property group, Gough observes the significance of the fact that this single term covers her three units. In fact, the acceptance of clan, lineage and property group as conventional kinship terminology by subsequent writers (Goody:1972, Fuller:1976) should be taken as an indirect tribute to her painstaking work.

More recently, Gough's use of descent theory is increasingly discredited theoretically and empirically (Holy:1979, Verdon:1982). Following Kuper (1982), Melinda Moore argues that descent theory compartmentalises phenomena into domains and destroys continuities among kinship, political systems and

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economic systems (Moore 1985:525). In its extreme, the descent theory was accused of arguing that with the minimisation of the role of the Father, in Marumakkathayam exogamy among Nayars itself is on the verge of collapse (Gough:1952b, 1955). Again, in

the Marumakkathayamanalysis, Gough could not fully elucidate the crucial process of the breakdown of Tharavadin the 20th Century. Mencher (1966:154) indirectly provides answer to the anthropologists' search for a viable alternative to descent theory by her observation of how distance-pollution rules were defined with the house compound or Tharavad limits as the reference point. This piece of insight projects the Tharavad as 'a ritually significant house - and - land unit'. Melinda Moore (1985) later develops this into a new frame of comparison of Tharavadas articulating its position in society through rituals

.4

and territorial relations. Moore's elaborate linking of ritual aspects, particularly ancestor-worship, Tharavadshrines, life-cycle rituals and the connotations of auspiciousness which surround marriage, to a Tharavadi relatively new to the Western centered approach in anthropological analyses. She (Moore:1985:537) postulates that matrilineages (and patrilineages) are formed only when there was a ritually significant House-and-land unit around which it can form. This evolution of lineage after the House-and-land unit is in direct contrast with Gough's lineage-to-land development.

Tivazhi - Formation

Moore's model is also better equipped to explain tivazhi formations and also more important, the breakdown stage of Marumakkathayam. Moore's analysis shows that tharavads do not split at times when an overnumbered lineage breaks into tivazhis as Gough's argument goes, but at points where some

members had an opportunity to establish new houses
(Gough:1961:343, Moore 1985:536).

Breakdown Phase

The 'Breakdown Phase' of Marumakkathayam is that which has received continuous attention from anthropologists (Gough 1961, Jeffrey 1973, Fuller 1976). It is also the stage, where many of them fall short of convincing explanations.

In the reading of the breakdown phase, Gough's (1961:631-652) haunting headache seems to be to synchronise the analysis of her own field work data on the matrilineous descent groups of Nayers of Central and North Kerala, Tiyyas of North Kerala and Mappillas of North Kerala with the vast cross-cultural data (Six societies from four continents - Plateau Tonga, Navaho, Truk, Trohriand, Ashanti and Kerala) in her command. Thus although she discusses at length the "changes in Kerala's structure of production and of occupation brought about by private ownership" and also "the marketability not only of produced goods but also of land and labour", it is evident that for her the predecided villain of the piece is the 'advancing market economy'. A major query on Gough's analysis of Nayar Marumakkathayamis raised by Fuller. If the marketability of land was the cause of decline of matriliney, why did Nayar Tharavads persist as joint property holders for so much longer than those in Thiruvithamkoor (Travancore), when land entered the market in Malabar seventy years before it did in Thiruvithamkoor ?

Jeffrey (1973), is not overly concerned with the analysis of the breakdown phase of Marumakkathayam as his main research concern was not that. But as a writer on social change, with his focus on

a community whose characteristic feature is devolution of property through sisters' children, the breakdown phase does receive his scholarly concern. Jeffrey's most fruitful insight is his identification of a perceived economic contradiction between the matrilineal Nayar community vis-a-vis the patrilineal Syrian Christian community. The most concrete and alarming manifestation of Syrian Christian prosperity was their acquisition of land (Jeffrey 1973:247). This self-perceived differential economic disadvantage holds good in a higher degree in Jeffrey's field of study (Thiruvithamkoor) and not as much in Cochin and Malabar, where the Syrian Christian population is comparatively smaller. In fact, this view combined with his account of the impact of the Great Depression in Thiruvithamkoor in 1930 offers a more convincing reading than a simplistic argument of "advancing market economy".

Fuller's study (1976) is again on the Marumakkathayam of Nayers. Based on field study on Nayers in a village in Southern Kerala, the burden of his work was to propose new arguments about the process of disintegration as it affected the Nayers living in the

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central areas of Kerala. He characterises Marumakkathayamas an ideology regulated partly by the policy variables and partly by the ideology of the economically most mobile faction of the society. This argument about the differential breakup of Tharavadin Malabar, Travancore and Cochin is poised on the rate of acceptance of patrilineal ideologies -- both British and Syrian Christian (Fuller : 145-146).

This argument however seems to be complimentary to another observation made by Jeffrey regarding the working of ideological elements in the breakdown of the Marumakkathayamsystem.

Thus, the basic conclusions that Fuller draws from an impressive amount of socio-economic data he collected from the village he calls Ramankara is apparantly an improvisation of Jeffrey's original proposition.

Ritual - Land Model

As mentioned earlier, Moore's Ritual-land model of the Tharavad responds best to the questions of variance in 20th Century. "What the British did", she writes, " was to destroy the house-and-land unit as a political and ritual entity". (Page 538). Her analysis is indeed pointed at the development of land market, but its impact is interpreted within deviations from previous writers. By activating the economic element in the Tharavad the economic-ritual nexus, a certain de-ritualisation was inevitable. Thus what was once 'a ritually-significant and holistic territorial unit modelled after the indigeneous conception of a kingdom' became 'a piece of property-partible, objectified, alienable'. (Moore:1985)

However, there is a confusion in the further development of her argument. Obviously, Moore treats impartible economic and ritual resource base as the distinguishing feature of a matrilineal Nayar Tharavad. In effect, this impartibility of the ritually significant land unit is true for Nampoothiri Illams also. Illams are notionally partible, but not exactly so in practice.

Intestate devolution of property of a Nampoothiri followed patrilineal primogeniture system. Thus the property was transferred in single piece to a single heir, the eldest son. Naturally, we presume that the land saleability-propelled de-ritualisation would affect the impartibility of Illams also. So, Moore's 'new look at the Nayar Tharavad' encompasses all impartible ritually significant units inclusive of both matrilineal and patrilineal property. In short, her's is an explanation more of the breakdown of joint family, than of matrilinearity. Moore's model would perhaps benefit from a combination with Gough's descent theory.

A GENERAL ASSESMENT

Considering a century old anthropological interest in the Marumakkathayam of Kerala, it is intriguing to encounter grossly insufficient historical moorings and often total misunderstanding of ethnographic data in many anthropological studies.

Lack of Time Perspective

Unnithan's (1974) findings that most of the studies focusing on the matriliney of Nayars lack a time perspective holds water even today. The slow changes taking place in matrilineal clan in recent times were not adequately captured. With specific reference to Nakane (1962), Unnithan writes of 'instant researches' of anthropologists in the 'beautiful land of coconuts' fitting in with their 'sabbatical requirements', but adding little to the existing literature. Nakane's paper, indeed, is Gough (1961) rewritten.

Misunderstandings

It is the amount of misinformation that their analytical

constructs spill out that is more worrying. A book which had been a Graduate level text book in the University of Calicut for a long time introduces the matriliney of Nayars as follows :

" The Nayar caste of South-West India does not have marriage in a strict sense. A wedding ceremony does take place, but the 'husband' leaves his bride after three days. Thereafter, the 'married' woman is free to have liaisons with other men, and any resulting children are regarded as legitimate children of the original 'husband'."

[Johnson, Harry.M (1952), Sociology : A Systematic Introduction, Allied Publishers - Indian Edition p.152]

In fact, Gough (1959. PartII) herself admits that some of her early papers on Nayars had been responsible for wrong conclusions culminating in statements like 'notion of fatherhood is lacking among Nayars' even from eminent writers like Leach and Levi - Strauss. This misunderstanding of Talikettukalyanam and Sambandham persists even in recent literature. Sometimes, controversies stirred out of non-issues like whether the ethymology of Marumakkathayam springs from 'marumakka' + 'ayam' (Moore 1985, based on an informant) or 'Marumakka' + 'dayam' (Gough 1961, Fuller 1976, based on Gundert's dictionary) is jarring to the native reader, who can immediately identify the pure semsantic nature of the quarrel. Ignorance of language and excessive reliance on interpreters limit the perceptions of non-Kerala Scholars. Nevertheless, it is the ignorance of the larger society in which the Nayar Tharavad is placed, which makes attempts at analysis like Moore's (1985) to err by measuring

matrilineal Tharavad and Nampoothiri Illams with the same yardstick.

Select Aspects Only

While there has been ample commentaries on specific aspects of Marumakkathayam like visiting husbands and polyandry among Nayers (Panikkar T.K.Gopala, 1900; Panikkar K.M., 1910; Raman Unni K., 1956) and on Nayar community in general (Fawcet 1903, Thurston 1906) and on the legal aspects of matriliney in Malabar (Joseph 1918, Balakrishnan 1981, Wigram 1900), the actual complexities connected with a comprehensive understudy of the Marumakkathayam system still awaits scholarly attention. In this study also however, we propose to tackle only one such hitherto unexplained aspect of Marumakkathayam in Kerala.

Gender Status

The gender status in Marumakkathayam is one aspect that has been mentioned extensively by various observers. Equality in education, property rights, social life and cultural growth, characteristic of matriliney has been ascribed as assuring 'always a voice to women' (Menon K.P.S., 1971:4; Pillai, 1940:43). This image took roots so effectively that people outside the matrilineal world even tended to equate matriliney with matriarchy. ⁶

Such adulation of gender status in Marumakkathayam is confusing in view of the fact that, in a Tharavad, women always did not have control over her domestic economic resources. ⁷ In this context, the claims of 'enjoying equal political and property

rights' coming from a female ruler of Thiruvithamkoor^B, whose access to the throne itself was possible only because of the temporary absence of an adult male heir, sounds self-deceptive. Secondly, what was the impact of the transition from matriliney? Jeffrey (1987, 1992) forcibly argues that matriliney was the cultural base of Kerala which made the high female literacy and the declining birth-rate of the present day possible.⁽⁹⁾ But the first to recognise the dissolution of matriliney as 'a retrograde change from the feminist standpoint' was Aiyappan (1944 : 122). "Does the legacies of the past, education, employment and even visibility need emancipate women?" The question raised by Saradamony (1922 : 44) needs further consideration.

Too Nayar Oriented

A substantial portion of the studies on Marumakkathayam are based on Marumakkathayam on Nayers. Appendix I would show that there are atleast twenty Matrilineal communities in Kerala. Except for Aiyappan (1944) and Gough (1961) for commentary on Marumakkathayam among Tiyyas, Dube (1969) and Gough (1961) on Mappilla Muslims and for Pandor (1963) on some aspects of Marumakkathayam among tribals, prime anthropological attention was given to Marumakkathayam of Nayers, eclipsing interest in any other communities. Although Puthenkalam's (1976) original contribution is his firsthand ethnographic material on Payyannur Thirumumbus, with its elaborately descriptive work has been utilised by subsequent anthropologists, mostly, as a database for ritual cycles in a Nayar Tharavad.

This kind of almost total reliance on a single community to bring out the essential features of social change might lead to oversimplification and reductive conclusions. In the broad matrix of differentiated economic, ritual and ecological bases among the different Marumakkathayam communities (Refer Appendix I), there is bound to be ethnographic variance as well. All this is likely to have varying repercussions on the longterm dynamics of matrilineal kinship in each community.

To illustrate, consider the Tiyyas of the Malabar. For a community, not of landed gentry, but of labourers, the matrilineal sentiment rather than ancestral property was the adhesive principle among them. The timing of the gradual decay of Marumakkathayam in such a community would probably be significantly different as in that of a Kshatriya¹⁰ community which was insulated from the outside world by its own ritual preoccupations.

The crucial fact that rapid nuclearisation of matrilineal homesteads did not take place among the Kshatriyas made them vulnerable to land reform legislations based upon individual or nuclear homestead considerations. Much of the land under common Tharavad property was considered either as surplus land or were subject to tenancy abolition regulations. Thus when partition finally took place, the per capita land share for a Kshatriya Tharavad member is much smaller than expected (Varghese, 1970). Does this 'structural dysfunction' created by matriliney (Lemerrier - 1983: P 224) combined with the royal patronage over the years make them ill-equipped to meet the economic challenges

of modern times ? Because of the tightness of Marumakkathayam, does this community face a crisis in comparison ? Was the gender status in Kshatriya community as remarkable as the gender status delineated in the matriline literature ?

Scope of the Study

The present study ventures to look into the contemporary consequences of the changes in the norms and practices of Marumakkathayam and how they are linked to production and accumulation, to political processes within communities and the resultant transformation effected in the role of women in society. The delayed transition of Marumakkathayam in Kshatriya community affords us an opportunity to study this community in detail, and thus to come to certain amount of understanding with relation to the aforementioned aspects.

The broad objectives of this study may be summarised as follows :

- ** Tracing the origin and breakdown of Marumakkathayam against a changing socio-economic background.
- ** Analysing the factors that insulated Kshatriya community from the immediate impact of the transition and their survival strategies in the new economic context
- ** Evaluating the status transformation of a Kshatriya woman, corresponding to the transition from Marumakkathayam to bilateral devolution and nuclearised families of recent times

What is the exact impact of the transition from one inheritance system to another on Kshatriya community, in general, and on its gender status, in particular ? For instance, does a time lag in the partition of Tharavad mean greater vulnerability to the land reforms which further means that when the partition ultimately takes place, the per capita inheritance of land is very low ?

Given the sudden withdrawal of financial allowances and the social status with democratisation, what are the resource management techniques followed by the Kshatriya community? How has the changes affected the members, especially women, in terms of Economic mobility, Family income, Land ownership, Educational opportunities, Employment opportunities, Migration, Participation in outside social activities, and Demographic factors like age of marriage, fertility decline, etc.,

FIELD OF STUDY

Considering the heterogeneous (see Appendix I for sub-divisions of Kshatriya community) nature and the highly skewed spatial distribution of the Kshatriya community, choosing a field of study is difficult.

There are Kshatriya clans which enjoyed extensive land privileges, but had no claim to royal authority; There are clans that had high social status vis-a-vis their royal and ritual status, but not on the basis of much landed assets; There were also clans whose economic strength was unquestionable, but Kshatriya status was socially suspect.

Over and above, there was bound to be regional differences as well. To represent the earlier political demarcations of Kerala as Thiruvithamkoor, Kochi and Malabar, the Kshatriya clans who were the ruling families of Poonjar, Kochi and Kollengode respectively were picked out for close study.

METHOD

Isolating the inter-linkages between the material reality of Marumakkathayam and Kshatriya culture is hardly a subject that a statistical survey can handle fruitfully. Although statistical findings and tabulations are priceless tools in macro-level quantifications, it is unwise to apply them to an economy well embedded in the socio-cultural fabric. To a large extent, it is the de-structurisation effected in the ritual and social identity of a community, by the implantation of colonial capitalism that is the main theme of this analysis.

However, we are not content with purely economic explanations like 'advancing market economy' or tradition-modernisation dichotomy arguments. To analyse the essentials of Marumakkathayam, one has to trace very specific time paths without reducing, in oversimplification, the complexity of the finer linkages between culture and economic reality. For this, the case study method seems more ideal.

Thus the Kshatriya clans who were the erstwhile ruling families of Poonjar, Kochi and Kollengode are taken as case studies for studying the Marumakkathayam of Kshatriyas. Here, we have to distinguish between the unique status enjoyed by Thiruvithamkoor and Kochi, who remained in power, at least notionally, till 1947; and others who in public memory were also ruling till the advent of the British or the centralisation of Thiruvithamkoor ; which resulted in the unseating of Poonjar

The case studies are expected to give insights into different strategies adopted by Kshatriya clans in the face of wide systemic changes. The assumption is that the Kshatriyas being numerically small and a "priveleged" community, with current or past ruling status, their adaptation to the transition phase of Marumakkathayam was different from other communities. Here, the changes had to occur not only in terms of inheritance systems and gender status, but also in direct inter-linkages with ritual, royal and social obligations. The elaborateness of the system that was to be changed, itself caused slowness of adaptation ; and to wide ranging diversity between clans.

SECONDARY DATA

The socio-political importance of the ruling clans has assured that vestiges of their past customs would be preserved in the form of atleast fragmentary Grandhavaris and some amount of family records. Material drawn from the State Central Archives in Trivandrum and The Regional Archives in Cochin for contemporary references to the clans under study were utilised. Back-issues of the family magazines of Cochin Royal Clan, Gosrivishesham and the Kollenkode Collection in the library of Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum were helpful in understanding the historical dimensions of certain social processes.

PRIMARY DATA

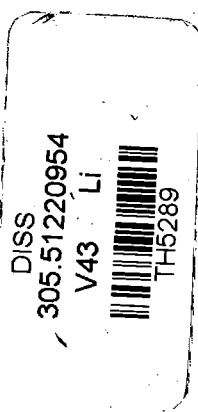
The importance of primary data in any kind of anthropological study can not be exaggerated. Here the pertinent method is the participant observation, used by anthropologists for study of cultures.

Participant observation method was first developed by Bronislaw Malinowski during the years 1914-18, for his field work in the Trobriand Islands near New Guinea. A concise statement of the main features of the method and its potentialities form the first chapter of his famous work, **Argonauts of the Western Pacific** (1922).

In brief, the method consists in the researcher spending a sufficiently long period of time in the community under study, collecting a considerable quantity of information by direct observation, interviewing knowledgeable elders, charting the geneologies of various kin-groups and quantifying the data whenever necessary.

In the present study, altogether three to four months were spent continuously on field study with a couple of re-visits later to fill in the gaps in the data collected. In the all the three clans under study, the migration of many members made a comprehensive view difficult. In the Poonjar case, this was dealt with by shifting our contemporary focus to the demographically largest Taavazhi in the clan, most of whose members could be interviewed. In Kollenkode, all that are left of the ruling clan are a few deserted buildings and some prolonged litigations. Most members had to be met at Madras and Bangalore.

The main defect in the methodology actually used was that the process of matrilineal existense was already a thing of the past. Therefore this study had to depend heavily upon recorrections, reconstructions and use of historical material. Thus, the



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methodology adopted here may better be described as a blend of participant observations and first hand reporting. The fact of being a member of a Kshatriya family over professional experience of being a journalist provided certain advantages.

CHAPTER SCHEME

The second chapter is intended to provide a time frame for the study. After broadly discussing the Reversal / Continuation debate of Marumakkathayam that has plagued historians of Kerala in the recent times, this section proceeds to depict the economic transition of late Nineteenth Century and thereafter, as a backdrop to the breakdown of Marumakkathayam.

The aim of the third chapter is to give a socio-economic profile of the Kshatriya community and also the Samanthas from where we have picked the Kollenkode clan. After functionally placing them in their hierarchial position vis-a-vis Nayars and Nampoothiris, the differences of Marumakkathayam in Kshatriyas with Nayar Marumakkathayam are discussed.

The case studies and the comparative analysis are proposed in the fourth chapter.

The fifth chapter summarises the arguments alongwith some concluding observations.

* = * = * = * = * = * = * = *

NOTES

- 1) The word Marumakkathayam will be hereafter used whenever referring to Matriliney in Kerala
- 2) Inadequency of translation to convey the precise meaning of certain terms like Tharavad compells us to use them in their vernacular form.

"Tharavad is the ancestral homestead of matrilineal castes. The properties belonging to the Tharavad are unalienable and impartible in principle. A Tharavad would consist of several branches of Kinship relations emanating from a continuous stem of ancestral inheritance. These branches are called Tāvazhis meaning collateral branches by the mother's side. The head of the Tharavad is the senior-most maternal uncle who holds supervisory powers over the common family property and normally, he is the final decision making authority.

"Tharavad" , therefore is not simply the physical form of residential structure, but designates a set of kinship relations in a matrilineal homestead.

- 3) Even while using terms like 'Clan', 'Lineage' and 'Property Group' having political, kinship and economic connotations, Gough takes care to compartmentalise each concept.
- 4) See Dumont L.,1964 - A Note on Locality in Relation to Descent, Contributions to Indian Sociology, 7, 71-6, for a detailed exploration of the literature on kinship and territory in South India.
- 5) Fuller, in response to Man (N.S.) 20, complains that Melinda Moore does not acknowledge Mencher (1966) or Dumont (1964) from whom she received clues to a locality - based model of Tharavad
- 6) Saradamony (1992) mentions two documentaries telecast by Doordarshan that bears testimony to this confusion.
- 7) "Even in the so-called Matriarchal Societies, men actually carry out the business of ruling" (Linton R, 1936 - A Study of Man, London, MacMillan & Co., p 226)
- 8) H.H.Maharani Sethu Parvati Bayi's Presidential address to the 10 th session of the All India Women's Conference at Trivandrum in 1935, as quoted by Velu Pillai (1940).

- 9) The willingness of families to educate their daughters and marry them late is the greatest single factor in explaining Kerala's declining birth-rate. This has been possible because of a Matrilineal background [Sushama P.N, 1989 - 'Martial Fertility Control in a Kerala Village - A Micro Demographic Study', Ph.D Thesis in Demography, Canberra, Australian National University, 1989, pp 95-125, as quoted by Jeffrey (1992)]
- 10) The Kshatriya community is traditionally recognised as the inter-caste between Nampoothiris and Nayars. Their functional position in the traditional Kerala society was as a defender and protector of the State and its assets. Apparently, the Kshatriya caste was created by the Nampoothiris with this in mind, an aspect, which we shall delve into deeply, later.

CHAPTER II

ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

CHAPTER II

Rationalising Marumakkathayam within a time frame is important to the present study. By emphasising the time-depth of the social processes involved, the ethnography presented in the succeeding chapters is displaced from centrestage to become a moment in a processual flow.

Lack of aligned discussions on the origin of marumakkathayam between the historians of Kerala and anthropologists working on Kerala has hampered an overall perception of its dynamics. The vast literature on the marumakkathayam of Kerala tends to run in two mutually non-convergent tracks - anthropological and historical. While the concern of the anthropologists has been in the transformation phase, the historians, predictably enough, dwelt on the origin of marumakkathayam in Kerala.

MARUMAKKATHAYAM: ORIGIN : IT'S SOCIO ECONOMIC ROOTS

During the last fifty years, there has been intense debates as to what exactly was the evolutionary sequence of Kerala's kinship pattern with reference to the Morgan Scheme (Refer Chart II in chapter I).

The collective wisdom before the debate

The tradition in Keralolppathi (Ed: Gundert.N.p.) was that Parasurama ordained the Sudra women of Kerala to forsake their chastity and consort with Brahmins. The initial conjectures of anthropologists was that matriliney in Kerala was an anachronic survival of an inheritance and kinship practice from the age of Barbarism (Thurston 1906, Fawcett 1915). Although, Ehrenfels

(1941:185) on the basis of similarities in mother right in Assam and South India, offered a theory that a group from the Indus Valley migrated to South India, his pre-supposition that all Dravidians are matrilineal blunted his logic.

The Course of the Debate

Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, was the central figure in the debate on the origin of marumakkathayam in Kerala. Based on Padmanabha Menon's doubts whether Nairs were actually matrilineal from the beginning (1929:II:686) he set upon a trail of epigraphic evidences seeking the details of the inheritance system in ancient Kerala. It was the course of the study and theorisations that ignited a subsequent debate.

There are two distinct stages in the formulation of Elamkulam's theory. According to him, the rulers of Kerala had followed Patriliney and later shifted to matriliney.

1. Initially, he hypothesized that Udaya Marthanda Varma Veera Pandyan, nephew of the Chera king Jayasimhan was the pioneer of the matrilineal devolution in Kerala. In 1312, he is said to have seized power from Jayasimhan's son (Kunjan Pillai 1952: 20,21). Later he abandoned this evidence.

2. Examining the stanzas from Pathittupathu, he observed that in the Sangham period (5th & 6th century A.D) Chera kings had followed Patriliney (Kunjan Pillai 1953:54).

On the basis of this evidence, Elamkulam was convinced that Marumakkathayam was prompted by a powerful exogenous force acting

upon the Patrilineal devolutions of rulers and the ruled. Thus he regards Marumakkathayam as the product of compelling socio economic forces let loose by the Chera - Chola war of 11 th century AD. He has pointed out that the political and religious dominance of the Nampoothiris, their economic ascendancy as the Janmis of Kerala and introduction of compulsory military training leading to the formation of Suicide - squads or Chavers during the Chera - Chola war were the compelling circumstances which led to the switchover (Kunjan Pillai :1953:196)

Elamkulam Tradition and Minor Variants.

Elamkulam's rationale of the shift to Marumakkathayam was well accepted by later historians. However, M.G.S.Narayanan suspects that the transformation took place not in the 11th and 12th centuries as Elamkulam proposes, but atleast before the 10th century. He points out that the Mushikavamsa Kavya, a Sanskrit historical poem of the 12th century depicting 10th century events, shows that the Chola dyanasty, related by marriage to the Cheras had accepted Marumakkathayam (Narayanan : 1966:62). Later historians like Sreedhara Menon (1967), Gopalakrishnan (1974) and Veluthatt Kesavan (1978:P.3-7) synchronised to this position.

Demand - Supply Factors in the Accepted Theories

To summarize the accepted wisdom of Elamkulam and his ideological successors, the origin of Marumakkathayam in a demand - supply nexus would be as follows;

On the Demand side, was the high male-female ratio among the Nampoothiris and secondly, the primo-geniture inheritance system of Nampoothiris. As it generally happens among migrating communities, the pioneering settlers had only a limited number of women of their own community to accompany them (Narayanan : 1966:61). Secondly the primo-geniture inheritance system barred all Nampoothiri males other than the eldest, from marrying from their own communities (Kunjan Pillai :1953:194,195)

On the Supply side, was the military conscription of the matrilineal communities like Nayers to serve as warriors in what Elankulam calls the " Hundred Years War ". Since this made interests in family property difficult for males, inheritance shifted to the female line (Kunjan Pillai :1953:192 - 195). Note a certain tilt towards the demand side, showing that Marumakkathayam among Nayers was a necessity to immigrant Nampoothiris.

Over the years, Elankulam's postulates have been questioned on three fronts, namely :

1. The semantics of epigraphic evidence.
2. Caste and ideological differences.
3. Logical grounds.

While the first mentioned problem is clear enough, the caste and ideological differences have so much tampered with logical reasoning, that it is difficult to differentiate between the two.

Epigraphic Semantics

Sangham Literature (5th,6th centuries), in fact, is not very clear whether inheritance system was patrilineal or matrilineal (Raghava Warriar and Rajan Gurukkal 1992). Elamkulam's argument that Chera rulers followed Patriliney is hinged on the interpretation of a word " Devi " in certain stanzas of Pathittupathu as meaning " Daughter ".

But, by Somasundara Bharathi's, reading of the word " Devi " in this context, the same Chera rulers that Elamkulam delineated as following Patriliney is viewed as Matrilineal [Bharathi, in Chenthamil, Vol XXVII p 119-22, as quoted by Damodaran, 1991, 3rd edition (First Edition 1962)].

In the debate which went on for years in Elamkulam's own time in the columns of Chenthamil and leading English dailies of the time, Somasundara Bharathi was supported by Tamil scholars M.Sreenivasa Iyengar and Mahamahapadhyaya Swaminatha Iyer. Elamkulam's interpretations was backed by G.Vaidyanatha Iyer, the translator of Patittupathu and Tamil Scholars like Neelakantha Sastri, M.Raghava Iyengar and K.G.Sesha Iyer (Damodaran 1991).

Caste, Ideological and Logical Differences

The logic of Elamkulam's arguments were questioned by Kanippayoor Nampoothiripad (1962), K.Damodaran (1962), Nampoothiripad E.M.S.(1969) and by Balakrishnan P.K. (1983). The prime concern of Kanippayoor was to repudiate the insinuation that it were

the Nampoothiris who caused Marumakkathayam and institutionalised the lack of chastity among Nayar females. Defying Pillai's epigraphic evidence, he argued that it was the Nampoothiri immigrants who brought development to a race of people still clinging to their tribal characteristics (Kanippayoor Nampoothiri : 1962:I).

Following the Engelian interpretation, Damodaran (1991:First Edition 1962) points out that the ancient people of Kerala lived for long under a sort of primitive communism and Marumakkathayam devolution is borne out by the evidence from Sangham works. Only uppercaste Nayars generally took to soldiery (Puthenkulam 1977:28) When the tribal clans became caste clans, one of the remains of the tribal tradition that was retained was the Marumakkathayam (p158-60). Like Damodaran, E.M.S.Nampoothiripad (1969:23-25) also discredits the theory of Nampoothiri domination and the Nayar military life causing Marumakkathayam among Nayars. He points out that there were many communities in India like Punjabis who adopted military life like Nayars, but did not accept matriliney. It is also wrong to say that all Nayars went to war, when there were agriculturists among them as well. ⁴

P.K.Balakrishnan postulates that while between 800 BC and 500 BC, societies in Ganges plains cleared the monsoon forests and evolved to more developed plough agriculture (1987:234), most people of Kerala, in the period between 1000 AD and 1500 AD remained more or less mutually separated food gathering societies scattered in the forests. (1987:226) Through intellectual

domination through a better knowledge and monopoly of agricultural technology, Panchangam (the agricultural calendar), a more evolved communication medium of language and by giving ritual acceptances to these, the Nampoothiri immigrants initiated agricultural development. ⁵ (1987 :p234, p346). He discredits the theory of high male female ratio causing the Nampoothiris to have Sambandham alliances with Nayar women by the fact that Nampoothiris came to Kerala as settlers and not merely as itinerants. Like K.Damodaran and E.M.S.Nampoothiripad, his reasoning is that Matriliney was already prevalent among the tribes, before the advent of Nampoothiris (1987:338-386).

The debate descended into equating respective positions held by each historian with his caste background and prejudices. While Kanippayyoor Sankaran Nampoothiripad and E.M.S. Nampoothiripad were accused of reacting to the issue with the caste spirit of Nampoothiri versus Nayar, Damodaran, the same E.M.S. Nampoothiripad and others of the Marxist school were accused of trying to be loyal to the Engel theory. Balakrishnan's denunciation that Elankulam's magnificent second Chera Empire was more a mental construct than history and his invalidation of Nayar dominance vis-a-vis Nampoothiri dominance was considered as an Ezhava's reaction to a Nayar historian.

A Critical Assessment

Going through the debate disregarding such marginal considerations, one tends to feel that an established custom like patriliney reversing to matriliney purely to suit a dominant

theocracy appear against all laws of natural development. Although it is difficult to share the iconoclastic delight of Balakrishnan in diminishing the large corpus of research evidences on Kulasekhara Empire, there are elements of logic in his hypothesis that calls for re-appraisal.

For example, his development of Damodaran's arguments that matrilineal tribes in Kerala evolved to become matrilineal castes thus explain the Marumakkathayam in castes like Mapilla Muslims, Channans and hill tribes whose interaction with Nampoothiris are minimal. However, the arrival of Nampoothiris with their primogeniture pattern might have served to reinforce this tribal custom. In the next section, we shall examine the socio-economic conditons that cemented the existence of Marumakkathayam.

SECTION II CONSOLIDATION : SOCIAL, RITUAL AND ECONOMIC ELEMENTS Land, Ritual and Hyperqamy

Land had always been a crucial link in the relation between the Nampoothiri settlers and the native chieftains. It was through gifts to Brahmins that chieftains throughout India attained vedic and later angamic ritual sanction and social acceptance. ⁶

In Kerala, this interaction of land and ritual have served to reinforce the prevalence of Marumakkathayam already existent in the society. Let us examine how.

Theocratic Oligarchy in the Temples

With the establishment of 32 large Brahmin settlements and other subsidiary settlements before the close of eighth century, temples

had become the cornerstones of the socio-economic structure of Kerala. ⁷

Besides Kings, Chieftains and ordinary cultivators, Brahmins themselves donated land to these temples. The management of the temple properties were vested with a council known as Ur or Sabha consisting of Uralers. Quoting epigraphic records, Kesavan (1978) shows how Ur, composed exclusively of Brahmins, underwent swift development receiving gifts of land and gold, whole villages, sometimes from Princes, Chieftains, Merchants, Brahmins, Devadasis and others. The donations of gold were also invested in lands that was leased out to tenants on liberal terms and temple servants were usually remunerated by the assignment of land on service tenures. In their corporate capacity, the Brahmin Uralers were the biggest landlords of Kerala. Here three facts seem pertinent:

- 1) There was an early preference for arable land ⁸
- 2) The rate of increase in the extent of cultivated land held as Dewaswom property was rapid
- 3) By the 11 th and 12 th centuries Uraler position had become hereditary (Kesavan 1978)

Accumulation of vast landed wealth and the representative role of the temple deity gave the Brahmin Uralers great authority. The clever interaction of the lord-tenant relationship and priest-devotee relations was a unique feature of land terms in Kerala.

Hypergamy Route to Land Control

A possibility that spontaneously offers itself in this context is that the hypergamy of females in their clans to Nampoothiris was a strategy devised by the tenants to gain sway over the Uralers who controlled their lands. In the 10th century, Uralers at Sukapuram and Avittattur were prohibited from courting alliances with the women of the tenants.¹⁰ To avoid complication, it was often prescribed that Uralers and their close relatives should not be welcomed as tenants of temple. These specifications could be understood as clear indications that Nampoothiri - Sudra relations defying the Brahminical scriptures already existed on the sly.

An asset-conservation character of Nampoothiri Illams was the strict observation of the primogeniture inheritance system¹¹. Although one does not know when the first formally sanctified hypergamy took place, it could not have been long before the Nampoothiris realised how well the hypergamy fitted with their primogeniture framework and the orthodox Brahmin tradition relaxed its scriptures to accommodate it¹².

It is worth remembering that the Nampoothiri in the early 11th century represented the epitome of technological advancement, economic and political power and ritual status. The inclusion of this ritual-technological-economic power block in the Matrilineal structure of the tenants was conditional - Brahmaswam properties would not devolve to his non-Brahmin children. Even then, this

was sufficient social sanction to institutionalise Marumakkathayam among the tenants. As hypergamy consolidated Marumakkathayam among rulers and petty chieftains, the Marumakkathayam practices in the common people that persisted from their tribal days were also reinforced.

Thus in 1518, after spending several years on the Malabar coast, a Portugese traveller who learnt Malayalam describes a Nayar marriage in detail, thus: " These men are not married, their nephews (sisters' sons) are their heirs. The Nayre women of good birth are very independant and dispose of themselves as they please with Brahmenes and Nayres, but they do not sleep with men of caste lower than their own under pain of death" (Barbosa:1921:40).

OCCUPATION PATTERN AND THE GROWTH OF THARAVAD

Barbosa's reasoning of Matriliney also provokes discussions:

" the kings of Nayres instituted it (Matriliney) in order that the Nayres should not be held back from their service by the burden and labour of rearing children " (1921:42-5)

We have already discussed that the military character of a race is not sufficient reason for them to shift to matriliney. But the disattachement of young men from land characteristic of a military culture was much conducive to preserve the matrilineal elements already existing in the soil. That this physical culture was the essentialist mode of Nayar life is richly expressed in the dying tradition of indigeneous games and

festivities like Onattallu (mock fights during Onam), Ochirakkali (mock fights on Ochira temple grounds) and Velakkali (mock war-dance).

A traveller to Calicut in 1508, gives a vivid description of Nayars' military training - "from the age of seven or so, Nayar boys begin their physical training, taking part in many exercises and massaging their limbs with sesame oil." ¹³ A more professional eye of the French commander Bourdonnais in 1725 does not reflect a high opinion of their overall army logistics, but admits that "they have no calling, but the military" ¹⁴ .

A picture of Kerala emerging as a network of feudatories constantly warring with one another for land and power was relevant atleast till the end of the 18 th century. In 1677, a Dutch commander notes with interest the military potential of 31 petty kingdoms in Kerala which in total adds upto 15 lakhs soldiers (Van Reed's Memorandum written 1677, English translation V.K.Raman Menon, Rama Varma Research Institute Bulletin No:IV P.15-19). It appears that the importance of physical culture even transcended caste barriers. Miller (1949:170) observes that in a Kalari, even a Nayar student prostrated before a Tiyya Guru. ¹⁵

The military culture had an economic value as well. A young man graduating from a Kalari was at once enrolled by one of the feudal Chieftains who gave him a "Viruthi" - a land gift. In north Kerala, this is called Kulichekom, in lieu of pay. These

Viruthi lands became the preoperty of the Matrilineage. Soldiers had personal insurance as well as family insurance - "The King is obliged to maintain the mother and nephews of Nayres who fell in battle, and forthwith assigns them a pension". (Barbosa:1921:34-5)

Emotional disattachment of young men from their family land and wealth accumulation in the family coffers inherent in these retainer arrangements must have had powerful impetus in the emergence of matrilineages as Tharavads with its territorial and organisational implications. While the territorial extensions of land assured economic and social status, the lack of development of close attachments between the women of the clan to their husbands made the Karnavar's authority total. Tharavad derives its name from the word Thara, which was a quasi-political organisation. Karnavars of different Tharas formed what is known as Desam in north and Kara in south.

This military avocation of the males of some matrilineal castes like Kshatriyas, Nayars, some sections of Thiyyas, supplemented the consolidation of Marumakkathayam in these communities.

WEALTH TO RITUALS

Economic prosperity breded yearn for social status which in the era of Nampoothiri superiority meant ritual acceptances closest on scale to Nampoothiri. Gradual sanctification of the Tharavad with rituals associated with stages in one's life cycle was in one sense reflective of the wealth of the Tharavad. These life cycle rituals took many forms - Kathukuthu (piercing of the ears), Ezhuthiniruthal (initiation to Kalari, in early days),

Talikettukalyanam (pre-puberty rites) and Therandupattu (puberty rites) and so on. Even among Thiyyas who were supposed to be outside the four fold caste structure, these practices used to be followed.

Deducing how early in time these rituals were adopted is largely a matter of conjecture. In Vadakkan Pattukal, ballads assumed to belong to the oral tradition of 13 th century, we are told of four stages in a girl's life cycle. Aromal Chekavar (The Hero), on the eve of what was to be his last duel, entrusts his sister Unniyarcha to another brother with the following words :

" We have only one sister
At five years, were her Kathukuthu,
And at seven, put to Kalari,
Was taught and trained to fence,
Her hair was tied at eight years,
Thus was her studies done,
When Kunhiraman of Attummanamel,
Married her in her tenth year,
Tying the Tali and took her away "

- Vadakkan Pattukal (written 13 th century ?)
(Santha Book Stall, 1990 Edn.P.187-188)

(Note: only an English translation is used)

The last sentence holds testimony to the fact that Marumakkathayam in its full-fledged form was not practiced at least by a section of Thiyyas, since the girl in this context, is being married away to another family.

But, this special reference to Kathukuthu, putting to Kalari, tying the hair and Talikettu is broadly suggestive of such rituals in 13 th century. However, interpolations of Vadakkan Pattukal in later years by many poets has been considered a

possibility (Raghavan :1929:121, Ayappan :1941:63-83) and as in the case of any folk tradition, one needs to be wary. But the fact that accounts of almost every foreign traveller to Kerala from the time of Barbosa (early 16 th century) is enlivened by the mention of Talikettukalyanam and its regional variations is sufficient testimony to the relative antiquity of the ritual element.

Talikettukalyanam is one ritual which has endured endless, sometimes strange interpretations from various sources. While to some, this pre-puberty rite is "analogous to the consecration of Devadasis in the East coast " (Thurston : 1906 : 327) or, " a relic of pre-nuptial defloration " (Westermarck, as quoted by Puthenkulam : 1977 :49). There were even suggestions that this symbolised " marriage to a group " (Gough : 1961 : 370).

Interpretations notwithstanding, it is possible that many of these rituals were initially lavish gestures investing on social capital, and later in keeping up the social status attained thereby. The incorporation of ritual into the Tharavad, as in the case of inclusion of hypergamy, made Marumakkathayam more firmly entrenched in the socio-economic fabric of Kerala.

SECTION III

The conditions that consolidated Marumakkathayam in early history more or less continued into the 19th century. In the 19th and 20th century, legal abolition of Marumakkathayam in Kerala was effected through the growing pressure on the Government from specific communities, particularly Nayers. The Matrilineal dilemma was most acute for Nayers because they had old standards, and ideas of their station to maintain.

Let us look into the changing socio-economic firmament that dramatised the perceived crisis for the Nayar community. This has its roots in early 18th century.

Shifts in Male Employment Pattern

A compulsive shift from the military occupation of Nayar males was effected once the British came into power. After annexing Malabar in 1792, the British disbanded the armies and Nayar men returned to their Tharavads. This shift in the employment pattern from military to land probably reduced polygamous unions in family life.¹⁷ Similar transformations must have been effected in the family fabrics of Tharavads with the demobilisation of the traditional Nayar brigades in Kochi and Thiruvithamkoor following the treaty between these princely states and the British in the early decades of the 19th century.

Secondly, dismantling of the military forces of the native rulers meant increasing mouths to feed at home. Findings of a survey taken in Cochin in 1891 indicate that the cost of living had increased between 1850 and 1890.¹⁸ This is likely to have been

the cases in Travancore and Malabar also. In the context of the increasing cost of living and low agricultural productivity of late 19th century and early 20th century, the population increase in the Tharavads must have created a dismal situation within Marumakkathayam Tharavads.

Land Tenure Changes and Nayar Tharavad

The tenurial developments in Thiruvithamkoor, Kochi and Malabar from early 19th century might have left indelible impressions on the economic spheres of Tharavads depending on their initial land ownership pattern. A brief look at the most significant changes in land tenures that affected Nayar kinship is attempted.

Before the British rule, no one had "owned" land in its strict legal sense. The landowners in Thiruvithamkoor, Kochi and Malabar owned merely the hereditary rights in a portion of its produce and judicial rights over those of the lower castes.¹⁹ Inadequate understanding of this tenure system in 1805 made the British legally recognise Janmis as landowners. This strengthened the hands of Janmis who were mostly Matrilineal Tharavads. The statistical atlas of Malabar, in 1906 shows that forty large houses in Malabar held about 28% of land in the district and paid more than Rs.5,00,000/- as land revenue. There were large number of Nayars among the tenants. Susceptibility to oppression from Janmis made the Malabar soil fertile in agrarian revolts.

In Thiruvithamkoor it was the hands of the tenants that were

strengthened by the legislations of the Government. By the Patton proclamation of 1865, and a succeeding proclamation in 1867, the tenants of 20,000 acres of paddy land in Travancore became full owners of their land without fear of " arbitrary ejection of but it was owners of small land holdings who lost. Likewise, in Kochi, tenants gained ownership of the land they tilled forty years later, and in Malabar, sixtyfive years later.

Thus in the turn of the 20th century, while these owners of small land holdings suffered a comparative disadvantage in the loss of earnings from tenancy in addition to their plots, there were owners of medium size holdings in Kochi who were badly struck. The situation in brief, was as seen in Table 2I.

T A B L E - 2 I

Skewed Land Ownership Pattern and Milestones in Ownership Legislations

| | Travancore | Cochin | Malabar |
|--|------------|--------|---------|
| Number of landowners as percentage of population | 20 | 7 | 5 |
| Year in which Janmis gained full ownership | - | - | 1805 |
| Year in which tenants gained ownership | 1865 | 1915 | 1930 |

NOTE: The number of owners is of the year 1940 - Census of India, 1940-41, Travancore, Cochin, Madras Presidency.

SOURCE: Varghese (1970)

The increased impact of this economic crisis in the Tharavads of Travancore, anticipates the role of Travancore Tharavads in effecting the legislations ending Marumakkathayam in Kerala.

Saleability of Land and Cash-crops

The spread of cash crop cultivation had an equal bearing on the relation between the Karanavan and his nephews as the saleability of land. The profit-advantage in coconut cultivation as compared to paddy cultivation was recognised as early as the 19th century. While in 1890, the average cost of living for a man including women and children was Rs.29.50 per year,²¹ one could, on an average get Rs.26/- by selling 1000 coconuts.

The cash economy gave despotic Karanavars a more convenient channel to express his favouritism. Inequitable cash division was easier than inequitable land division. The magnitude of Tharavads which went to court for partition, as early as 1887 because of excessive cash allotments to wives and gifts to children was noticed by P.Govinda Pillai, President of Marumakkathayam Committee. (refer Table 21)

TABLE - 21

Table Showing the Number of Gifts and Allotments to Wife and Children by Karanavars in the Partition Suits between 1887 and 1896

| Year | No. of partitions | No. of maintenance allotments to wife | Karanavars' gifts to his children |
|------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1887 | 301 | 205 | 293 |
| 1892 | 344 | 281 | 473 |
| 1896 | 516 | 385 | 601 |

SOURCE : Report of the Marumakkathayam Committee, Travancore (1908)

Opening up A New Resource Structure

From the limited employment opportunities in an agrarian society, in the late 19th century, the emergent cash economy opened up employment avenues in Government. In the State of Travancore alone, there was an increase of Government servants from 14,700 in 1875 to 20,000 in 1891.²³

By his managerial rights, the Karanavar could incur debts on behalf of the Tharavad, pledging the Tharavad property as security.²⁴ Many Karanavars misused this provision to give gifts to his wife and children. Many young members of the Tharavad viewed this as misappropriation of the resources which would otherwise have been used for the educational investment of the juniors of the family. Educating the nephews, according to many Karanavars, was an investment without returns. Tharavads -to use a phrase of Mannath Padmanabhan (1957:38) - became "battle spheres". Thus in a span of nine years, there were 4574 partition suits against Karanavars in Travancore alone (see Table 23)

T A B L E - 23

Table Showing Details of the Suits Filed by Junior Members Against Their karanavars Between the Years 1887 - 1906

| Suits by Juniors for Cancellation of Alienations made by Karnavars | | | Suits by Juniors for Removal of Karnavar | | | Suits to set aside Attachments of Tharavad Properties for Karnavar's Debts | | |
|--|---------------|---------------------|--|---------------|---------------------|--|---------------|---------------------|
| No. of cases in which alienations were | | | No. of cases in which | | | No. of cases | | |
| wholly set aside | wholly upheld | partially set aside | wholly set aside | wholly upheld | partially set aside | wholly set aside | wholly upheld | partially set aside |
| 2046 | 1700 | 619 | 62 | 68 | 12 | 29 | 32 | 6 |

Source : Report of the Marumakkathayam Committee, Travancore (1908)

Ideological Transformation

For any social pressure group to function, ideological conviction is essential. The Patrilineal precepts latent in many of the text books of English educated Nayers and individualism characteristic of the capitalist economy were capable of effecting this ideological transformation. In early 20th century, the Government of Travancore had prescribed novels like Swiss Family Robinson and Pride and Prejudice and biography of Gladstone as Matriculation readings in English medium schools.²⁵

Repeated readings of such idealised Patrilineal nuclear families that form a backdrop to adventure, domestic drama or grave individual sagas engendered an emotional conditioning in the boys to be rather ashamed of their peculiar heritage.²⁶

Cash economy itself might not have caused the decay of matriliney.²⁷ But, an important message of cash economy was the spirit of economic initiative inherent in it. Patrilineal people like Christians, Tamil Brahmins and the patrilineals of the Ezhava caste with legally partible land identified every economic possibility and took advantage of them. Living near them, seeing them everyday, the Nayers also wanted to engage in some capitalist enterprise. But, the legal impartibility of the Tharavad made this difficult.

Pressure Groups to Legislations

An ideology borne of economic tensions and a certain identity loss concretised in the shape of caste based organisations, like

Nayar Service Society and Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sangham. Their immediate demand was the legal recognition of Patriliney, so that a man's property descended to his wife and children, not his nephews. Legal right to claim one's individual shares from the Tharavad was also sought. "Comprising almost one - fifth of the population" wrote Jeffrey in 1992, "Nayars provided the models or reference groups for the context of others ". (Jeffrey:1992:35)

A relentless crusade from 1890's to 1970's, in Thiruvithamkoor, Kochi and Malabar started yielding pay-offs in a series of successive legislations. The table in Appendix III shows the important milestones in the legislations abolishing Marumakkathayam. From Appendix III it appears that a pan-Kerala unity could be perceived in the sphere of social legislations, pertaining to the system of Marumakkathayam. However, we would presume that the impact of these legislations on various communities in Kerala could have been of varied intensity.

Marumakkathayam in Minorities Marginalised

Before the All India Act of 1956, (Hindu Succession Act) there were many other communities following matriliney, but were not covered by these legislations. By Travancore Census 1891, Nayars, Ezhavas and Vellalas together formed only 50 % of the total Hindu population. But then the Census of 1931 - after the Nayar, Ezhava and Vellala Acts were passed notes that, even after the legal breakdown of matriliney in Nayar, Ezhava and Vellala castes, of a total Hindu population of 3,134,888 persons, 925,902

persons followed Matrilineal system.

Until 1976, all legislations were largely optional. But 'the Joint Hindu Family System (Abolition) Act' of Kerala Government made the dissolution of the corporate body of Tharavad compulsory.

How far individual communities wary of de-linking from their Tharavads coped with this situation, we will try to assess, with our case studies from Kshatriya community. But, before that we should have a socio-ethnic profile of Kshatriya community.

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NOTES

- 1) Ehrenfels opines that the fact that Khasis and Nayars share characteristics like Mother-right, Ancestor-worship, Naga-pooja, etc., indicates a common origin in the Indus Plain.
- 2) Damodaran (1992 edn:147) shows that this argument was anyway absurd. That the nephew of the King obtained the throne of Venad by force might be true. But how could this decide the inheritance system of a whole region ?
- 3) There were other minor evidences also to Elamkulam's argument which were invalidated by later critics. Due to space constraints, the same is not being included here.
- 4) Only upper caste Nayars generally took to soldiery (Puthenkulam : 1977 : 28)
- 5) "The expansion of river valleys in a big way with forest clearing and irrigated paddy cultivation was achieved between the 5 th and 10 th Centuries after Christ under the leadership of the incoming Brahmin settlers who established their 32 large settlements and other subsidiary settlements". (Narayanan M.G.S. and Kesavan Veluthat - "The Traditional Land Systems in Kerala, Problems and Change of Perspective". - Paper presented in Logan Centenary Seminar on Land Reforms in Kerala - 29 th August, 1981.
- 6) An earlier custom of giving a gift to the Brahmin Priest at the time of performing a ritual slowly changed to a practice of ritual gifts to Brahmins (Dirks, Nicholas.B. - "Merit and Prosperity : From Ritual as Gift Giving to Gift Giving as Ritual in Early South Indian Kingship", quoted by A.Appadurai, "Kings, Sects and Temples in South India' 1350 to 1700 AD, Indian Economic and Social History Review, 14 (1977) p.481
- 7) Kesavan Veluthat, Brahmin Settlements in Kerala (Calicut : 1978, Sandhya Publications).
- 8) All the Nampoothiri settlements are found in the Plains between the sea-coast and the mountains, where the fertile soil, watered by numerous rivers, furnished ideal conditions for paddy cultivation (Veluthat, 1978 : 31)
- 9) The prosperity of Dewaswom land is well illustrated by the Temple epigraphs. For example, in the Thiruvalla Temple, the land set apart to feed Brahmins could be sown with 12634 Kalams (126340 Parais; one Parai being roughly equal to 17 litres) of paddy seeds and land of a seed capacity of over 20000 Kalams was earmarked for burning "Kedavilakku" in the Temple. (Thiruvalla Copper Plates, TAS., II;131-207, as quoted by Kunjan Pillai (1970), p 238,239.

- 10) Quoting A.R.E. 1895, nos.208-211, Narayanan.M.G.S, and Kesavan Veluthatt - A History of the Nampoothiri Community in Kerala: Agni:The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar : Fritz Stall (In collaboration with C.V.Somayajippad and M.Itti Ravi Nampoothiri) Vol.I and Ed. with the assistance of Pamela Mac Farland, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, etc., (Indian Edn) 1984 (1975) P.262.
- 11) The date of origin of primogeniture system of Nampoothiris is not clear. That it was in practice in Kerala atleast in the early 11 th century is evidenced by the settlement of land to 24 Brahmin families. The allotment is to one member in each family and it is understood that the land will devolve without partition to the next heir.[Thiruvadur Inscription of ca 1020 (A.R.E. 1926, no. 477, 478), as quoted by Narayanan and Kesavan 1984: ibid.P.267.
- 12) Despite the penalising scriptures of Hinduism, Brahminism is much adaptive to different habitats. In Kashmir, Brahmins do the un-brahminly act of eating meat, in West Bengal, they justify eating fish by calling it water-fish and in Kerala, they have sexual relations with females of ritually polluting castes.
- 13) Giovanni Botero's Relations (1608:317-18 Johnson's translation from Latin) as quoted by Fuller (1976:7)1
- 14) Mahe de la Bourdonnais, who captured Mahe for the French, quoted in Logan (1951, I 137).
- 15) Miller J Eric (1949) Caste in North Kerala, Cambridge Edn.
- 16) Raghavan M.D, "Talikkettukalyanam", Man in India(Ranchi), IX (1929) p 121
Ayyappan, 'The Meaning of the Tali Rite', Bulletin of the Rama Varma Research Institute, Trichur, Vol.IX, July 1941, p-63-83.
- 17) Gough surmises that Sambandham unions tended to more or less permanent union with one man and women.
- 18) Cochin Census Report 1891, Vol.I, p.144.
- 19) Logan, 1951, I:110-112, 269-70
- 20) T.A.R., 1866-7, p.37, as quoted by Jeffrey (1992:163).
- 21) Cochin Census Report 1891, Vol. I, p.144
- 22) Price of coconut is that in Calicut in the period between 1860 and 1890 (Mayer, Adrian, 1952, Land and Society in Malabar, Bombay, Oxford University press, p.62

- 23) Census of India, Travancore, 1875, p.155.:Census of India, Travancore, 1891, Vol.I, p.578.
- 24) This type of mortgaging was called "Melcharthu"
- 25) Mitchell Crighton A. (1909), Report on Public Instructions, P.16
- 26) European Christian Missionaries, whose influence, especially in Travancore, spread into the school system, pronounced matriliney an abomination and ridiculed it at every opportunity (Jeffrey 1976:150-2)
- 27) Elsewhere in the world, Matrilineal kinship has not collapsed by the intrusion of a cash economy. See, for example, Nash, Jill (1974) Matriliney and Modernisation : The Nagovisi of South Bougainville, New Guinea Research Bulletin no.55, Canberra, as quoted by Jeffrey, 1992:237.

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CHAPTER III

KSHATRIYA COMMUNITY : A PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

A structural-functional grasp of the ethnic community on which our questions on marumakkathayam are poised is essential for a systematic unfolding of our study. What was the niche of Kshatriyas in the feudal apparatus of the Pre-capitalist days? Are Kshatriyas and Nayars the same? Who are Samanthas? Many definitional problems seek clarification. Before we go into these questions, some insight into the historic roots of Kshatriya community in Kerala would be useful.

ORIGIN-DIFFERENT VERSIONS EXAMINED

The omnipresent lore of Parasurama comes in, in a discussion on the origin of Kshatriyas also Keralolpatti (Gundert Ed.) says that Parasurama, the sixth incarnation of Vishnu went on twenty one rounds of destruction of Kshatriyas and thereafter went up to Mahendra Hills for meditation. Fearing the extinction of the clan, the Kshatriya women appeal to the Brahmins to revive the clan through procreation. The Brahmins obliged and the Kerala Kshatriyas are the descendents of these Brahmin-Kshatriya unions¹. In spite of many incongruities in the legend like its presupposition of prior existence of Kshatriyas whom Parasurama killed, the legend emphasizes a persistent demographic tension of most Kshatriya clans in Kerala which shall figure in many of our discussions, the fear of extinction of the clan.

A second theory of origin², which seems popular among old Kshatriya Karanavars is the belief that they were Shaiva Dwija Brahmins from Vindhya Plains who came to Kerala in 2nd or 3rd B.C to effect a cultural renaissance in the Kerala of the Post-

Buddhist period. The story insists that they were matrilineal castes with a tradition of Bhagavathi worship. During the anarchic conditions of Kalabhra invasions of Kerala, the heads of four Talis, the supreme bodies of the 32 Brahmin settlements requested a powerful Shaivadvaja called Veera Nambyadiri to hold administration together by being the Perumal. The Nambidis, Rajas, Thiruvadis, Varma's and Thirumulpads are descendents of this Perumal. (Swamikal 1988: P.119-116). The use of historical material like the arrival of Sivadvaja Brahmins and the cultural renaissance in post-Buddhist Kerala in this version is deceptively impressive. Apart from its unconvincing logic, a serious anachronism betrays the general weakness in the argument. The failure of the story line to consider that the period of the Perumals and the Kalabhra invasions are centuries apart rips off the credibility of the tradition.

Another origin legend recalls that Kulasekhara Perumal who hailed from Pandya Kingdom brought five Kshatriya families and eight Samantha families with him. Brahmins gave children to Kshatriya girls and Samantha girls had alliances with Kshatriya men³. A slightly different version, proposed by Kanippayoor Sankaran Nampoothiripad (1966) is that Brahmins invited Kulasekhara Perumal from Tamizhakam in 8th century A.D to fill in the void of a Kshatriya king in Kerala because only Kshatriyas knew to 'Reign well' Perumal came, presumably with his family. Since there were no Kshatriyas to marry the women in his family the Perumal requested the Brahmins to father the Kshatriya children of his sisters. Kanippayoor points out that, in fear of

incest, Kshatriyas were never endogamous, until recently. All of them by this theory descend from Viswamitra gotra.

In the first Version, the implied existence of Samanthas in Pandya Kingdom ; Samantas were a later splinter group of Kshatriyas, is an anachronism. But the legend's bunching together of samanthas and Kshatriyas is suggestive of a popular awareness of shared characteristics in the two communities. In Kanippayoor's version, the import of a Kshatriya from abroad to 'Reign well' in Kshatriya-style is not convincing. Whether the Perumals had accepted matriliney is also a much contested point⁴.

The Brahmin link to Kshatriyahood

But, what seems submerged in most of these legends is the allegiance of any Kshatriya ruler in early Kerala to Brahmins for their power and sustenance. This Brahmin link has been best digested by M.G.S Narayanan. What the Brahmin teachers who formed the intellectual elite here did was to designate the ruling chieftains and the traditional fighting groups as Aracharyate (ruling caste) which was equated with Kshatriyas at a later stage⁵. This explains how the old Dravida dynasties like those of Chera, Chola and Pandya became Kshatriyas with a solar and lunar pedigree in the copper plates of middle ages (Narayanan M.G.S 1966 :57)

Barter Value of Rituals

This Brahmin link to Kshatriyahood was fundamentally an economic one. The exchange of rituals for the glory of the king and economic tributes in land, gold or cattle to the Brahmin is repeatedly referred to in Sangham Poetry. That the word Tirai

Sangam poetry stood for both a tax levied by the king and an offering⁶ owed to the gods is suggestive of these broader links.

In Kerala, Nampoothiris effected the conversion of an ambitious native clan lord to Kshatriya hood through expensive Hiranyagarbha rituals not without specific purpose - to attack and accumulate wealth for his territory. And he was sometimes made the king through Ariyituvazchas to be the protector of Brahmin and cattle wealth. In either of these roles, as protector and defender of wealth a Kshatriya had to spill blood. For these sins, acquired in the course of his Kshatriyadharma, he had to pay the 'necessary antidote' in the form of rituals⁷ and gifts to Brahmins. We have explained in Chapter II, how through hypergamy of Kshatriya females to Brahmins, the Kshatriyas of Kerala implanted ritual elements into their matrilineal kinship which served to reinforce the system in Kerala soil.

The wielding power of Nampoothiries got institutionalised in the Sabhas of Temples and their authority to extract large fines from Kshatriya Kings even for seemingly small crimes were unquestioned. In 1770 the Raja of Cochin was made to offer an elephant as penalty to Vadakkumnatha Temple for his laxity in extracting a sacrilege penalty from Ayinikkur Nambidi (Padmanabha Menon, 1912 I:185)

A resource redistributive role, no doubt, was ingrained in this cycle of Temple Sabhas extracting wealth as gifts or fines from Kshatriya Kings. This was only a continuation of the flow of

ritual gifts or penalties which the Kshatriya in his position as ruler obtained from his subjects. From the corporate wealth of Temples the resources were further re-distributed to the people. One presumes that the role of the Kshatriya ruler as an important intermediary in this large centrifugal economy was marginalised long before the breakdown of this institution.

Strength of demographic fission and fusion

Kshatriyas are 'minute castes', wrote Fuller in 1976. Indeed their demographic strength either at the turn of the century or more recently, never once make them even 0.5% of the total population.

TABLE 3.1

Changes in Population of Kshatriyas & Samanths over time

| Year | Travancore | | | Cochin | | | Malabar | | |
|------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| | caste grouping as % of population | samanthas | Total in lakhs | caste grouping as % of population | samanthas | Total in lakhs | caste grouping as % of population | samanthas | Total in lakhs |
| 1891 | 0.04 | * | 26 | 0.10 | * | 7 | * | 0.13 | 27 |
| 1901 | 0.05 | * | 30 | 0.11 | * | 8 | * | 0.13 | 28 |
| 1911 | 0.06 | * | 34 | 0.11 | * | 9 | * | 0.14 | 30 |
| 1921 | 0.06 | * | 39 | 0.12 | * | 10 | * | 0.14 | 31 |
| 1931 | 0.07 | * | 51 | 0.20 | * | 12 | * | 0.15 | 35 |
| 1941 | 0.08 | * | 61 | 0.22 | * | 14 | * | 0.15 | 39 |

Note : '*' denotes a percentage of population less than 0.01%

Source : Census of India - Various years

This probably is the heritage of a strategy of deliberate entry-restriction to the caste, crucial to maintain the Kshatriya's ritual status. No amount of economic power facilitated the Raja of

Travancore's social mobility to Kshatriya status.

Not only were new entrants to this ritual status dissuaded, but there also seems to be an elimination process from Kshatriya hood. To illustrate, the population figures of Malabar District (Table 3.1) do not show the existence of Kshatriya caste in Malabar. This is partly due to flight of many Kshatriya families towards South Kerala, during Tipu's conquests. But, in spite of the presence of important rulers like Samudiri, the absence of Kshatriyas in Malabar is rather puzzling. This makes us suspect that the group of ruler castes in Malabar, generically called Samanths, were actually Kshatriyas, ritually degraded.

On the contrary, there has been others who felt they were only "Super-eminent Nayars" (Fuller 1976 :p 34). Raja of Nilambur filed a suit against William Logan, Malabar district collector for describing him, 'a Samantha' as a 'Nayar'. He lost. The court verdict was that the plaintiff is a Nayar (Padmanabha Menon p:276). In many of the anthropological studies on matriliney of Nayars like those of Gough and Moore, their discussions holds a built-in assumption that Nayars are a monolithic ethnic group and Kshatriyas and Samanths are part of it⁹. Caste being a concept elastic over time, the question who belongs to which caste is a very contextual one.

In the contemporary political situation it is the numbers that matter. Countless minimal segments in a given region cannot compete individually in the struggle for control of resources. Beteille¹⁰ has pointed out that when such micro-groups come

together they follow alignments inherent in the traditional structure of the caste. Social mobility in the medieval India - to use a crisp concept of Srinivas - was based on "fission", while in modern India, it is based on "fusion". In this context of sub-caste fusion, the fact that Kshatriyas and Samanthas hold membership in All Kerala Kshatriya Kshema Sabha and not to Nair Service society is indicative of the present homogeneity of these two sub-divisions. There are also arranged intermarriages between these two groups which are indicative of their ethnic approval of each other. Our choice of Samantha clan, the clan of Raja of Kollenkode as part of our case studies in Kshatriya community seeks justification in this homogeneity.

A closer look at the Kshatriya community with sub components within Kshatriyas and Samanthas with their regional variations is required.

There are four divisions among Kshatriyas - Thampurans, Thampans,

Thirumulpads and the Koil Thampurans. Thiruvalla, Vaikom and Mavellikara are the chief Kshatriyas centres. Koil Thampurans were Kshatriya families who moved from Malabar during Tippu's attack. Samanthas are largely Malabar based. In North Malabar, there are

Nambiyar's, Unnithiris and Adiyodis. (Velu Pillai 1940:1 Iyer.1912)

Nedungadi, Vellodi, Eradi and Samantha Tirumulpad are the Samanths in South Malabar. In Travancore, there was a Samantha caste called Pandals

This caste stratification, in a region-wise perspective would be as in Table 3.2

T A B L E 3.2

A Region Wise View : Subcastes within Subcastes

| Region | Kshatriyas | Samanthas |
|------------|---|--|
| Malabar | | Nambians Unnithiri Adiyodi |
| | | Nadungadi Eradi Velludi Samantha Thirumulpad |
| Cochin | Thampurans Thampans Thirumulpad | Adiyodi |
| Travancore | Koyi Thampurans Thampurans Thampans | Unnithiris Pandals |

Source : Anandha Krishna Iyer (1912)

Velu Pillai : (1940) Vol. I

MARUMMAKATHAYAM IN KSHATRIYAS AND NAYARS A COMPARISON

We shall now try to compare the Marumakkathayam of Kshatriyas to the better known marumakkathayam practice of Nayars. Since proximity to Nampoothiris on a scale of ritual purity is the historical route of sub-caste stratification in Kerala, certain amount of comparison with Nampoothiris automatically follows.

For this we have to go to comments on early social practices and readings of the ethnographic past.

In Kerala the Kshatriya community is an intermediate caste between the Namboothiris and Nayars, with affinities to both - to Nampoothiri in matter of abulation ceremonies food and drink and ritual practices and to Nayars in the Marumakkathayam system of kinship and inheritance (Iyer 1912 p:167). However ritual and kinship, on an empirical plane, cannot but interact. Like the Nampoothiries, Kshatriyas are invested with the sacred thread, in a four day Upanayana and a year long Samavarthana ceremony. In a feast they can sit with the Nampoothiries, but not in the same row. Their birth and death pollution observance are also more similar to that of Nampoothiris. A characteristic by which a caste was identified was whether they were Pathupulakkar or Pathinarupulakkar. While Nayar have 16 days death pollution, Kshatriyas observe 12 days of death pollution. The birth pollution of Kshatriya is also limited to 10 days, when for Nayar it is 15 days. Kshatriyas were strict vegetarians, who also did not take garlic or onions.

On the kinship plane, they were hypergamous. A Kshatriya female married a Nampoothiri and a Kshatriya male married mainly Nayar females. Because of hypergamous restrictions, the Nayar custom of cross cousin marriages was possible only for Kshatriya males. Marriage had two stages: Talikettukalyanam and Sambandham. The former certified eligibility to marry in an invariably grand ceremony. Sambandham was more informal, and like those of Nayars

the relationship could be called off at any moment when either party desires. In Cochin the Tali-tier had to be a Nampoothiri. In Travancore and Malabar it could be also a Tamil Brahmin and in North Malabar, an Embranthiri.

An important difference in the marriage practices of Nairs and Kshatriyas as characterised by Kanippayoor (1961:80) is the fire altar ceremony in the Talikettukalyanam of Kshatriya. Kanippayoor also points out that the practice of Pradhama Nishekam (Virgin defloration) associated with Talikettu kalyanam was exclusive to Nayars¹¹ (Kanippayoor 1961:80). Thus the major differences in Nayars and Kshatriyas can be shown as in table 3.3

T A B L E 3.3.

Nayars and Kshatriya Differences

| Nayars | Kshatriyas |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Mostly endogamous | Mostly hypergamous |
| No Fire Alter Ceremony | Fire alter ceremony for Talilkettukalyanam |
| Virgin defloration | No such ceremony |
| Vegetarians & Non-Vegetarians | Vegetarians |
| Birth Pollution 15 days | Birth Pollution 12 days |
| Death Pollution 16 days | Death pollution 10 days |
| Cannot feast with Nampoothiris | Can sit for a feast with Nampoothiris, but not in the Same row. |

Source : Iyer (1912), Kanippayoor (1961), Puthenkalam(1977)
 Note : The customs mentioned above pertains to a century ago.

With westernisation many of these practices have been discarded. They are presented here only to have a contextual understanding of the group on which we are attempting our case studies.

Reaction of Kshatriyas to Marumakkathayam Legislations

Kshatriyas and Samanthas did not perceive the limitations of Marumakkathayam as critical like the Nayers. Safely enclosed in the (feudal) economic benefits and their social status, the social legislations bypassed them but for the All India Hindu Succession Act of 1956 and later Joint Family (Amendment Bill). For Kshatriyas and Samanthas, any stone cast at the Tharavad - with its centuries of ritual appertances is not to be understood in a pure economic sense. It amounted to a cultural sin, so much so that in early 20th century, when young Kshatriya men fresh from education in Madras Presidency College and with exposure to friends from patrilineal community had no forum to discuss marriage and marriage reforms.

The ritual corpus of the Tharavad was so deeply ingrained in their minds that, in 1897, a Kshatriya Raja, who was a member of the Malabar Marriage Commission attacks the Nayar movements with fervour. That "which prompted Nayars for this change" was not "to make their marriages more binding or to make divorces more difficult - not therefore any desire for morality. Rather, it was pure self-interest : To keep one's self acquired property out of the hands of one's Tharavad and rightful heir and to use it to make ample provisions for the wife and children" 12

Travancore Kshatriya Act

But there were young men in the Kshatriya community in Thiruvithamkoor who saw progressivism in pleading for marriage reforms. Thus the first Kshatriya Association in Thiruvithamkoor was formed informally in 1912, May 1, under a purely religious guise in Thiruvalla Muthoot Valiyakoyikkal Palace¹³.

Nobody would have welcomed a forum for criticizing tharavads. So Ezhumatoor Kovilakathu Govinda Varammaru Pandarithil Thampan who initiated this meeting called it a Trikala Pooja, occasioned by the full moon. After the Pooja and the feast, where most Kshatriya families in Thiruvithamkoor participated, the crowds dispersed. There were 'Trikala Poojas' on all ensuing full moons at different Kovilakams where discussing the problems of the community became common. In April 1915, the meeting at Chennithala Menamvila Kovilam, the participants changed the name of the meetings from 'Vavu Yogam' to 'Central Travancore Kshatriya Samajam'.

Only after ten years of Samajam meetings could they create sufficient opinions within the Kshatriyas in Thiruvithamkoor that the community would be "retarded" without legitimising marriage and facilitating partitions of the Tharavad¹⁴. In this context, Minority Marumakkathayam Bill was put forward by L.R.Raja Raja Varma Koil Thampuran. Thus in 1933, Travancore Kshatriya Act was passed, not only recognising Sambandham as legal marriage, but also allowing per capita division of family assets¹⁵.

The act had more impact than the reformers expected. This spate of partition suits that followed however signalled certain reservations for the reformers. So an amendment to partly undo the easy per capita partition was pushed for.

Consequently the Travancore Kshatriya (Amendment) Act, that came into being from 10th September 1941, which specified that in the 31 Kshatriya Tharavads of Travancore (listed in a schedule) that any member dissatisfied by the maintainence provided by the Karanavar could apply in the local District Court to rectify this ¹⁶. In more serious cases of conflict, a Court of Wards could be appointed. This followed the precedent set by the list of 17 impartible Samantha Tharavads in the schedule of the Madras Marumakkathayam Act 1933.

Overall, one finds that the pace of movement, for change in Marumakkathayam was rather slow and hesitating in the Kshatriya community. While in Thiruvithamkoor and Malabar, a half-hearted attempt appears to have been made to make partibility of Tharavad effective, in Kochi, among Kshatriyas, there is no vestiges of a social ferment for Patrilineal devolution at all.

N O T E S

- 1) Keralolpathi (Gundert Ed.)
- 2) The Swamikal who recaptulates this oral tradition hails from a Kshatriya family in Mavelikkara (Sakhyananda Swamikal 1988 'Keralthile Kshatriya Parambaryam' 'Kshema Prapthimargham' Kerala Kshatriya Kshema Sabha publication)
- 3) The story was recounted by A.L Rama Varma who wrote a letter to editor in 'Tilakom' magazine March 1960.
- 4) According to Raghava Variyar and Rajan Gurukkal(1991), Kerala Charitram p:183 Sangham literature is not clear on the kinship practices of perumals
- 5) By the time of 'Tolkappiam' the 'Kshatriya' were called Aracharyate Tolkappiam, Porul Athikaram, Sutra 75, as quoted by Naryanan M.G.S (1966). The growth of Aryan influence in ancient Kerala, History on March, Kerala History Associaton.
- 6) Raghava Varier M.R 'The Namppothiri ritual tradition' Agni : The vedic ritual of the fire altar Vol II 1984(1975) Staal. Col.
- 7) Drekmeier, Charles (1962) Kingship and community in early India, standard, as quoted by Raghava Varier (1975)
- 8) Padmanabha Menon K.F (1912) KochiRajya Charitram, Trichur, Vol II, p:199
- 9) Gough (1961) has differentiated between common Nayars and Aristocratic Nayars. But one tends to gauge her understanding of the divisions as mostly financial and not based on ritual purity
- 10) Beteille Andre (1964). A note on the referents of caste 'European Journal of Sociology; 5:130-4, as quoted by Srinivas M.N (1989) "Mobility in the caste system", The cohesive role of Sanskritization and other essays, Oxford University Press p:54
- 11) Puthenkalam (1977:48) points out that this was considered by westermack as well. Barbosa also noticed this custom.
- 12) Parappanattu Raja, a Travancore Kshatriya was a member of Malabar Marriage Commission (Malayala Manorama, 6th May 1891, Kottayam). Raja's comments are as quoted in a paper of a later date as appearing on Travancore Govt. Gazette, Vol. XXXV, No.3, 19th January, 1897)

- 13) Thamban.G.K, Kshatriya Sanghadana - Annumuthal Innu Vare, Silver Jubilee Souvenir of Karappuram Kshatriya Sabha, 1978, Chertala.
- 14) Ibid : P.24
- 15) The Travancore Kshatriya Regulation VII of 1108, The Regulations and Proclamations of Travancore. Vol.VII 1105-1109 M.E.,1933 Edition, The Anantha Rama Varma Press, Trivandrum.
- 16) The Travancore Kshatriya (Amendment) Act, 1117, dated 10th September, 1941, The Acts and Proclamations of Travancore, Vol. XIII, Part I, P.117 - 118, published by Govt. of Travancore 1945.

CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDIES FROM KSHATRIYA COMMUNITY

THE CASE STUDIES

The lineages of Rajas of Poonjar, Kochi and Kollengode were selected as case studies representative of the old political demarcations of Thiruvithamkoor, Kochi and Malabar. The objective of making a comparative diachronic analysis, in each case, is to ascertain the factors that explain the structural differences between the kinship pattern, so as to verify to what extent they are determined by economic variables. We have also tried to deduce how the changing property relations and the kinship patterns have affected the socio-economic status of women. For analytic convenience, we will study each case in isolation and later make note of the differences.

THE POONJAR CASE :

The Poonjar Koyikkal clan were owners of large tracts of land in the north east of the erstwhile Thiruvithamkoor. Here, an introduction to the historical background of the clan seems necessary. The tradition is that the founder of this clan was the Pandya King Chirayavarman Manavikraman who, from his Madurai-based empire, ventured into the western, Malayalam speaking areas in about 1157 A.D (Valia Raja : 1988 : p4, Nilakanta Sastri K.A : 1972 : p113). ¹Chirayavarman Manavikraman is said to have partitioned the Pandya empire between his younger brother Maravarman Srivallaban and himself in such a way that eastern part of the empire was under Sreevallaban, with Madurai as the capital and the western part known as the Pandyamandalam was his own domain, with Gudaloor as the capital.

Using the money he had brought from the treasury of Pandya empire, in 1189 A.D., Manavikraman is believed to have bought, extensive hilly tracts called Manjapparamalayakangal, north east of Travancore from Chengamanad Devaswom². After Poonjar³, the stream that trickled down the new hilly acquisitions, Manavikraman assumed the title "Poonjar Udayakulasekhara Perumal Pandarakaryathillekku Valiaraja (1988), in his rendering of Poonjar history based on the now extinct Poonjar Grandhavari, proceeds to describe how various Karanavars of Poonjar Koyikkal family, in their tenures as Poonjar chiefs added on to their domains by purchasing the adjacent acres of land. For instance, he mentions that in 1252 A.D. Poonjarudaya Kulasekharaperumal bought Anchunadu and Kannandeven malayakangal from the neighbouring Raja of Vadakkankore and that in 1419 A.D. bought Vandipperiyar from Raja of Thekkomkore.

With the original documents regarding the transactions missing, it might not be possible to vouch for the legal exactness of the transfers of such large tracts of land. However, in a milieu where kingdoms came to existence through other measures, the concept of building up a kingdom by purchase of land and rights does sound intriguing, and if true, certainly deserves further research. It would not do to assess the logical veracity of the landpurchases and settlements before 18th century with the densely populated, high valued land of present day Kerala at the back of one's mind. The availability of marginally settled cultivable lands in the Malayalam-speaking areas in North-east

Travancore might actually have favoured new settlements and new societies⁴. Since labour was at premium anyone with command of human resources achieved mobility⁵ Stein(1968 : p.79) has warned that the modern phenomenon of competition among castes for enhanced status within a narrow localised ranking system is inappropriate for understanding medieval mobility⁶, in medieval India, implied spatial mobility and the units of mobility would be individual families. In the grassroot levels, such spatial mobility was directed by the tilt of the ecological-demographic balance. Thus, in the pre-colonial days, the open agrarian system seems to be the most forceful agent of social mobility .

Reversal of Kinship

Not entirely so in the case of the decision-making families like the clan under study. Here, the dynamics of social mobility is heavily burdened by the dynamics of adaptation. Consider the chieftain of a territory graduating to the position of a Raja in an alien habitat, acquiring in the process the symbolic and other appertenances of Kshatriyahood. In his turn, he becomes a source of mobility to individuals and groups living in his domain. But, to achieve this status, the chief's style of life, his dietary habits and his inheritance and kinship pattern has to be altered to synchronise with that of the Kshatriyas of the Malayalam-speaking areas.

The greatest challenge for the immigrant ruler was the change in kinship pattern, in this instance, from makkathayam to marumakkathayam. Women, instead of being sent away in marriage,

as part of another family, became the stock of descent⁷. The Children of sons of the family were no longer members of the Tharavad. The changes in human relationships and its forward linkages like property relations and ultimately, production relations must have been dramatic,

Examining the role of Poonjar Koyikkal Clan in the macrostructure of a larger society is central to our problem of discussing its Kinship structures. One peculiarity of this clan is that, the traditional role of Kshatriyas in ChaturVarna i.e., their military role was subdued by their agricultural role. Tucked far into the highlands with population too scarce to exploit the uncultivated lands, Poonjar did not suffer any disruption in her boundaries till the fag end of 18th century. Neither were expansionary military attacks ever part of Poonjar's political design⁸. There were thick forests within their domain and the Koyikkal clan had monopoly for elephant hunting and Ivory Trade⁹. The period presumed to be the one in which they settled in Kerala coincides with the flowering of merchant economy in India, particularly trade with China and Arab countries¹⁰. Given the spice wealth of Poonjar's tracts¹¹, it is not unlikely that Poonjar chief set up trade links with other Kingdoms.

Mercantile Surpluses, Village Economy and Ritual Status

The surpluses thus accumulated by the ruling clan through merchandise in natural products had two roles. First, is its role in production relations. Influx of surpluses by trade in forest produces made the whole question of interventions of

political authority in the organisation of production unnecessary. What then happened to these surpluses? One might suppose that because of the closed economy characteristics of the producing units in the village, gold or silver, the main medium of exchange employed by foreign merchants, never entered into circulation. It has been postulated that the economic uselessness of these coins resulted, in groups which monopolised the surpluses, in the practice of hoarding. Thus "richness line" came to be drawn to discriminate between 'rich' and 'poor' depending on who had a larger volume of the accumulated metal. While this concept of accumulation and self-sufficient village economy is true in a very general sense, in the empirical level some incongruencies appear. For instance, discussions with many old people in Poonjar village, betray the presence of a coin currency called "ponnu" in Poonjar up to the recent past¹³. "Ponnu" was alternatively called "kariponnu" or "chakkaraponnu".

This can be partly explained by the interplay of transfers of surpluses between different ranks of political hierarchy which would be necessary for perpetuating the hard earned social status¹⁴. Another possibility is the partial redistribution of surpluses through the ruling clans inevitable transfers of wealth to their 'Paradevatha' (Clan deity) Meenakshi Temple and the adjacent Sastha Temple¹⁵. Thus the surpluses helped the Poonjar Koyikkal clan did not only played a dominant role in the economic life of the village, but also in asserting their ritual status¹⁶.

What should interest us in the study of Kinship relations is that the loose knit production relations and the comparative ease in raising the forest surpluses made even supervisory role of the non-producing, accumulating class minimal. This was supremely compatible to a situation where females were the stock of descent and the main interest of Karanavara and his nephews were upward social mobility through ritual status. Thus we find a pyramid structural model with a close knit matrilineal structure, nourished on the economic front by an exogenous merchantile economy and on the social front by Brahmin theocratic hierarchy-forming the apex and loosely integrated with self-managing groups at the base. That is, to put in a nutshell, the kinship pattern at the apex and the production relations at the base were mutually complementary.

Adoption : Economic Implications

A deviation from this mode of production occurred in the most unexpected manner. In Galletti. A and Groot (1911), Stein Van Gullenesse writes in 1743 of the adoption of a female child to Poonjar Koyikkal clan from Sharkkara Kovilakam in Venkidangu, near Guruvayoor. Valia Raja(1988-22-24), based on the extant fragments of Grandhaveri notes that this was around 1625. In an era, when Poonjar Koyikkal clan had achieved high social status through owning vast acres of land and rights for elephant hunting and taking recourse to adoption has a somewhat tragic semantics with social and economic dimensions.

The fear of "Aniyam Nikkal" (Tarawad going to alien hands due to

extinction of the clan) of the Tharavad was a persistent nightmare not only for Kshatriyas but also among Nairs. In the case of Kshatriyas, a community always demographically threatened, the trauma was all the more haunting. Going by the Poonjar Grandhavari, it had been three or four centuries since the splinter groups from Pandya Dynasty settled in Poonjar and now extinction threatened them.

From a more critical stance than the one Valia Raja (1988) provides, this adoption should be regarded as an acid test of their acceptance by other Kshatriya clans. Since hypergamous sambadham to Nampoothiris was the main tool by which Marumakkathayam was reinforced, close interaction with any other Kshatriya clan could occur, in a kinships plane, only when an adoption question cropped up.

The question is a crucial benchmark in gauging the ritual status given to Poonjar Koyikkal family by other ruling families. In spite of the clusters of Kshatriya clans¹⁷ within the communicable vicinity of Poonjar, why does the Poonjar chief seek assistance in this crisis from Sharkara Kovilakam, north of Trichur, a relatively remote and obscure Kshatriya clan¹⁸ ?. Nobody really admits the apparant failure of the Poonjar Koyikkal Clan, to qualify for the aspired ritual status.

On the contrary, this northward extension of kinship is used as a timely pretext for economic diversification. Close to Sarkara Kovilakom, large acres of paddy land were brought and a Desavazi was created. On the economic front, this amounted to a

kind of de-localized crop diversification. Till then Poonjar clan had to rely mainly on bartering its garden crops to fill her granaries with paddy. The land, characterised by dry land was not suitable for paddy cultivation (see Table 4.1)

Table Showing Distribution of Cultivated Land in Poonjar Edavaga

| | Wet Land | | Dry Land | | Total | |
|------------------------|----------|------|----------|------|-------|------|
| | acre | cent | acre | cent | acre | cent |
| Nadubhagam Pakuthi | 38 | 87 | 10924 | 1.5 | 10962 | 88.5 |
| Thekkumbhagam Pakuthi | 30 | 2 | 11012 | 32 | 11042 | 34 |
| Vadakkumbhakam Pakuthi | — | — | 13077 | 84 | 13077 | 84 |

Compiled from Vol-12,13 & 14 Poonjar Edavaga settlement Register 1940-41

TABLE 4.1

Subsequently, to supplement the paddy brought in from Vengidangu, extensive wet lands suitable for paddy cultivation were bought in Kottayam¹⁹. For supervising the cultivation, a Desavazi was established in Nattakam.²⁰

It is possible to postulate that the development of Desavazis and delocalized agriculture signify not only a turning point in the economic life of the clan, but also certain kinship transformations. When distant cousins are thrown in together under one roof, with just the abstract concept of a common ancestress and the legal impartibility of the Tarawad keeping them together, kinship relations tend to weaken²¹. The remoteness of blood relationship with Karanavar often make the junior members undermine his sovereignty in the Tarawad. So by extending the economic interests of the clan to distant

locations, the Karanavar was actually diverting the emerging fissiparous energies of Junior members to more productive channels. Thus in Nattakam paddy lands, a supervisory infrastructure, took shape with its self-sufficient residential unit, granary house, boat-house and private 'Odi Valloms' (a kind of boat) for transporting the grain to market place. Varghese (1979 : 119-120) describes how accompanying this spread of cultivation in swampy areas, migration of agricultural labour families took place in large numbers from the adjoining areas towards the newly-cultivated tracts. All these developments engaged the rebellious junior members and preserved the unity of the Tarawad²².

Although the date of purchase of Nattakam wet lands is not known,²³ the role of this Desavazi in the transition of Poonjar clan from a forest economy based mode of production commercial production pattern and its imprints on the kinship pattern cannot be understood without proper reference to the political and economic developments in the period.

Marthandavarma (King from 1729 to 1758), the 'founder' of modern Thiruvithamkoor consolidated his political power through the unification of small kingdoms.

Since Poonjar was an ally to Marthandavarma in his war with

Vadakkankore and Thekkankore, Thiruvithamkore was morally bound to leave Poonjar alone from his military agenda. Thus in 1755 when Vadakkankore and Thekkankore were merged with Thiruvithamkore, 'Poonjattiperumal' managed to retain his kingdom.

Mysorian invasions, on the other hand, in the northern region of Kerala was not so sympathetic to Poonjar land. In 1771, Hyder Ali attacked the Pandyamandalam of Poonjar Kingdom and added seven villages belonging to Poonjattiperumal. After long negotiations, Poonjar was obliged to pay a tribute of 75000 kuriponnu and 7 elephants to Hyderali (ValiaRaja - 1988 :p :28)

Concentration of economic interests in Kerala region had already disengaged the Poonjar clan from the Pandyamandalam (Tamil speaking areas of Poonjar domain). With the outbreak of smallpox in Pandyamandalam the visits of Poonjar clan to the native Gundaloor Palace was cut short. From a mere three thousand Nayar²⁴ army, Poonjar chief hastened to organise a larger army capable of exploiting their familiarity with the forests and hilly terrains. For this, the traditional concepts of Nayar armies was abandoned and formed the 20,000 men army encompassing healthy males from various castes and tribes²⁵. Assistance of this army to the well-organised forces of Dharamaraja, successor to Marthandavarma in Thiruvithamkore, in effecting a historic

check to Tippu Sultan has been widely noted²⁶. By the Treaty of Srirangapatam (1792), the British , took possessions of the lands Tippu had conquered. The East India Company made separate agreements with the rulers of small kingdoms all over Kerala. They acknowledged Thiruvithamkoor and not Poonjar controlling Pandyamangalam. In the political reorganisation under the British Residence, Col. Munroe in 1815, Poonjar lost substantially. Since documents showing the borders could not be produced, areas like Kanjirapalli, Ambara, Todupuzha and Neriya Mangalam merged with Travancore (Valiaraja p:14) . So by 1816, Poonjar became an Edavaka under Travancore.

The dismantling of the Poonjar Army after war with Tippu also proved heavy on the debit side. Much of the gold in Edavaga treasury was used up for military repatriation. In Kothamangalam, those property that could be shown as Thanathu of Koyikkal was recognised as a Poonjar Koyikkal Desavazi and the rest was ceded by Travancore²⁸.

Paradoxically, dispossession of land was a gradual and economically painless phenomenon for the Koyikkal clan. This was painless because of the deliberate shift of haphazard use of the forest resources. This also marks the erosion of the concept of land as social capital and it's emergence as economic asset. Apart from the reclamation of swampy areas for paddy cultivation,

the Koyikkal clan was also involved in plantation agriculture, with the influx of foreign capital into plantations. On 11th July 1877, Punchattil Kerala Varma Valiaraja entered into lease agreement of the Kannan Devan hills to Mr. John Daniel Munroe, a British Coffee Planter²⁹. By the terms of the agreement the planter paid Rs 3000/- annually to the Koyikkal houses and a sum of Rs 5000/- upon the expiry date of the agreement³⁰. Poonjar Chief reserved the right for ivory, cardamom, wax, frankincense and other articles from Kannan Devan hills. Poonjar's Thanathu land in Poonjar was mostly non-labour intensive gardenlands of coconut trees and arecanut trees. Thus by the end of 19th century, Kothamangalam Bazar was practically monopolized by coconuts, arecanuts and paddy from Koyikkal lands. While in 1865, the Thiruvithankoor Government granted it's tenants full ownership rights over 200000 acres of land, creating land value estimated to be worth around Rs 15 million, Poonjar Edavaga was not included³¹. The control of resources slipped away from Poonjar ruling clan only in 1955, by the Edavaga Rights Aquisition Act (1955).

century, ~~Kothamangalam Bazar was practically monopolised by coconut, arecanuts and paddy from Koyikkal lands. While in 1865, the Thiruvithamkoor Government granted its tenants full ownership rights over 2,00,000 acres of land, creating land value estimated to be worth around Rs 15 million, Poonjar Edavaga was not included~~³¹. ~~The control of resources slipped away from Poonjar ruling clan only in 1955, by the Edavaga Rights Acquisition Act (1955).~~

A peculiar relic of feudalism that survived in Poonjar Edavaga administration seems relevant to our analysis. The control of land revenue within the Edavaga domain and the revenue from marketed surpluses from its outlying assets was still with Poonjar Koyikkal clan. This is in direct contrast to the administrative machinery in Thiruvithamkoor and Kochi, where resources were pooled by the British Controlled Governments and later fixed allotments were made to the ruling clans.

This is because Thiruvithamkoor and Kochi were ruling families and their income share or home allowance was streamlined according to British practice.

This cannot be dismissed by a simple explanation~~s~~ as the absence of the direct intervention of colonial power in Poonjar. One should also know that vast expanses of land near Dindigal, earlier owned by Poonjar Koyikkal clan, but not under the direct supervision of the family members had gradually slipped to other hands, without the intervention of any colonial variable. Unlike the ruling clans, the Poonjar Koyikkal clan were involved

participants in the integration of local agriculture to the commercialised economy. In this sense, the colonial spirit, which was the usherer of full-fledged commercial economy was even beneficial to the Poonjar clan. It does strike one's mind that ultimately, even if institutional legitimation and sanctification of monopoly of scarce resources disappear, so long as the members of the clan are directly involved in productive activities, they do not tend to loose ownership over scarce values.

More relevant is the impact of all these on the ensemblage of kinship. Since the Poonjar Koyikkal clan were active participants in the race for harvesting the yields of commercialisation in agriculture, they did not perceive matriliney as detrimental to their development. On the contrary, kinship was adapted to the external social economic situation to maximize the economic development of the clan. To study the specificities of the adaptations to matriliney, we will have to go in detail to the twentieth century kinship patterns of the clan.

By the middle of 19th century, the Koyikkal clan had split into four lineages, hereafter referred to as four Taavazhis. They were Kanjiramattom, Nallamadhom, Putthenmalika and Vadakkemadhom. Although the exact geneological relationships could not be confirmed, the order of segmentation within a Tawazi was remembered because it was relevant to the reversion of property, if one tawazi dies out. A tawazi was not an independent economic unit and it's members did not jointly own an estate. Instead, they were part of the larger economic unit, Tharavad.

In 1904, when the present Karanavar of the Koyikkal clan was born, the Karanavar was Moolam Tirunal Rama Varma Kochunni Thampuran³¹. All members of the tawazis stayed together in the same compound, although not in the samehouse and had food from the common kitchen and dining hall. Although no partition had taken place, certain areas were notionally decided to have been allotted to different tawazis. Most of the adult 'Ilamurakkar'³² were frequently away supervising the agricultural interests of the family. A well-run administrative machinery reporting to the ValiaRaja, the Karanavar took care of the material comforts of the members of the Tarawad³³. There was usually one Muthalpidikkaran (the rent collector), two Tamil Brahmin cooks and for each male or female members, there was a personal servant of the same sex. Apart from food and clothes, every servant was paid a monthly salary of five British Rupees and two Changazhis³⁴ of paddy. All these employees were accountable to the Koyikkal manager who in turn reported to the karanavar and not to any female member.

A modern gender-sympathetic perspective might deride that reproduction and raising the social status of the Tarawad through hypergamy was the primal role of women in this Kshatriya Tarawad. But then at the turn of the century when social status was a function of political status, ritual status and economic status, even this was no meagre contribution.

In the Koyikkal clan, the political status, as we have seen was already impaired beyond repair. To compensate for this

insecurity a renewed favour in the pursuit of ritual and economic status was set in motion. The most palpable evidence of this was the evolution of gender-based division of labour with adult male members furthering it's economic interests and adult female members conserving it's ritual status.

The changes in ritual status and kinship structure can be analysed by noting the contemporary changes in the kinship pattern and perceptions of women representative of three generation. All the three different generation women are selected from the Kanjiramattam Tawazhi, the largest lineage of Poonjar Koyikkal clan.

First Generation Respondent

Rituals could be in the form of public festivals or private celebrations. For instance, in 1920 eight year old Ambalika Kochikkavu Thampuratti stood at the Koyikkal portals watching the Ulladans³⁵ from the Mamadi hills trudging the their way to the koyikkal outskirts for the annual pattathanam. Today, Ambalika Kochukkavu Thampuratti, hard of sight, at the age of eighty, has often nostalgic visions of the "pattathanam" rituals observed by the koyikkal clan till about 1925.

'Pattathanams', she describes 'were a kind of annual festival where the various tribal groups from the adjacent hills and forests would come, days in advance to Poonjar and camp: in outskirts of koyikkal. On the day of 'pattathanam' before a full audience of villagers and koyikkal members they would perform crude gymnastics and native dances, and present Thirumulkkazchai to the Valiaraja (Interview with Ambalika Kochikkavu Thampuratti,

Poonjar 12, September 1992).

Often, the gifts were Tiger skin, Honey , Frank-incense and other forest produces. In the end of the day, the Valiaraja would present one changazhi paddy, a ladle of cocunut oil, a 'Mundu' and 'Thorthu'³⁶ to each of the visitors from the forest. It was the duty of Valia Thampuratti³⁷ to ensure a lavish feast for every participant on the Pattathanam. With possible exaggeration Ambalika Thampuratty says that about 100 Paras of rice was used up for the feasts on the day of Pattathanam. Another respondent, whose father used to be manager in Koyikkal homestead reported that his father used to complain that around Rs 3000/- was spent every year on such "trivala" (Interview with Kalathannikkal Kuttan Pillai Erattupettah, 13 september 1992) .

Gundert's Dictionary defines Pattathanam³⁸ as a public ritual for atonement of all sins by kings and chieftains. This ritual was likely to be a leftover from the days when the forest economy was a more significant link in the production cycle of Poonjar Clan. As different from Revathi Pattathanam³⁹ of Zamorin's court, the Pattathanam in Poonjar must have initially had more economic value than in achieving social mobility. By early twentieth century, the economic value of such interactions with the 'labour force' of forest economy became marginalised by the need for stimulating social mobility through ritual status⁴⁰ .

In fact, the Poonjar clan hailed with rejoice any occasion to reinforce their ritual status. Ritualistic sanctionage was essential for any member to start receiving extra income from the Tarawad. In the period around 1919-1920, every adult male member recieved Rs 16 and every adult female member got Rs 12 as 'Pathivu' (Monthly Allowance)⁴¹. To men, the threshold point of adulthood was Upanayana (the investure of sacred thread) and to women, it was Talikettu kalyanam.

Wouldn't these monthly cash allowances of Rs 12/- place a woman of Poonjar koyikkal clan on a high degree of independence in comparison to any other woman of the same period ?

One surely needs to be cautious before making a positive reply. First of all the control of these allowance by the actual allottee was de jure⁴². Normally, it was the female senior member of the tawazi who received the allowances of all female members. Thus an individual like Ambalika Kochukkavu Thampuratti, who married at 16 and became mother at 17 might find that her allowance is not , after all, with her, but with her mother.

This dominance of senior females affected all the major milestones in her life. Although Poonjar Koyikkal clan has started a small English Medium School, women from Koyikkal were not sent to these schools because children from other castes were also admitted there⁴³. But matriliney meant that girls often attended local schools even before the establishment of centralised education systems in 1860's (Jeffrey(1992), Thakazhi)⁴⁴. After Vidyarambham⁴⁵ at five, Kochukkavu was sent

to the adjacent Koyikkal kalari with other girls of the family, where she was taught to read and write Malayalam, moral education in the form of precepts and sayings in Malayalam. English was not taught. The sole teacher in this school was a Malayalam Munshi imported from Thiruvithamkoor who always insisted on beginning his classes with 'Vanchesha Mangalam'⁴⁶. Thus although, the cultural imperialism of the superstructure of Thiruvithamkoor state was imprinted on this tiny freehold, the percolation of the western power superimposing on Thiruvithamkoor was hardly felt on Koyikkal clan.

In any case, education was considered secondary to their role in reproduction. It was the Karanavar sometimes in consultation with the Valia Tampuratti who chose the appropriate Nampoothiri for sambandham for the young female. In the case of Kochukkavu, our first generation respondent, Talikettukalyanam was celebrated at the age of 12 by an Aryapattar. How unimportant the ritual performer was, compared to the actual ritual of sanctioning a seal of eligibility to marriage to the girl, can be deduced by the mere fact that, today half a century later nobody remembers the name of the Aryapattar.

But sambandham was not a superficial ritual. In 1936, she married Kidangoor Oссерi manackal Padmanabhan Nampoothiri. In Poonjar koyikkal, conventionally Thalikettukalyanam was performed by Aryapattars and Nampoothiris for Sambandham came mostly from Oссерi Mana and Mannumalamel Illam in Kidangoor. In the 19th century, Nampoothiris who migrated from Malabar fearing Tippu's

assault also became candidates for sambandham in Koyikkal. The relative inaccessability of Poonjar meant that whoever married to the Koyikkal clan tended to stay on⁴⁷ and develop cultural interests in the family temples⁴⁸.

Neither of the couple had much control over their reproductive life, because in a demographically threatened clan, there is always pressure on the young married female to reproduce and ensure permanence for the clan. Reproduction of the clan was such an imperative to the members that it was not unusual for a mother and daughter to be at confinement together⁴⁹. The hands of the village midwife/ Pathichi Nani was always busy, with post-natal care in Koyikkal clan alone⁵⁰.

Even more crucial was the sex of the children. With females as the stock of descent, the intraclan status of a mother with female heirs sharply spiralled up as the potential ancestress of future Tawazi. In the Poonjar koyikkal case, more than high infant mortality, the main reason for demographic instability was the high male-female-ratio⁵¹.

As mother of four daughters, Kochikkavu might gradually have assumed greater control over production and accumulation within the Tarawad, but for a minor crisis that briefly enveloped the Koyikkal Tharawad. For a better understanding of kinship transformations in this clan, a critical examination of this crisis seems necessary.

Feud In The Clan

The crisis was none but that which was causing ruptures within the matrilineal homesteads all over Kerala. Like many other Karanavas of his times, the Poonjar Chief Avittam Tirunal RamaVarma who took charge from 1917 was unhappy about the growing disinterest of Karanavar's authority and the ensuing partition deeds in the family scenario of Thiruvithamkoor. Although his own nephews probably never had partition in mind, with the confusion borne of the inherent contradictions between English education and Tharavad morality, young Ramavarma and Godavarma both fresh graduates from Madras accused the uncle of mismanaging the Edavaga finances. The Karanavar had no doubt that it was English education that infused such temerity to his otherwise amenable nephews. He was adamant that no child from Koyikkal shall go to college thereafter.

The nephews were equally adamant. The younger generation demanded that family coffers should open up to give higher education to the junior male members. Karanavar was unrelenting. The feud in the Taravad started becoming a scandal in the neighbourhood. The nephews went on a hungerstrike for the right to education. After the fifth day of fast, the Karanavar reacted by abdicating his position as the head of the family and as Poonjar chief. The leader of the young rebels was left to takeover the administration of the family. This was in 1927.

"When I took control of Edavaga and Koyikkal administration at

the of 22, there was rent income from shops and establishments in Kothamangalam Bazar and paddy from Nattakam lands. As Janmibhogam (rent) and Rajabhogam (tax) alone annual revenue of two to three lakhs was estimated. But the account books showed that for years the rent had not been collected". 88 year old Rama Varma ValiaRaja remembered. "Further, it was found that many tenants had made inroads into Koyikkal's Tanathu lands" (Interview, Allekkode September 1992)

The tenants adversely reacted to the young administrator's attempts to collect taxes. Androse, a surveyor appointed to verify the encroachments on the Tanathu land of Koyikkal was murdered by an angry mob⁵².

This is considered by 'nationalists' and 'Marxists' as a rare case of peasant uprising in Thiruvithamkoor. This is not a case of integration. Idapalli, Poonjar, Vanchipuzha Edavagas were recognised from Jenmom lands in Thiruvithamkoor with none of the pro-tenant reforms applicable to them. The uprising was for the extension of the Jenmom rule to Edavagas.

The tenants of Poonjar sought integration to the adjacent Thiruvithamkoor, where people enjoyed land ownership and benefited from giving commucialisation. The tenants disliked paying high rents. It suffices to say that the dynamics of transitional agregarian structure was set in motion in Poonjar Edavaga also.

Although the Koyikkal administration was able to appease the tenants by agreeing to instalment payment of rent arrears, a Court

of Wards under C.P Gopalapanickar was set in Poonjar Koyikkal for the period between 1928-1935.⁵³

The ramifications of all these on the kinship structure was far-reaching. The elders of the family conferred to re-assess their resources of production in the changing economic contexts of the outside world. There were two factors to consider. Educational investment had acquired a new perspective. Although, earlier it had been feared that the economic returns of educational investment on a son would go to the Tarawad of his wife and children, Koyikkal clan identified the social investment returns for the Tarawad interest in it. Education had now replaced land as the major matrimonial resource for sons, and to a lesser extent, for daughters. Secondly, the interference of the young rebels in Poonjar Koyikkal administration could be avoided by diversifying their socio economic interests. The clan lost no time in finding a respectable job and suitable alliances for RamaVarma and GodaVarma⁵⁴.

Meanwhile, there was the partition question. Although partition signified better access to resources for individuals, most of the members were averse to it fearing the loss of social status of belonging to Koyikkal clan and also the inevitable rupture to kinship structure. However, by 1950, the left movement in Kerala amassed such strength that like many landowners, Koyikkal clan foresaw a Communist Government and de facto confiscation of surplus land by the state⁵⁵. Partition was considered the only way out⁵⁶.

So in 15th June 1951 the estates of Koyikkal clan was partitioned by Marumakkathayam custom among 141 members, 77 males and 64 females under supervision of Advocate G.RaviVarma of Kilimanoor Palace. Part of the estate was maintained as common property of Koyikkal clan and was put under a trust. Democratically elected members from the Koyikkal clan constituted the trust members.

The common property under Koyikkal trust can be broadly classified into four divisions.

1) Ritually significant assets

a) Dewaswom

There are two temples to which Poonjar Koyikkal clan is affiliated to - Sastha Temple and Meenakshi Temple. Out of the land revenue of the Edavaga the clan set aside Rs 8600/- and 102 paras of paddy for 'Nithyanidanam', 'Masavishesham' and maintenance of the two temples.

b) Nalukettu, Kulappura, Nadassalla Malika and cremation grounds are places of ritual importance in a Kshatriya's life cycle. These were maintained as common properties.

2. Economically Productive assets

Poonjar Koyikkal clan has two schools Kallekkulam primary school and Poonjar S.M.V English Highschool, now managed by the Koyikkal Trust.

3. Property on Litigation on which collective responsibility was necessary. It was also the duty of Trust to collect rent on far-flung locations from Koyikkal and distribute it with accounts to

the owner. There is also an annual rent income of Rs 3,000 from Kannan Devan Estates.

4. Maintenance of Edavaga Kacheri, Pathivu Kacheri and Other Government Buildings

In 1955, after the Edavaga Acquisition Act, the Edavaga buildings were nationalised. In compensation, the Government paid 8.5 times the annual income of the Edavaga.

The rest of the partition was neither percapita nor taavazhi partition. The residential Units within Koyikkal tharavad; a guest house in Thiruvananthapuram and registered pattam land on various leases in Kothamangalam, Iramalloor, Kuttamangalam, Moolakkulam, Kadathuruthi, Thalayazalam, Vaikom, Thiruvarpu, Nattakom, North Kanjirapilli, Akalkunnam and Feerumedu were divided among 47 clusters of mother and children / brother and sister groups.

Of the 141 members in Poonjar Koyikkal (in 1951), 64 members who in 1951 constituted the Kanjiramittam taavazhi were much unenthusiastic about partition. A separate Kanjiramittam Koyikkal had already been built in Poonjar Nadubhagam Pakuthi. While many of the other members alienated their Koyikkal inheritance through sales or partition to sons' issues (belonging to another tharavad) the shares of Kanjiramittam taavazhi were collectively managed by P.R. Ramavarma Raja. The sales proceedings of Nattakom Paddy lands were invested in buying nearly 16,000 acres of forest in Mangalore and North Cannanore transgressing Kerala - Karnataka borders⁵⁷. Clearing the

forests, he set up large scale cardamom and rubber plantations in Alakode, near Kannur.

Response to Land Reforms

By Kerala Land Reforms Amendment Act (1969), tenancy was abolished and land ceiling was fixed at 15 acres of double crop paddy land or its equivalent in the case of a family of five members (extendable up to 25 acres in the case of larger families at the rate of 1 acre per additional member). All land under cardamom, rubber and such plantation crops, whatever their area, even when it was in holdings operated on a family basis or through partnership fell beyond the purview of the Land Reforms Act. In the case of Koyikkal clan, the total abolition of tenancy signified the end of most of the rent income. But by the terms of the 1877 lease agreement with the Kannan Devan plantations and its renewal in 1944, the Tata Business group, the present owners continue to pay an annual rent of Rs.3000 to the Koyikkal Trust. Again, by their preplanned early partition and subsequent diversification to plantation agriculture the Koyikkal clan was largely unaffected by the ceilings imposed by land reforms.

Two aspects of the partition and post-partition developments are noteworthy. First is the formation of Trust as a strategy to bypass a legislation which appears detrimental to the clan both in its economic and kinship levels. It was by this trust formation that the clan could resist a total partition of Koyikkal assets imposed by Kerala Hindu Joint Family System (Abolition) Act 1976. Despite the contemporary uproar for

work as our first generation respondent found herself economically mobile after partition, not only by the income from agricultural interests in her husband's homestead, but also ownership and control of her share and the shares of her three minor daughters. In a prepartition tharavad context, a female has only control over her "pathivu" or personal allowance and that too if the senior female transfers it to her. Her access and control over the domestic finances of a tharavad increases with her seniority.

While economic mobility is high, her educational mobility, participation in outside social activities and active role in decision making of the family remained limited, even after partition. All this was voluntary. What freedom the institutionalised comforts of the tharavad had denied her, she chooses not to utilize thereafter.

The eighty year old Kochikkavu Thampuratty of Kanjiramittam taavazhi fields all questions on her finances to her brother, the 88 year old P.R. Ramavarma Valiya Raja. Engrossed fully in attending the family temples and in conducting daily religious rituals of the clan, she is unused to responsibilities other than rituals and reproduction. Having lost her husband early in life, widowhood never was the partial ostracism that it was in some patrilineal communities like Brahmins. Choice of right partners for her daughters marriages, their arrangements and their economic responsibility is the burden of the Kanjiramittam taavazhi head and also the Koyikkal trust. Not only the

marriages and cremations but also the shastipoorthi (sixtieth birth day) and shathabhishekam (eighty fourth birth day) of Poonjar Koyikkal members are conducted by the trust.

Second Generation Respondent

Sixty five year old Attamnal Ambika Aniyathi Thampuratti of Kanjiramattom taavazhi, belonged to a generation that had to break the hypergamic convention. Her arranged marriage to Kerala Varma, a member of another Kshatriya clan had this defect in the perception of her elders - the groom was not a Nampoothiri.

This was not deliberate. The thirties and forties were a period when a Nampoothiri youth movement forbidding the Nampoothiri juniors from marrying outside the caste was on the ferment. E.M.S. Nampoothiripad and V.T.Bhattathiripad and other young Nampoothiri leaders wielded so much influence that no eligible Nampoothiri was willing to offer himself for sambandham. So, more out of compulsion, than out of choice, most Kshatrya clan had to turn to endogamous marriages.

However, this did not rule out thalikettukalyanam. At the age of 12, Ambika Aniyathi Thampuratty's debut to the adult society was elaborately celebrated with guests from most Kshatrya clans in Thiruvithamkoor. The tali-tier as per convention was an Aryappatar (Tamil Brahmin).

Education and Personality Development

Unlike Kochikkavu Thampuratti, her education did not end in special school in Poonjar. Apart from Sanskrit, she studied

English in the Sree Moola Vilasam English School up to 10th standard. Like earlier females of Poonjar clan, her accomplishments did not end with Thiruvathirakali. She also learned Kathakali from a male performer. Nevertheless, her Kathakali enactments were entirely for a family audience and never once for public performance.

Marriage meant migration from Koyikkal tharavad, because her husband was employed in British India's Army. But the employment was short lived and Ambika Aniyathi Thampuratti's neolocal residence fell back to its matrilocality. The emphasis on the reproductive role of female was still persistent in the Koyikkal clan and Aniyathi Thampuratti had one male and four female issues. Now, in their late middle age, she and her husband reside with each of their daughters in turn.

Third Generation Respondent

The value given to the female heirs, for clan sustenance so deep rooted that Usha Devi, our third generation respondent insisted on retaining her fertility until the birth of a girl. Thus, the 42 year old Usha Devi has three sons and a young daughter. The significance of this fertility decision is more pronounced when one understands that Usha Devi is a post independent child of Koyikkal clan with an urban college education and patrilocal residential pattern. A social worker and a political activist in the place where her husband has agricultural interests, her matrilineal Kinship affiliations are explicit. To summarise, our observations are as seen in Table 4.2.

TABLE 42

| | First Generation | Second Generation | Third Generation |
|--|------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Age of marriage | 16 | 18 | 21 |
| whether thalikettu kalayanam performed | yes | yes | No |
| Husband's caste status | Namboothiri | Kshatriya | Kshatriya |
| Husband's occupational status | Agriculture | Employed | Agriculture |
| Residential pattern | Matrilocal | Virilocal mostly matrilocal | patrilocal |
| Children | 4 Girls | 1 Boy + 4 Girls | 3 Boys + 1 Girl |
| Education | Primary | Matriculate | Graduate |
| Education away from home | Nil | Nil | College |

A characteristic unescapable to a researcher on Koyikkal clan is the extra role placed on the Koyikkal female to keep matrilineal kinship alive. This is projected, in conversation, in actions and even in the names of clan members. P.R.Rama Varma Valiya Raja cannot speak of his mother except collectively with her sisters referring to them as 'Ammamars' (mothers). Even the names of almost everyone up to second generation - Kochaniyan, Aniyathi, Kunjaniyathi, Kunjaniyan - stand for kinship terms for addressing one another. Even in the third generation, motherhood is shared. Sisters share even the breastfeeding of their children, whenever possible. Despite farflung residences of nuclear families, birthdays of clan members are remembered, celebrated and religiously attended.

On the whole, it does appear that the transition from matrilineal kinship is not complete in Poonjar Koyikkal Clan.

Section ii : The Kochi Case

By most renderings the roots of the erstwhile Royal family of Kochi starts with a partition well-known in the history of Kerala (Keralolpathi, Ed. Gundert)

"Of the five Thampurans⁵⁹ in female line, nieces to Cheraman Perumal, the youngest Amma Thampuran had a son. To this young Thampuran, Perumal bestowed the Melkkoyma⁶⁰ of 34 divisions from Kanyakumari to Gokarnam" -- Perumbadappu Swaroopam Grandavari.

Data on the kinship details of the erstwhile Royal family of Kochi in the Pre-Portugese period is restricted to the family chronicle - the Perumbadappu Grandavari. Although, chronicles of a royal dynasty cannot be taken as gospel truth, what fits in with several ascertained facts of subsequent history is that it was Rama Varma Kuleshekhara, the last of the Perumals who is the protagonist of the mentioned Partition (Elamkulam 1953). The date of Partition then would be somewhere in early 12th century⁶¹ and not 345 AD, as the Grandhavari suggests.

Nephew's Inheritance

A sequence, that seems nearest to truth, can be culled out of the various versions, as follows : Rama Varma Kulasekharan's sister had 5 daughters. Of these, only the youngest had a son. When Rama Varma Kulesekharan adopted Buddhism or Islam or simply retired, he made a partition of the area under his control between his relatives and supporters. His son was Venattadikal (By some other versions, Eralpad , the Samudiri) and the only nephew, the later king of Kochi⁶². This could be later mythification to legitimise the relative superior powers that

these three Royal families came to assume. Venad figures even earlier than 12th century for instance in the 9th century copper plates of Tarisapalli.

However in our examination of the ideological content of this myth, it appears that the nephew got less territories than the son who got both Venad and Odanad. The major share of nephew's inheritance was the melkkoyma (Suzerinity over Temples) of many temples.

Paternal Inheritance

The name Perumbadappu Swaroopam also unfolds an account of a devolution. Perumbadappu Nampoothiri⁶³ of Vanneri, near Ponnani who had performed the Trittalicharthu⁶⁴ of the youngest niece of Perumal and his Illam became extinct. The properties of the Nampoothiri in Perumbadappu village⁶⁵ of Vanneri devolved to his son⁶⁶. Thus the nephew who had inherited territories from the Perumal also acquired a Patrilineal inheritance⁶⁷ the Perumbadappu Swaroopam. It is from this nephew that the erstwhile Raja of Kochi's family claims their descent. For convenience, we will call this clan, the Perumbadappu clan.

Melkoyma inheritance to ritual status

The value of the Melkoyma inheritance to the clan needs elucidation. One sees a social space created for a group, it's economic function, in conjunction with it's ritual role defined. The emphasis on the ritual role is very crucial to the development of the Perumbadappu clan's analysis. Whether the clan actually had 'melkoyma' of 34 divisions from Kanyakumari to Gokarnam is doubtful. But the clan chief's claims in the

Devaswom memberships of Vadakkumnathan temple, Elamkunnappuzha temple, Haripad temple and Kuttamperur temple by the Grandhavari could be true because, in many documents surviving to the 20th century, the Raja of Kochi is referred to as Koviladhikarikal meaning 'caretakers of the temple'. (Padmanabha Menon 1910 I p:184)

It is in this ritual role that his economic role, not only as the protector of the landed human resources of the temple, but also as a non-producing consumer of surpluses of the temple centred economy, was articulated. It is also in this melkoyma responsibility and his recurring necessity of arranging Nampoothiri alliances to his sisters that his allegiance to Nampoothiris is evident. Perhaps, it would not be too rash a surmise that a resplendant combination of 'Soorya Kshatriya'⁶⁸ and 'Kuru'⁶⁹ dynasties were fabricated for him by Nampoothiris of Sukapuram⁷⁰ faction in exchange for support against their sworn rivals, the Panniyoor Brahmin Faction.

Territorial Expansion Vis-A-Vis Kinship Expansions

The clan's land inheritance from the Perumal was comparatively scant⁷¹. Grandhavari leaves one to understand that Perumbadappu Swaroopam expanded its territories not so much by military expansions as by giving male and female members in adoption to demographically dwindling clans with enormous material resource structures.

Perumal had five nieces. Although only the youngest had a son,

there were five tāvazhis in Perumbadappu clan. Mootha tāvazhi, Ilaya tāvazhi, Muringoor tāvazhi Chazhur Tāvazhi and Palliviruthi tāvazhi.

While the Ilaya tāvazhi was endowed with both male and female heirs, the other tāvazhis had only female heirs who further produced female heirs. Only male heirs could become the clan chief, the Perumbadappu Moopinnu⁷². This had two implications. A prolonged unilinear devolution through one tāvazhi minimised inter-tāvazhi claims which made the Ilaya tāvazhi dominant. Gradually a new norm that succession always flows through elaya tāvazhi was evolved. Second, the number of females in the clan was high. In this context, the Perumbadappu clan was prepared to exploit its female wealth.

Padmanabha Menon (1912 : 480) also notes that the Ilaya tāvazhi became dominant by effecting adoptions of females from Perumbadappu clan into the influential houses of Matattenkur⁷³, which possessed territory and temple estates upto Kanneti near Quilon and of Kuruswaroopam and Villarvattam who were also large land owners. When these clans became extinct, the property merged with Perumbadappu swaroopam, much to the credit of the clan chief. Obviously, it was his dynastic ambience as 'Soorya Kshatriya' and wield of ritual powers as 'Perumbadappu Gangadhara Veera Kerala Trikkoviladhikarikal'⁷⁴ that equipped him to manage these adoptions to wealthy clans.

Production Relations and Kinship

The cardinal means of production for the Perumbadappu clan was ecology-determined. As the inheritors of Mahodayapuram (a trade centre in ancient Kerala, identified as modern Kogungallore) and its established mercantile trade⁷⁵ the economic future of the clan was only predictable. This had ramifications on the Kinship plane also.

By its very nature, trading is an act involving competition. Price-fixation and production co-ordination to demand requires the active control of the participants. For the Perumbadappu clan, this necessitated, the complete involvement of all the men of the family. Women's role was confined to reproduction of the clan and maintaining the ritual status of the clan. To maximise the profits the merchantile economy in Mahodayapuram, the entire clan moved to Mahodayapuram palace in late 13th century. Samoodiri's military attack at this period, as claimed by the Grandhavari, must have offered a timely pretext for the shift on the residence.⁷⁶ The migrations engendered by the challenges in the early economic life of the clan and its impact on kinship can be visually depicted as in Diagram-4.1 (Refer next page)

After floods in Periyar in 1341, the formation of Cochin harbour gave a new lease to foreign trade. Within a century, the whole Perumbadappu clan moved to Kalvatty palace in Kochi to take control of the means of production. Customs duties formed a substantial position of the King's income. Pepper, coconut and coconut oil were the chief articles of export. Kochi was the chief emporium of trade. 10 percent import duty and 6 percent export duty were levied.

DIAGRAM 4.1

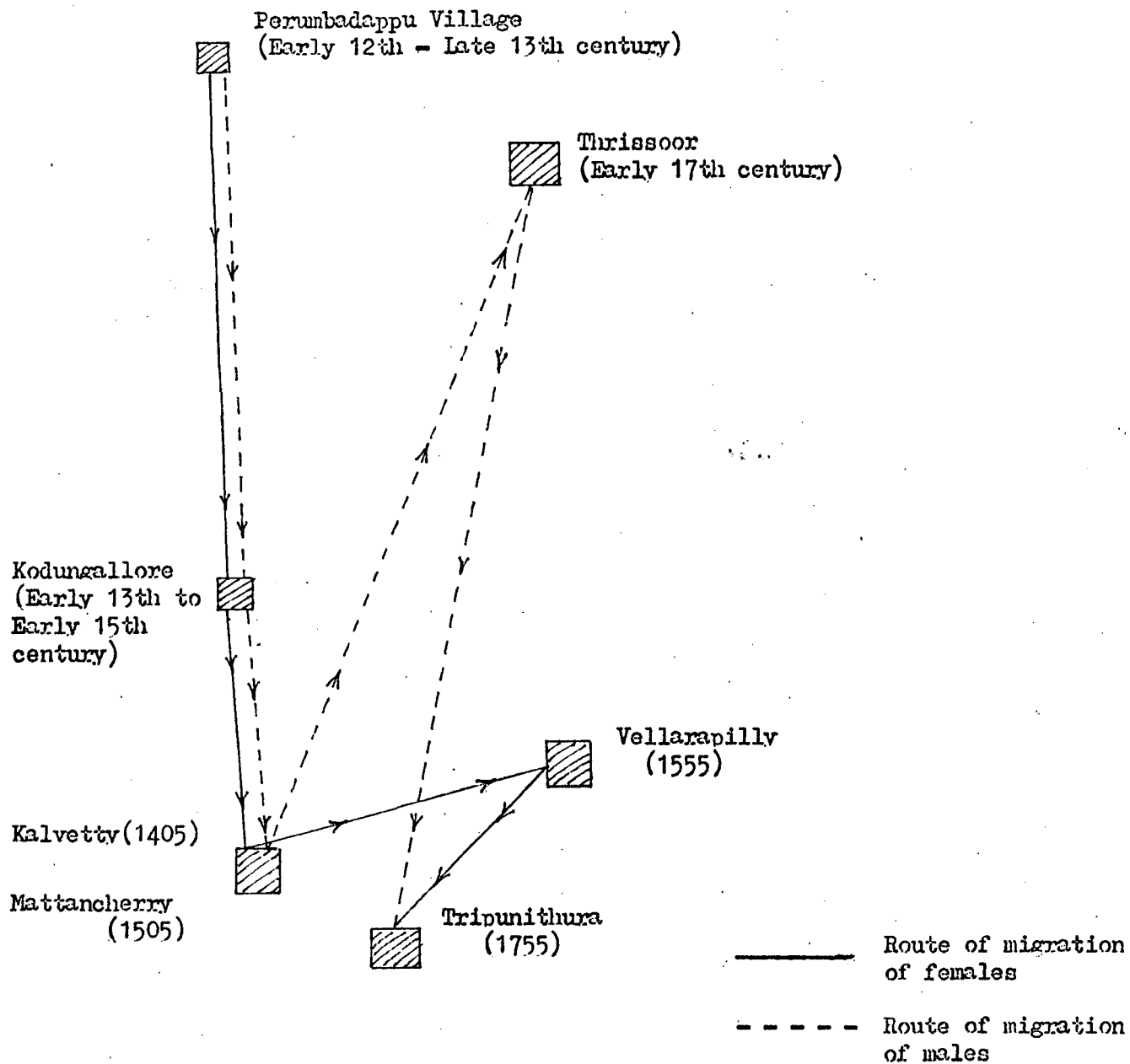


DIAGRAM SHOWING THE DIVERSE ROUTES OF MIGRATION OF MALES AND FEMALES OF THE PERUMBADAPPU CLAN

Foreign Intervention Kinship and Division of Labour

The clan's military role as Kshatriya or ritual status as 'Koyiladhikarikal' seems to be superseded by eager participation in mercantile economy. Thus the Raja of Kochi whom in 14th century Ibn Batuta describes as "the only person who rides a horse" and Ma Huan in 1409 understood as "a ruler of Solar race"⁷⁸ was by 1518 much involved "at the port of Cochin where many and great ships enter, both Portugese and Moorish."⁷⁹ In fact, in 1500, we find Unni Godavarma Koil Thirumulpad sending a letter of friendship written on a "gold leaf, a rich collar of pearls and precious stones and a box full of rich white silk" to be presented to the King of Portugal through Alvarez Cabral.⁸⁰

The intrusion of foreign powers like Portugese, Dutch and British in the power relations (which here proxy for the production relations) cuts into the kinship in many ways. Increased trade surpluses created competition from the various tãvazhis and from other clans like Samudiris and that of Thiruvithamkoor for control of the Trade. Even the adoptions into the Perumbadappu clan were regulated by Portugese and Dutch.

Apart from such direct intrusions into the inner recesses of the kinship, one suspects how the constant interactions to a group alien in language, manner, culture and religion co-existed with the carefully guarded core-identity ritual status of the clan. This basic conflict of clan ideology of ritual status with the foreign intervention inevitable in their chosen means of production resulted in a pronounced division of labour between men and women of the household. The dotted line in the Diagram-1

stands for the mothers sisters and their children of Perumbadappu clan moving from Kochi to Vellarpally in 1555. The transfer of the females, the conservers of ritual status, into safe inland palaces is the strategy that the clan ultimately adopted for its ethnic salience.

Ritual Investment

By 1750, the female population was high necessitating new residences. Thus the female stock of the family shifted to the palaces near Poornathrayeesa temple⁸¹ in the fortified town of Tripunithura, while Rajas of different periods sometimes had their headquarters in Trichur and sometimes in the Hill palace in Tripunithra.

With the loss of control of trade surpluses, the Perumbadappu clan became increasingly involved in their role of ritual status conservation by investing in expensive ceremonies and widescale feasts like the Trittalikettu of the girls of the family. The manuscript of a letter of 1825 A.D on the arrangements for a non-vegetarian feast for East India Company's representatives invited for Trittalicharthu by this 'ritually pure' vegetarian clan shows how smoothly by now, the ritual elements were flexed to accomodate the Western violations of it. (Refer Appendix III)

Trittalichartu represented the ritual marriage ceremonies of all girls above ten, arranged together once in four or five years. It was mandatory that only Nampoothiris of high ritual purity and from Trissur Vedic schools should tie talies of the girls of this clan, that a Nampoothiri of this category generally commanded a

dowry of Rs 15,000 in 1885-1895 from a Trittalicharthu. It was in the period of the Raja known as Abdicated Raja (1896 - 1914) that a decision was made that the Nampoothiri who tie the Tali need not be her husband. This released Nampoothiris from a certain amount of community ostracization involved in such marriages and the dowry figure fell to Rs 3000. The advantage to the Nampoothiris was that one Nampoothiri could tie Talis with many female Thampurans, even if they were sisters, aunts and nieces.

Of the Palace expenditure that was 6 to 7 percent of the total budget of Cochin state in the years from 1917 to 1945⁸⁴, nearly 17% is spent on ceremonies and rituals⁸⁵. The revenue justifications are that for every Rs 68,000 spent on ceremonies⁸⁶, there is a return of Rs 53800 as Thirumulkkazcha and Rs 82 as Stanakazcha⁸⁷. Thus the overall emphasis on ritual preoccupations of the clan leaves its traces even in the 20th century.

Residential Segregation

The residential pattern in Tripunithra was also one favouring insulation of females from a 'ritually impure' outside world. By 1925, there were 44 residential palaces set tightly around the Poornathrayeesa temple and the Ettukettu (a typical Kerala architectural construction with twin quadrangles), where the clan deity Pazhayanoor Bhagavathi is worshipped through daily pujas. Till 1945, no castes other than Kshatriyas or Nampoothiris were permitted inside the fort⁸⁸. For educational convenience, the

young men of the family stayed in the Residential Palace in Ernakulam, with one of the uncles as warden. Once married, these young men could set up new houses with their allowances, supplemented by employment income if possible⁸⁹.

The preoccupations of the Karanavar as the Raja and his segregated residence made the palaces largely female controlled. The economy of these palaces rested on two sources--State and Valiamma Thampuran Kovilakom estates. The feudal income of the family was vested in paddy terms under the name of senior most woman of the clan⁹⁰ and after converting to rice, they were distributed to each palace as in the Table-4.3. Notice the extra measure of rice allotted for Nampoothiri propitiation.

Table -4.3

Monthly allowances in Rice measures from common property (1920-1948)

| Individual | Para | Idangazhi | Nazhi |
|---------------------|------|-----------|-------|
| Female | 1 | -- | 20 |
| Child | -- | 7 | 1 |
| Nampoothiri Husband | 2 | -- | 10 |

Note: 1 Para (13.11 ltrs) = 10 Idangazhis
1 Idangazhi = 4 Nazhis

Source: Based on interviews

Allowances for each palace came from the palace Expenditure Fund of the Kochi State. This stopped when the State merged with Thirukochi in 1948.

Table 4-4
Cash allowances from the palace expenditure fund⁹¹ (1945)

| | | Monthly | | | Pathivu Thrice a year | Visheshal Twice a Year |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------|------|----|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | Rs | Anna | Ps | | |
| Men | Age 16-25 | - | - | - | 75 | 60 |
| | Above 25 | - | - | - | 100 | 75 |
| Women | Age 16-25 | - | - | - | 25 | 40 |
| | Above 25 | - | - | - | 75 | 60 |
| Nampoothiri Husband | | - | - | - | 5 | |
| Tamil Brahmin Cook | | 10 | | | | |
| Personal Servant | | 3 | | | | |
| ⁹² Chagalavattakkutty | | 1 | 10 | 8 | | |

Source: Based on interviews, recollections

An informant explains the gender differentiation in the disposal of allowances as evident in table 4.4 in the following way. "The Kochi State gave more allowances to educate and enrich the minds of men who are likely to be rulers ?⁹³". Whether the state stand has it's own strange justification or not, but that the Karanavar of a clan, whose devolution is traced through the female line should think that equal stepends to men and women in the clan are "detrimental to the solidarity of the family"⁹⁴ is very expressive of the value given to woman in matrilineal Tharavads welding Royal power.

Restricted Mobility and gender status

This is not to suggest that a women in Ferumbadappu clan, in spite of the royal powers they enjoyed were not educated. Most of them were home-tutored by sanskrit scholars. In fact, 88 year old Ikkavu Thampuran, who is the present Valiamma Thampuran of the clan is also an Honours graduate from Madras Presidency College. But one wonders whether her education was of the kind that a helps a women to find her individuality or simply erudition in Sanskrit which was her topic. She never attended college with Students from other communities. Within the soundproof walls of ritual purity, she boycotted temples for a long time after the Temple Entry Proclamation that gave Harijans access to temples.

The Quality of Freedom

With the freedom inherent in the Marumakkathayam, she could delay her marriage upto 25 years and could maintain her matrilocal residential pattern.

But, while the Nayar wife of an uncle of hers, in 1905, could boast of being able to drive a dog-cart (a kind of horse carriage) through the streets of Trissur, of expertise in Tennis and Bridge⁹⁵, Ikkavu Thampuran wrote her Honours Examination in Stella Mary's College, Madras in 1925 screened from all sides from 'Polluting castes'. This is not intended as an argument for Westernisation as a route to freedom, but only to point out that geographic mobility and exposure to outside

social activities requisite for the unfolding of personality was in the ritual-bound life of a first generation woman in the Perumbadappu clan. Insistence on Nampoothiris from Trissur vedic schools as spouses, as opposed to those of Tirunavaya Vedic Schools was another tradition that limited the choice of a life-partner.⁹⁶

Marumakkathayam, Power and Gender Status

All these illustrates that Marumakkathayam burdened by power relations do not have many gender-sympathetic attributes. Females in a Kshatriya power yielding family were only channels of devolution through which the male control of power relations were articulated. Theoretically a female Karanavar was permitted, but a female ruler was not. Examining the Grandhavari and 42 rulers traced from Veera Kerala Varma, the only Queen we find is Gangadhara Laxmi (1656-1658) who reigned Kochi for three years on a regency effected by Portugese.⁹⁷

A male heir no doubt, was more wanted in a ruling Kshatriya clan than a female heir. Shanta Thampuran recalls in the family journal Gosrivishesham⁹⁸, how in 1940 as a school girl in her class room, she counted the three conventional Aacharavedis (shots signifying a royal birth) and was crestfallen that her younger sibling was a girl. Three shots meant a girl, but five meant a boy. Sixty year old Shanta Thampuran belongs to another generation, educated in the Maharaja's College, Ernakulam and more exposed to the society

beyond the fort of Tripunithra. Hers was the first generation of the females to leave Tripunithra for a neolocal residence determined by her husbands job posting. Endogamous marriages with mere intellectual symmetry of spouses than was possible in the hypergamous specifications imposed on the previous generations marriage decisions were in way.

With the Nampoothiri exclusivism dropped, the earlier dowry system, at least it's overt form, has disappeared. Perhaps, one should say that the rationality of marriage as a strategy of social advancement hinging on the status of the participants has been rehashed with more economic in consideration. These changes were linked to the changes in the Kinship structure induced by the legislations.

By the Hindu Succession Act (1956), the estate of the Perumbadappu Clan would immediately have had to be dispersed among his 616 heirs, but for a Palace Administration Board, a trust formed by the Maharaja in 1949 to administer the Estate and the Palace Fund Proclamation [Proclamation (IX of 1124) by Sree Rama Varma, Maharaja of Kochi, G.E.No:34, Government Gazette Extraordinary, 29/7/1949].

The Palace Administration Board obtained a temporary exemption from the immediate operation of partition. It's prime function was the slow dismantling of this ritual, reigning and feudal machinery enstrapped in the matrilineal ensemble of the

Perumbadappu clan. This role was enacted in three accounts of the Palace Board, namely, Nadumuttathu Dewaswom, Palliyara Muthalpadi and Valiamma Thampuran Kovilakam Estates. Of these, Nadumuttathu Dewaswom embodied all the Dewaswom memberships of the Maharaja. This account was later transferred to Dewaswom Board. Palliyaramuthalpadi represents the properties which earlier accrued to the Maharaja as an expense account for maintaining his social status. The Palace Administration Board's accounts show that the Maharaja's Privy Purse accumulation alone amounted to Rs 10,000 per month in 1940. Gradually, many of the movables and immovables of this account was transferred to the State as archeological property. The Valiamma Thampuran Kovilakom Estates, representing the earlier feudal income of the clan was marginalised after the tenancy abolitions.

The Palace Administration Board has thus been a distribution system from the common resources, that never got replenished by collective production. Although the economic participation was minimised, the ritual elements that had once pushed them up the caste-hierarchy has not been abandoned. It is the residential clustering around the clan-deity and their ritual affiliation that retains the kinship ties in this clan of 719 members affine to each other by an ancestress who lived in early 19th century.

The Kollengode Case

In terms of historical evidences, the roots of the clan of Raja of Kollengode (Venganad Nambidi) is shrouded in mystery. But this is amply substituted by the rich dynastic and divine connections in the geneology legends of the clan. The main repositories of there origin traditions are Keralolpathi⁹⁹. Kashyapakshetra mahtmyam¹⁰⁰ and a manuscript summarising the traditions of Venganad Clan¹⁰¹ from Venganad palace. Based on their family name, we shall call them Venganad Clan.

The origin of the legends on Venganad can be placed in five phases.

1) In the first phase, the family traditions trace the clan from Dharma Varman who came from "a hardy descendant of the solar race"¹⁰². The solar race, again is linked to the Chera dynasty of ancient Kerala.

2) King Dharma Varman's son Hemangada was accidentally separated from his parents . A Kollan (blacksmith) found him and brought him up, training him to be an archer, a hunter and a warrior. Once, Parasurama, impressed by his skill with weapons, presented him five kingdoms. He named this domain after his foster-father, Kollengode¹⁰³.

3) The Celibate King Hemangada is re-united to his sister Dronavathi. By the legitimisation of Parasurama, Dronavati has a brilliant son Vira Ravi, by the Sun god, disguised as a Brahmin.

4) During Vira Ravi's reign, Indra (King of the gods) was offended by certain ritual lapses of Nampoothiris and took away Soma (Sarcostemma brevistigma), Karinnali (a plant called Mimosa

Catechu) Krishnaginam (Skin of black antelope) and the sacrificial fire, all indispensable for Nampoothiris performing Yagic rituals (Fire Rituals performed by Brahmins). Later he entrusted these to King Vira Ravi giving him monopoly and responsibility of providing these to Brahmins. In compensation for this responsibility, Vira Ravi, was to get one-sixth of the prosperity from the rituals. Indra, then invoked Agni, the lord of fire to Vira Ravi's feet¹⁰⁴. Later Parasurama met Vira Ravi and instructed him on the finer details of the distribution of sacrificial items from the forest to the Brahmins. Venganad Nambidi, as the descendent of Vira Ravi, carried this tradition.

5) Another Version is that Parasurama ordered a gandharva (a celestial being with supernatural powers) who lived in Tenmala - Vatamala regain to guard the Brahmins in Kerala and that the Venganad Nambidis originated from this gandharva. According to this legend . This is the reason why the women of Nampidis family are called appachi, a corruption of Apsarastri, meaning a nymph.

The Ideology Permeated

Perhaps, it would be difficult to find a geneology construct with better craftsmanship or one so deftly blending the diverse purposes of similar shiny pedigrees. Almost every piece of this complex plot has it's function in creating and perpetuating a power base for a native chieftain. To begin with, in the first phase, the Venganad Clan is tagged to solar dynasty for a cosmic dimension, and almost simultaneously contextualized by a more locally valid Chera dynasty link. The introduction of Parasurama in the second

phase serves to point to Hemangada's¹⁰⁵ Brahmin-licensed ownership of land which is rendered credible by a nearly convincing etymology of the place name, Kollengode,¹⁰⁶. The military character of Nambidi is also stressed in his wielding of weapons.

In a study of matrilineal kinship of Venganad clan the third phase is particularly pertinent. While the transition from patrilineal inheritance to matrilineal inheritance is projected as authorised by Brahmins, its hypergamy contents - the sungod in Brahmin disguise - is also implied. One could almost read the message that in medieval Kerala, manumakkathayam and hypergamy were considered pre-requisite for social elevation.

However, a query how Venganad Nambidi, a Samanatha who is not socially authorised even to wear a sacred thread could successfully sustain a colourful geneology and a near Brahmin status is worth raising. A close reading of the fourth phase of the tradition furnishes a striking clue to clarify this doubt. The control of Soma, Karinnali and Krishnaginam broadly hints to Venganad Nambidi's monopoly of forest resources.

In a Brahmin - dominated milieu, it is by the control of these items indispensable for the fire rituals of Brahmins, that the Venganad clan became valuable to Brahmins. They could as weapon - wielders, hunt out the black ontelope and kill and skin it which the Brahmins, who needed this skin could not in their caste function as priests perform. It is quite probable that Brahmins conferred special privileges¹⁰⁷ on the Nambidi¹⁰⁸ to ensure ready supply of these items.

A secondary semantic layer in this fourth phase identifying Indra the King of Gods as the locally dominant chieftain (Perhaps, Samoodiri) and Parasurama as the Brahmin hierarchy might superficially make exciting sense. One should remember that the only the politically dominant person could confer special authorities and this would need confirmation from the spiritual authorities. Thus this legend could point to an early acculturation of a tribe by the political and spiritually dominated groups in lieu of their control of forest resources.

The discourse of the legend of Venganad Nambidi as the gandharava (The celestial bard) who guards the western region is only too obvious. The political significance of Venganad lies in its location at the mouth of the Palakkad gap. It served as an outpost and as a strategic position in the prevention of invasions from the other side of the western Ghats. Identifying Venganad Nambidi as gandharva is basically an investiture of divine aura to his role as the guardian of this politically, vulnerable spot. However the interpretation of Appachi as Apsarastree, the female of gandharva - as evidence to Nambidi's divinity is very unconvincing since Appachi.¹⁰⁹ is a common kinship term used in Malayalam to signify father's sister. This emphasis placed on the respect paid to appachi points to the matrilineal kinship in the family¹¹⁰.

The territory under Venganad clan was also supposedly large. According to Keralolpathi, Venganad was one of the administrative divisions of Kerala, comprising of Kollengode, Vattakkad, Vatawannore, Elavancheri and Payyalloor (as quoted by Raghava Warriar, 1984 P.283).

Historic Elements in the Legends

After such a lengthy dynastic construct and implications of immense territories, one would expect Venganad Nambidi to leave some trace in ancient history. But before 14th century, there is no mention of him in any contemporary readings. Despite the repeated reference to Venganad as a Swaroopam, (an independent kingdom) in the family traditions, there is no historical corroboration to whether he was anything more than a vassal¹¹¹ of the Samoodiri of Kozhikode. Kozhikode Grandhavari mentions that in early 15th century, Samoodiri instructs his son Kutiravattathu Nayar¹¹², a local chieftain who successfully returned from a military expedition to protect Venganad Appachi, the senior female member of the class. In Samoodiri's military move to Edappally in 1504, Venganad Nambidi is described as the 4th of the 10 barons of Samoodiri holding command of 20,000 odd Nayar soldiers (Kerala Pazhama, as quoted by Padmanabha Menon 1924 I p.490 - 491; Kozhikode Grandhavari, as quoted by Krishna Iyer 1938 p.133,204). The next time point where we read of Venganad Nambidi is in 1559 when the death of a samoodiri was not officially intimated to Venganad Nambidi because Sammothiri's successor was displeased with Venganad Nambidi (Kozhikode grandhavari, as quoted by Nampoothiri 1987 p.244). The next mention of this clan is in an ambiguous statement of an adoption in 1673, of Chakkumparambil Unnichunda Nambiar, the nephew of Peruvandamukkil Kizhakke Nambidi to Venganad Clan and his investiture as the Nambidi. There are two interpretations to this document (Bundle 13, Palmleaf 2, Kozhikkode Grandhavari, as quoted by Nampoothiri 1987 p. 223). The varying readings are as follows:

- 1) Because of the extinction of Venganad clan, Cherooli Achan,

minister to Samoodiri performed the duties of the adopter for Venganad clan, in adopting Junior Pervandamukkail Nambidi and his sister to Venganad clan (Krishna Iyer 1938 P133 - 134, Raja P.C.M. 1982 P.104 - 105).

2) Samoodiri removed Cheroli Achan from Venganad Nambidi position and arranged junior Peruvandamukkal Nambidi to be adopted by the clan and invested him with the title Venganad Nambidi (Raghava Warriar 1984 P.284.)

Both interpretations make it clear that Venganad Nambidi was a title legitimised by Samoodiri. The latter interpretation even makes one to wonder whether it was a title from which a person could be displaced and another appointed at Samoodiri's will. In the light of the fact that Cheroli Achan was already holding a high post as minister in Samoodiri's territory, the first interpretation seems to be more tenable.

Piecing together the minute historic evidences from different time points in 15th and 16th centuries., the picture that emerges is that of a clan politically significant to samoodiri by its strategic location and of immense resource - significance to Brahmins. Thus our historical discussions seems sequential to the third, fourth and fifth phase of the geneological traditions considered, that is the resource base, the power base and the Kingship base of Venganad clan. The continuous interaction between these bases cannot go unnoticed. The ritual privileges, (note only priveleges, not ritual status)¹¹³ that they secure is

one of the essential intervening variables in these changes.

Interactions Between Kinship and Power Base

Let us consider these one by one. On the Kinship level, we understand that clan with a strong powerbase never dies out merely by lack of blood descent. Surprisingly more than the biological descent, the primary determinants of Kinship, what seem important is the conservation of its socio-economic powerbase. This base is not merely a House and landunit, but the entire social and ritual resources inclusive of even its long-winded geneologies. Thus adoption is one of the power-base perpetuation measures, the system had devised, in its pre-capitalist days.

The greater this socio-economic powerbase of the clan, greater could be the interference from political authority as we see in the case of Samoodiri arranging an adoption to Venganad clan from Chakkumparambil Unnichunda Nambiyar. This intrusion of external power graphs into the Kinship plane intercuts its economic base also. Thus we find that immediately after the adoption and investiture as Venganad Nambudiri, the new clan chief drawing from its economic resources, transferring ubhayams, kalappads and vallichathans¹¹⁴ (land and labour) Samoodiri's treasure. (Kozhikode Grandavari, as quoted by Nampoothiri 1987 pp247).

One does not know from when this vassal chieftain of Samoodiri started calling himself Raja of Kollengode. When Hyder Ali annexed Malabar, he recognized the Melkoyma claim (religious authority) of Raja of Kollengode in Kachankurissi of temple.¹¹⁵ Venganad Nambidi's clever utilization of the the new regime's

ignorance of native hierarchies can be seen as an attempt to assert his ritual privileges, to establish his Melkoyma and finally achieve social mobility as Raja. By the treaty of Sri Rangapatanam, when Tippu ceded Malabar to the British in 1792, Kollengode, with other Chieftains, lost whatever vestiges of power they have and became merely a land owning clan.

Resource Base : Its Implications

The very name Venganad ¹¹⁶ -land of Tigers- is a signifier to its resource base - the forests. Apart from feudal dues from nearly 100 sq. miles of cultivable land, the clan were owners of 140 sq. miles of forests ¹¹⁷. It was Sakthan Nambidi, the clan chief who lived in the end of 18th century who started the practice of commercialising forest produces. ¹¹⁸. We have already discussed how this resource base had directly (through gifts to the dominant political power) and indirectly (by monopolising the supply of essential ritual item to the theocratic oligarchy) energised the powerbase. Even after the loss of whatever power they had, the resource utilization pattern of the Venganad clan appears to retain its power - assertion character.

From the income - expenditure Pattern that Kunjkrishnan (1987) unravels from the palm leaf records in kollenkode Archives,, it seems that most of the Vengand clan's income was in terms of rights, levies, transportation tolls and monopolies. Most of Raja's monopolies on minor items of forest products like bamboo sticks, fencing logs, pieces of wood for yoke and plough, fire wood and wood to make charcoal and even the right to graze cattle

was usually leased out. The Raja is thus not a direct participant either in the gradual insurge of commercialization of agriculture or in the trade in Ponnani, Pollachi and Kochi, but only an indirect beneficiary vis-a-vis his various monopolies ¹¹⁹

A social investment feature which is again power - assertive in character is evident in the expenditure pattern, as well. Kunjukrishnan (1987-551) notes reckless spending on non-productive activities such as rituals, ceremonies, feasts and monumental buildings which brought the Raja religious merit and socio-political status.

Role of a Prime Mover

The Venganad Valia Nambidi ¹²⁰ of the early 20th century, Vasudeva Raja was instrumental in transforming the surplus to social investment. Identifying the change in the dominant social groups from Nampoothiries and local chieftains to the socials who represented the colonial regime, Vasudeva Raja associated himself with western planters and socially established princes in North India ¹²¹. He hosted Maharaja and Maharani of Baroda and their British friend Clarke with such pomp that an impression left after reading Clarke's account of this Kerala tour would be that Kollengode, Thiruvithankore and Kochi were the three dominant princely states in Kerala ¹²².

Perhaps due to long association with the Patrilineal groups, Vasudevan Raja had firm convictions on the extinction of rituals and hypergamy as instruments for social mobility. Sarada Thambatti, niece of Vasudeva Raja remembers that her uncle was

the first to openly break the celibacy vows that characterised Venganad Valia Nambudiri. He reacted defiantly to the subservance involved in seeking Nampoothiri's for hypergamic alliances, and from his generation decided that any Hindu with high education could marry females from the Venganad clan.¹²³ Vasudeva Raja's disenchantment with Marumakkathyam is vociferously clear in his introduction of Malabar Inheritance Bill (1919), as the member of Madras Legislative Council.¹²⁴

Understanding the Raja's Initiatives

A careful examination of Vasudeva Raja's relatively radical stance would show that his attack was not aimed at the tharavad as such. Tearing apart the strands of social status and impartibility that a Tharavad represents, he wanted to discard impartibility and retain the social status. With the rapid accumulation of wealth in the Venganad Clan in 19th Century (Kunjukrishnan 1987) there had been questions raised on the Karanavan's authority to the control of resources.¹²⁵ The family contract¹²⁶ that Vasudeva Raja initiated in 1909 seems to indicate his concern on gaining more control over the property and at the same time redefining the social status of the clan.

By this contract in 29th May, 1909 he effected a partition as 'Streetavazi Swathu' (Property for female members) and Stanam properties¹²⁷. When the male members of the Venganad Clan in late 19th Century started bringing their Nayar wives to reside with them, the female members started residing in a separate adjacent palace called Kulari Puthen Palace. The Kitchen and Dining halls were common.

The family contract of 1909 effected two measures¹²⁹

- (1) A fund for 'Streetaavazhi Swathu' was registered in the name of Dhatri Valia Rani, the oldest female member of the Venganad Clan. New land, referred to as Mathakkode and Cheelakkode properties were invested in this fund.
- (2) Starting with Vasuydeva Raja, four seniority - based stanoms, named first, second, Third and fourth Nambidis were created with properties attached to each. The rest of the property remained with the Karanavar.

The strategy in this contract on seems simple in the light of the fact that Dhathri Valia Rani was Vasudeva Raja's mother. In a broad context of junior members challenging a Karanayar's authority, this contract partition gave him more control over his resouces than was possible in a simple Marumakkathayam frame work. The creation of stanoms, were also probably meant to appease the junior members and also to reassess the social status of the Venganad clan. After the death of Vasudeva Raja in 1940 similar renewed contracts were arranged by succeeding Karanavars. This triple - focus reconstitution of wealth by which two - third of the family property was gradually getting alineted through partitions and sales. with the practice of females migrating to neolocal residences and gradual deritualisation of the shrines within the Venganad Kovilakam, kinship ties also weakened.

In 1956, when Meenakshi Valia Rani passed away the Tharavad Property was considered partitioned among 13 members of Vengand

Clan - 9 males and 6 females. By Hindu succession Act, this partition has been challenged continuously by atleast 32 court cases, still unsettled. What remains of the estates of Venganand Kovilakam - the main Palace, Kalariputhen Kavilakam and Devi Vilasam Palace and the grounds are now the court - appointed Receiver's responsibility. There are also tax arrears of near 40 lakhs to be paid up.

Gender status

In the context of Kriship transformations which seem to have happened early in the 20th Century, a search for corresponding transformations in gender status is limited by time. The present Valia rani Sharada Thambatt, only 65 year old, now settled in Bangalore does not use the title Valia Rani. Although she claims that her gains from belonging to Venganad was merely an ideal alliance, one notes that from her earlier maintenance funds she has invested Rs. one lakh in buying a house in Madras nearly 35 years ago. Her disillusionment with the Tharavad which she left 40 years ago seems largely ideological. A graduate from Madras University in 1948, she continuously speaks of the "Old system" from which she escaped. Her geographical mobility at any period was not inhibited seriously by rituals or even by her caste status. In fact hers was an arranged marriage to a Tamil Brahmin, who later became planning Board Member in the Government of India.

Her younger sister Meenakshi Rajan alias Vimala Thambatti is a 52 year old cancer specialist in Madras who hates to talk of her

"feudal matrilineal homestead". Her only acknowledgement to her Tharavad is for giving her the ambition to become a cancer specialist, in view of the cancer-susceptibility in the clan. (This could probably be one of the reasons for the gradual demographic decline of the clan which hastened its structural transformation) The kinship ties also appear scant. Despite merely 13 members remaining in the clan, many of their addresses could be located only with the help of advocates handling their cases and not from the members of the clan. Nuclearisation of the family with neo-local residential pattern seems complete in the Venganad clan.

However, neither of the sisters could clearly articulate what exactly made them escape from the system that admittedly gave them the education, autonomy in resource control and personal decisions. Sarada Thambatti speaks of her uncle Vasudeva Raja's revolutionary role in breaking Kerala free of matriliney. One wonders how much of this hatred of the marumkathayam system is inbibed ideological heritage and how much is deserved. The Kinship transformation in this clan is perhaps too distant in time to make a more concrete judgement.

Chapter IV NOTES

1. Nilankanta Sastri does not mention the arrangement between the two brothers Chirayavarman Manavikraman and Maravarman Srivallabhan. He writes : "The next Pandya King of whom we have definite knowledge is Maravarman Srivallabhan who is known to have been reigning in A.D 1160-1 and to whom Vira Ravi Varman of Travancore was Tributary. (Nilankanta Sastri K.A 1972 The Pandya Kingdom, Swathi Publications, Madras, p.113) this roughly tallies with the date given by Valia Raja(1988).
2. Poonjar Grandhavari quotes the purchase document as follows :- "Chengamanattu Tevarunamapperil uralar irupathenmanam swamipurusharum venattumanushavum keelmal manushavum pette pothuvarum koodi cheytha karyam" The connection of venad manusham (Travancore) might be as ooralars in chengamanad Devasom. (Valia Raja : 1988 :pp4-5). The precise role of Raja of Travancore and Raja of Vadakkankore in the Purchase remains unknown.
3. The name Poonjar is a correction of "Punya Aar" meaning sacred stream. It is actually a tributary of River Meenachil.
4. This was true of all India, not only Malayalam-speaking areas. Irfan Habib has written : "Aini-Akbari and rennel's Atlas (1770) show that down to 18th century large cultivable tracts still lay behind the forest-line. (Habib Irfan.1963. " An examination of Witt Fogel's Theory of Oriental Despotism" : pp.54)."
5. Valia Raja(1988) writes about the high land man ratio in Poonjar during the early years (p.44) and the efforts of the Rajas of different periods to increase cultivation through initiating settlements. He notes that in 1252, the then Raja brought groups of Mannan community from Pandya Kingdom to populate Poonjar domain.
6. Stein, Burtan (1968) "Social Mobility and Medieval South Indian Hindu sects, Social Mobility in the caste system in India " J.Silverberg(cd.), The Hague, Mouton pp.79
7. For sambandhams of the female members of the clan, hypergamy with Nampoothiris were necessary. Evidence of the later years does prove that Nampoothiris did perform their hypergamous role in Poonjar Koyikkal family (Interview with Attamal Ambika Thampuratti. Aug.1992) However, answers to intriguing questions like what was their immediate reaction to the new entrant in the Kerala caste hierarchy and against what odds were their integration into the system will remain missing links in the story.

8. They might not have the demographic strength to sustain aggression and probably were continuously occupied by battles with the untamed nature. However Valia Raja (1988) ascribes this to the pacifist nature of the rulers.
9. In this context, the mahout's hook and stick in the old insignia used by the Poonjar chief assumes a symbolic ambience. The hook and stick used by mahout, strange emblems as they seem for a Kshatriya ruler might imply his control over the elephant country. The insignia thus unveils the picture of an economy accumulating forest wealth. The oral tradition in the family insists that the mahout's hook and stick were handed over to the chief of the earliest settlers by Ayyappa, the god of mountains in Hindu mythology. Perpetuation of such myths was essential to create the ritual status characterising a Kshatriya ruler.
10. Marco Polo, who visited Quilon at the end of 13th century, records that "The merchants from Manzi (China) and the Levant came here with their ships and make a great deal of profit from their imports and exports... The population can procure all the necessities of life cheaply and in abundance". (As quoted by Sreedhara Menon A (1987) A Survey of Kerala History, NBS Kottayam, p.69)
11. In Galletti (1911), Stein Van Gullenesse in 1743 mentions that much cardamom is found there with 'Punjathi Perumal'. (Galletti A and Rev P.Groot (1911) The Dutch Malabar selections from the records of Madras Govt Dutch records No.13 and No.2, A translation of sections No.1 and 2 with introduction and notes : p 57)
13. (i) Interview with P.R Ramavarma Valia Raja at Alekkode, Cannanore 14,15,16 September 1992
(ii) Interview with P.R Ramavarma Junior at Poonjar 20,21 September 1992.
(iii) Interview with K. Kunjukrishnapillai at Poonjar (son of a former manager at Koyikkal) 20,21 September 1992.
14. It was such surpluses that helped 'Poonjar Valiya Kulasekhara Perumal' to buy large forests from neighbouring Rajas. Even after allowing for the fact that the nature of such purchases are rather suspect, Poonjar might have had to pay some kind of recompense to the Rajas for giving up their rights over these lands. The surpluses might also have been used as gifts to propitiate the Nampoothiris.
15. Village shrines in Kerala have often been channels through which wealth from the leisure class was re-distributed among the labour force of the village. Studies in anthropology have projected village temples as mediators of ritual communities in training down the economic inequalities in the caste-hierarchy. For details see A. Appadurai 'The south Indian Temple authority, honour and redistribution'. Contribution to Indian Sociology (N. S), 10,2 (1976), p.190.

16. This is not to argue that most of the surpluses from the trade of forest produce was redistributed. Accumulation of wealth, in the form of improductive investment like gold could have taken place.
17. Thiruvalla, Vaikom and Mavelikkara are the chief centres of Kshatriyas (Vellupillai :1949) The Travancore State Manual, Vol I Published Govt of Travancore , P 850. All these places are within a 50 km radius of Poonjar.
18. Valia Raja (1988) quotes the common Pandya ancestry to justify the adoption from Sarkara Kovilakam. But the Raja of Pandalam, a prominent ruler geographically closest to Poonjar also has Pandya ancestry
19. Partition deed of Poonjar Koyikkal clan shows that at 1951, they owned 31 acres and 85 cents of wetland in Nattakam Pakuthi
20. Partition deed of Poonjar Koyikkal clan shows that in 1951, they still owned a major part of Kothamangalam bazar with many shops and establishments on it.
21. Incestuous relationships between distant cousins within the Taravad was also a matter of concern to the senior members.
22. With paddy prices souring, the surpluses must have been large enough to cater to the private accounts of the Junior members who handled the far flung agriculture interests without making any conspicuous dent in the final profit that went into the Tharavad coffers
23. The Oral tradition in the family is that it was bought from Raja of Travancore in around 935 M.E for a nominal price (Interview with P.R Ramavarma Valia Raja at Allenkode, Cannanore 14,15,16 september 1992) Poonjar's assistance to Marthanda Varma of Travancore in his war against Thenkkencore and Vadakkankore could have prompted the favour. In the Land Revenue settlement (1912) Vol-III these lands are classified as Sreepadam lands.
24. The list of Rajas and feudal chieftans and the strength of their army is reported in 1677 by then Dutch Commander Van Rede. (Van Rede's memorandum 1677, translated to English by V.K Raman Menon, Bulletin of the Rama Varma institute No.IV, pp 15-19)
25. Valia Raja (p. 44)
26. Shankunni Menon (1878) describes how Diwan Keshavapillai organised the armies against Tippu. He thus 'fortified' the line and batteries between Kumarakam and the Kundoor Hills at Poonjar where "all the responsible officers, both military and revenue were posted at different places and the divisional revenue authorities were directed to remain at

intermediate stations and raise irregular militia armed with whatever descriptions of weapons

27. Statment given by Kalarikkal Menavan Kanakku Govindan Kittanan and Vakil Vasudevarayar for Poonjattil Tampuran (1815 August). Central vernacular records, Document cc VI, as quoted by Valia Raja.
28. Travancore made no revenue claims from Poonjar Edavaga. But the outlying lands of Koyikkal like Nattakam Desavazi and Kothamangalam Desavazi were assessed with a small levy of Rajabhogam (Land revenue settlement 1912. Govt of Travancore Vol-III)
29. Papers relating to Kannan Devan Hills 1877- Govt of Travancore- Page-1
30. In 1944, this agreement was renewed, by which Travancore was recognized the owner of the hills, although Poonjar Chief was permitted to take the annual rent of Rs 3000. Koyikkal clan, even now, continues to receive this rent.
31. T.C Varghese, Agrarian change and economic consequences (Bombay: Allied, 1970)pp 64-9,p.238 Jeffrey, Decline of the Nayar Dominance, p 89
31. Private Notes of Dr. R.P Rajah of Haripad Chembrul Kovillakam, based on his ongoing research on the geneology of Poonjar Koyikkal clan.
32. Junior male members of a ruling family were called Ilamurakkar.
33. Interview with Attamnal Ambika Thampuratti, of kanjeramattam tawazi of Poonjar Koyikkal clan at Poonjar on 14th and 15th November 1992.
34. Changazhi is a southern Kerala measure of paddy equivalent to 2 Nazhis ie., 0.75 litres
35. Ulladans are one of the aborginal tribes of Kerala, seen mainly Changanassery, Kottayam, Pathanamthitta and the forests of Ranni. These migrant tribes worship hill Gods like Ayyappa.(Vishnu Nampoothri M.V Folklore Nighandu (1989) State Institute of Languages, Kerala p.42)
36. Mundu is the Keralites conventional robe, worn around the waist. "Thorthu" has dual purposes to towel after bath or to wear ceremonially on the base torso on a more formal occassion. Giving paddy for food. oil for ritual purification and closth for warmth and Social presitige was part of of old Kerala feudal assertions.
37. Valia Tampuratti is the oldest female member of the Taravad, and not , as is often misunderstood as the wife of Valia

Raja. The wife of Valia Raja belongs to another Taravad.

38. Pathathanams are mentioned in records concerning landgifts to Kaviyoor temple by Mangaletu Narayanan Kesavan and Mangalathu Narayanan Kirittan in M.E 126 (Elamkulam Kunjanpillai Janmi Sambradayam Kulathil. p35)
39. RevathiPattuthanam of Zamorin of Calicut was an annual court assembly of sanskrit scholars to display their fund of knowledge through discussions and debates and received gifts from the King. In this essentially elitist ritual, the Zamorin renewed the approval of Brahmins, the theocratic cligarchy. After all, with monopoly of sanskrit by Brahmins most of the scholors were bound to be Brahmins.
40. As early as Rama Varma Valia Raja can remember (He was Born in 1905) the Koyikkal clan had newly acquired 400 acres of Cardamom land. This is to point out that with the Koyikkal clan, already an active beneficiary of the expansion of plantation agriculture, any question of their economic reliance on the barter transactions with Hill tribes could be ruled out.
41. Interview with Attam Tirunal Ambika Thampuratti (Poonjar, 14,15, November)
42. "It was rather like the employee's provident fund. One can be comfortable at the security it offers, but the actual control of the funds is rare". Rama Varma ValiaRaja explained.
43. Strict observance of Tottupula (Touch Polution) and Theendupula (Distance polution) was integral to their roles on the custodions of ritual puritty of the clan.
44. Jeffrey (1992) p.16
In Thakazhi Siva Sankara Pilla's Kayar (1977), a novel spanning the socio-economic changes in Travancore, Kalyaniamma one of the leading character who lived in the last decade of 19th century was literate. Educated in an Asan Kalari, Kalyaniamma could not only read Malayalam fluently, she could also make neat manuscripts of religious texts like Ramayana, for a living. Kalyaniamma came from the traditional scribe sub-caste.
45. Ritualistic Start to one's education.
46. 'Vanchesha Mangalam' was the National Anthem of Travancore State.
47. In Taravads located on much travelled ways like Vaikom, Guruvayoor etc, the Nampoothiris on sambandham tended to migrate in pursuit of better alliances. This was an old joke in Kerala. (Kanipayyoor Sankaran Nampoothiri, Letter to editor, Unni Nampoothiri July, August 1934)

48. Worship at Meenakshi Temple and Ayyappan Temple adjacent to the Koyikkal Taravad were daily rituals for the Koyikkal clan. Meenakshi was the family deity representing the clan's descent from the land of Meenakshi Temple in Madurai, TamilNadu.
49. For example, Kochikkavu's first confinement and her mother's tenth confinement were contemporary.
50. Although an Allopathic dispensary was set up in Erattupetta in 1917 (Palace Expenditure (1917) Central Vernacular Archives, Trivandrum) by Government of Travancore, Koyikkal clan relied mainly on traditional indigenous medical practices for day-to-day health care. A pathichi as the country midwife was called, was generally part of the roll-call if a traditional Kshatriya homestead.
51. In 1951, at the time of Partition in Poonjar Koyikkal clan the no: of males in the fertile age group (20 to 70) to no: of females in the fertile age group (16 to 50) was 37 : 8.
52. The court of wards, appointed later, indicted Joseph Telly, locally known as Nathana Kunju, as the chief protagonist in the uprising (Interview with R.B.K Menon, Idamanakkaravedu, Poonjar on February 93 Kottayam).
53. The uprising of tenants was effectively suppressed by setting up the court of wards from govt of Travancore. (F Gopalapanickker, Commisioner of the court of wards, saw to it that the tenants of Poonjar Koyikkal was brought under the Revenue Recovery Regulation (1934) of Travancore. This made tax collection smoother. However when the Edavaga was abolished, these tenants of Poonjar Koyikkal were not provided with any compensation (The Edavaga Rights Acquisition Act 1955 section 8, Acts and Regulations of Travancore-Cochin).
54. Godavarma was the later Col G.V Raja, renowned as a dynamic sports patron, after whom the G.V Raja Football Stadium in Trivandrum city is named. Goda Varma, who was married to Karthika Thirunal Laxmi Bhai of Travancore Royal Family, died in a plane crash. Ramavarma, Later P.R Ramavarma ValiaRajah, was married to Bhavani Thampuratti of Mavelikkara, cousin of Karthika Tirunal Lakshmi Bhai Thampuratti of Thiruvithamkoor. The royal connections helped him to get a high post in Travancore government from which he retired as Dewaswom Commissioner.
55. 'The militancy of the agrarian movement and the real threat of official land reform combined to create a parallel unofficial land reform' (Ronald J Herring 'Abolition of Land Lordism in Kerala- A redistribution of Privillage' E.P.W June 1980, p-a67)

56. The partition deed of Poonjar Koyikkal does not specify the reason for partition. But the partition deed of another Kshatriya family of Thiruvithamkoor categorically states that it economic reason that forces them to separate to different units, "Unless there is individual enterprise on land, the productivity of land will go down. This is the state of our palace lands. So there is no alternative, but partition. (partition deed of Chembrul branch of Changanacherry Lakshmipuram Palace.P.D.N. 4725, Harippad Sub-Registrar Office, 20,September,1957).
57. Neither the figures nor the ownership composition could be confirmed because the clan members were hesitant to discuss economic details regarding the clan. One is told that the the capital for the vast acrages in North Kerala and Karnataka comes from F.R. Rama Varma's private income as a retired Devaswom Commissioner. However, it is surmised that multiple ownership and a large parcel of land spread in two states (Kerala and Karnataka) might be helpful in circumventing the legal difficulties in largescale plantation ventures.
58. Families involved in agriculture seems to have felt that partition causes land fragmentation which is negatively correlated to agricultural productivity. This argument is one much alive in agronomic anthropology, especially on countries like Portugal and Spain. A discussion can be seen in More W.E.(1972) Economic Demography Of Eastern and Southern Europe, Arno Press, New York P.105-125.

Section II (Kochi)

59. For reasons unknown to us, the female members of Perumbadappu clan are called Thampurans with a mesculine 'an' gender ending.
60. Melkoyma can be roughly traslated as suzerinity over temples. Reading Veluthat Kesavan (1978) Brahmin Settlements in Kerala, Calicut, one gets the understanding that this suzerinity denoted mainly Raja's responsibility to Brahmin Controlled temple bodies than any absolute authority.
61. Elamkulam's researches have shown that the last of the Perumals was Rama Varma Kulashekhara. He also points to epigraphic evidence on a partition in 12th century. Appan Thampuran in Mangalamala opines that it was Bhaskara Ravivarma who partitioned the empire. This is likely to be erroneous.
62. Venattadikal was the King of Thiruvithamkoor and Eralpad or Samoodiri was the later King of Kozhikode. As per Keralolpathi (Ed.Gundert), the Peruwal embraced Islam and his so was Samoodiri.

63. Chitrakoodam palace in Perumbadappu village, 6 miles from Vanneri is said to be the place where the coronation of Rajas of Kochi were conducted before Samoodiri annexed Vanneri. Traces of a palace still exist in Perumbadappu in Ponnani Taluk. (Padmanabha Menon 1924, History of Kerala Volume I, Cochin Government Press, Ernakulam page 540.
64. Tritalicharthu is the name by which the Thalikkettukalyanam ceremonies of females of the Perumbadappu clan are celebrated.
65. There is another opinion that Perumbadappu Nampoothiri was actually Perumathura Periyavar - the great one from Perumathura --a place near Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu. (Puthezhathu Raman Menon Sakthan Thampuran 1955 Edn. Mangalodayam Publication Page 5). Apart from the structural similarities between the temples of Chidambaram Thiruvinchikulam, there is not much basis in this hypothesis.
66. By some accounts Perumbadappu Nampoothiri is cited as the Guru (Ritual Teacher) of the clan. Grandhavaris reference to him as the performer of the Tali ceremony encompasses his role as both spiritual and biological father.
67. An irony that the founder of a large matriarchal clan based his Tharavad on a piece of Patrilineal heritage and then melkoyma right from a mixed type of inheritance, where both son and nephew are heirs, might indicate the early confused phase of the consolidation of marumakkathayam in Kerala.
68. Keralolpathi refers to him as "Soorya Kshatriya". The Raja of Kochi according to anonymous inventors of Keralopathy is the great grand son of Sri Rama, installed on the throne by none less than Parasurama. This is the connection to Solar dynasty of Sri Rama. By the ten incarnations of Vishnu, Parasurama's period is before Sri Rama. There is a great leap through generations when Parasurama lives to Crown the great grand son of Sri Rama.
69. Kuru dynasty is synonymous to luna dynasty - Arjuna, the archer prince of Kuru dynasty, according to Keralolpathi, came to Kerala in pursuit of a horse for Aswamedha. He married the daughter of a chieftain and had several children by her. This 'Kuru' dynasty, with Arjuna as an ancestor later merged with Perumbadappu clan, giving luna ambience with Perumbadappu Swaroopam. It is by linking native chieftains to legendary figures presanctified by scriptures that the King makers--mostly Nampoothiris earned their royal support.
70. A feud between two of the 32 Brahman settlements, Sukapuram and Panniyoor marks the post Chera period, contemporary to the early days of Perumbadappu Swaroopam. Whether the feud began as shiva-vaishna conflict or as overdone

competitiveness in learning martial and vedic knowledge from Scholars outside Kerala, we do not definitely know. But several foreign travellers have noted that the Sukapuram Panniyoor feud rocked the whole of Kerala dividing the ruling Chieftains into two camps. Perumbadappu clan supported the Sukapuram factor. (Padmanabha Menon 1924, History of Kerala, Ernakulam p.480 Krishna Aiyer K.V. 1938. The Zamorins of Calicut.)

71. Sooryakshatriya was given 50 kathams of land says Keralolpathi. In Colloquial Malayalam, a Katham is defined as the distance till which one's shout could be heard. For a feudal kingdom 50 Kathams was not much.
72. The oldest male member of Permbadappu clan was called Perumbadappu, Moopinnu. Except for a short period, it was convention that he became the king.
73. It was the merging of Madathinkoor swaroopam with Perumbadappu swaroopam that give her the name Gosri dynasty. The Tamil word 'madam' in Madathinkoor meant cattle. Its Sanskrit equivalent 'Go' suffixed with a sanctifying Sri to glorify Perumbadappu as Gosri.
74. The full official designation used by the Raja of Cochin was "Perumbadappu Gangadhara Vira Kerala Trikkovil Adhikarikal" Achutha Menon. C.1911 Cochin State Manual. P.39. Padmanabha Menon K.P. 1912. Kochi Rajaya Charithram Vol.1. P.183-184.
75. Mahodayapuram, alternatively known as Muchirri, Miziris or Makotai, is identified as modern Kodungallore. The author of Perplus Maris Erythraei in 1st century describes the trade of Mahodayapuram as at the height of prespeity, frequented as it is by ships from "Arriake and Greek". A Tamil Poet of 5th or 6th century describes this town as where Greek ships, 'bring gold' and 'return laden with pepper'. (The author of Perplus and the Tamil poet as quoted by Achyutha Menon Vo.I., 19-11. P.304, 307, 308).
76. There does not seem to be any special mention of Samoodiri's military expedition to Perumpadappu in the late 13th century, except in Perumbadappu Grandhavari. Although, mutually warring petty kingdom were quite common in the period, whether a real military threat sufficient to warrant a southwards flight occured, remain doubtful.
77. Ibn Batuata, as quoted by Achyutha Menon 1911 P.59.
78. Ma Huan summarised by George Phillips, Journal of Aseatic society, April 1896, as quoted by Achutha Menon 1911 p.44-48.

79. The port of Kochi as described by Barhosa 1921 (Written 1518) p.156.
80. Achyutha Menon (1911. 62)
81. Vishnu in the form of Sandana Gopala - a god with fertility implications - is the deity of Poornathrayeesha Temple. To the Perumbadappu clan who prides in its demographic strength, this temple had earlier associations. The name Goda Ravi Varma appears in a stone inscription in the temple, but it is undated.
82. This letter is the 5th one in a bunch of 62 letters written in 1875 by a Government official Seshagiri Rayar to another Government official Nanjappayan of Kochi state (See Appendix III). The letters, in manuscript in decaying papers are now kept in one of the palaces in Tripunithura - Except the first two letters, the manuscripts in neat Malayalam letters, are readable.
83. Kanippayyor Sankaran Nampoothripad (1961. P.105-107).
84. Estimated from Audit Report and Appropriation Accounts of Government of H.H. Maharajah of Cochin - year 1120 M.E. (1944 - 45 A.D.) Regional Archives, Kochi.
85. Budget Estimates of (Various Years) from 1917 - 1948. Since continuous Time series data was not available, tabulation was not attempted.
86. Palace Expenditure Budget Estimate of Kochi (1917-1918).
87. Revenue, Budget Estimate of Kochi 1917 - 1918).
88. Interview with 72 year old Kerala Varma Kochaniyan Thampuran 6th October, 1992.
89. Interview with 87 year old Ikkavu Thampuran, 6th, 7th, 8th October 1992.
90. Although the estates were in the name of Valiamma Thampuran, the seniormost of the female Thampurans, the accounts were handled by Elaya Raja. In a letter dated 2nd August 1909, the Raja compliments the Elaya Raja on "Keeping the collection of interest under Muthalkadam very fair" and for "cent percent collection under Pattom and Michavaram". Paper Relating to Abdicated Raja typed manuscript. I.N. Menon Collection Regional State Archives, Ernakulam.
91. 'Pathivu' in accounting parlance represents routine accounts. 'Visheshal' stands for special accounts.
92. Changalavattakutty signifies young lamp bearer employed in the residential palaces around Tripunithura. Young boys of 12-16 age group, mostly belonging to Tamil Brahmin castes, worked in each palace to bear the heavy Changalavatta lamp

and light the way of female Thampurans in their mandatory visits to Poornatheyesa Temple at dawn and dusk.

93. Ikkavu Thampuran, quoting her seniors, (Interview with 87 years old Ikkavu Thampuran, 6th, 7th, 8th, October, 1992).
94. "There was a proposal to give stipends to princess just as to princes, to avoid complaints and to enable the princesses to live comfortably. But H.H. vetoed these suggestions as being detrimental to the solidarity of the family".

Papers Relatiing to Abdicated Raja (1889 - 1914) typed manuscript, I.N. Menon Collection, Regional State Archives, Ernakulam.

95. The famous writer and literary patron Rama Varma Appan Thampuran encouraged his wife Ambattu Nanikutty Amma to speak English and to be 'western' in fashion and hobbies. (Rama Varma K.T. 1983 Kairalividheyam Rama Varma Appan Thampuran Dakshina Books, Sukapuram P.118 - 119).
96. This insistance on Thrissur Vedic school probably a hangover of the Panniyoor - Sukapuram feud, where the Perumbadappu clan took sides with Panniyoor faction of Nampoothris.
97. Her real name is not known. Gangadhara Laxmi is only a title name mentioned in the Grandhavari.
98. Shantha Thampuran "Anarkha Nimisham" Gosrivishesham Family Journal of Perumbadappu clan, October, 1992.

Section iii (Kollengode Case)

99. Keralolpathi Edited by Gudert (p.58-62).
100. Kashyapakashethra mahatmyam, as quoted by Raghava Warriier. The Nampoothiri Ritual Tradition. (with special reference to Kollengode Archives) in Agni: The Vedic Ritual, Itti Ravi Nampoothiri, Pamela Mac Farland, Volume II, Motilal Banarsidas, (Indian Edition) 1984 p.285. This family chronicle could be a later composition to perpetuate their socio-ritual status.
101. Aiyamani K.G. (Date not mentioned) The Traditions of the Venganad Palace (manuscript) Kollengode Archives, Centre for Development Studies Library, Trivandrum.
102. Ibid. P-1.
103. Kashyapakshetramahatmayam, according to Raghava Warriier (1984 : 285) mentions Kollengode in a Sanskritised word Ayaskarapura, ayaskara being the Sanskrit for blacksmith. Even today, people beyond the river Malampuzha refers to Kollengode a Aykara.

104. It was believed that if Venganad Nambidi discards his wooden footwear and steps an earth, the earth would catch fire.
105. The name (Ibid. p.286) Hemangada, meaning golden complexioned probably as suggestive of Aryin Origin.
106. Kollengode, as the land of blacksmiths might be historically meanigful. There is some concidence that South Malabar, where Kollengode is situated was one place where many native iron works were found by Buchanan in early 19th century (Buchanan, Frances 1807. A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar, Volume 2, London Black, Pelly and Kingsbury). Although one cannot comment on the advancement of iron tecchnology in these areas, an idea that superior iron weapons, because of their blacksmith connection, gave them superiority in warfare is also plausible.
107. Like Brahmins, Venganad Nambidi was permitted to enter the mandapa, the porch in front of the central shrine, in temples, and to ring the temple bells like Brahmins. He was permitted to walk inside the temple on wooden sandals, which even Brahmins could not. (Krisha Iyer, K.V.1942 Venganad Nambidis, Rama Varma Research Institute Bulletin, 10, as quoted by Raghava Warriier 1984 p.284).
108. It appears that there were two types of Nambidis - one born in Nambidi caste, intermediatery between Nampoothiri and Khatriya and other, the Nambidi title conferred to Samantha or Nair Chieftains, perhaps modelled on the Nambidi caste. In some documents, they are also refered to as Nampiathiri. Anantha Krishna Iyer (1912) explains that Nambidi caste is acutally a Nampoothiri degraded for doing the un-Brahinly at of killing a Perumal. Thus it would mean that even the title Nambidi is already a sponge absorbing the essential sins of killing the beast and skinning it for the Brahmin rituals.
109. Even if Appachi was a later corruption of Apsarastris, it is unlikely that someone would be addressed face to face in such an elaborate manner and more unlikely that it should survive down the centuries.
110. Appachi "meaning father's sister" ties in loosely with a tradition in the family which goes on as follows: Once Venganad Nambidi is said to have had to live in disguise in the forest, leaving his possessions to Samoodiri. Since the absence of Nambidi made fire rituals difficult for Nampoothiri, they pressurised other chieftains to threaten Samoodiri with excommunication. Thus Samoodiri relented. He is supposed to have approached the senior female of the Venganad clan and instituted her son as Nambidi. Aiyamoni (undated p.24).. Whether the tradition is factual or not, the implied respect to Appachi points more to the Kinship term as 'father's sister. This logically plausible

tradition emphasises the matrilinean kinship in the family.

111. The Venganad Nambidi figures among the list of feudatories invited for the Ariyittuvazhcha (Coronation ceremony) of Samoodiri (Krishan Iyer 1938 P.1)
112. The Kutiravattathu Nayar, who was Samudiri's son and a capable general is mentioned in the grandhavari as active in 1427 - 1428 according to Krishna Iyer 1938 p.133.
113. Despite having near - Brahmin privileges, Venganad Nambidi was not given Kshatriyahood. There is a possibility that this was intended to put a limit to his monopoly over the sacrificial items.
114. 'Ubhayam' mean rice fields in South Kerala and four fruit trees - Coconut, arecanut, Jack and Pepper in Malabar kalappads stand for cultivable land. Vallichathans are bonded labourers associated with land (Gundert's Dictionary) Krishna Iyer, 1942, as quoted by Raghava Warriar, 1984. p.284.
115. Krishna Iyer, 1942, as quoted by Raghava Warriar, 1984, P.284
116. There are many places in ancient Kerala with names similar to Venganad. A stanza in Shukasandesham refer to a settlement in Kochi called Vengananad (Raghava Warriar and Rajan Gurukkal 1992. p.197).
117. According to the Palakkad District Court judgement on 15th July, 1967 to the Partition Suit of Venganad clan (O.S.No.67/64 - subcourt Palakkad) in the 1960's Venganad Clan had "Mountain, hills and forests to an approximate extent of 140 square miles". (P.3).
118. Michael Tharakan P.K. 1985 "Indigenous source Material for historical research". An introduction to the Kollengode Collection of Records". Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum. Working Paper No.201. P.6.
119. Kunjikirishnan,(1987)" Aspects of Surplus Extraction and Problem of Capital Accumulation - An Overview of the Kollengode Records, Indian History Congress Vol I proceedings of the 17th session, Srinagar 1986. P.550 - 551.
120. The senior most male member is known as Valia Nambidi and the next in line is called Ilaya Nambidi.
121. In 1901, he was conferred the personal title of Raja along with the Kaisherhind (Caeser -i- hind) medal and was knighted in 1925 by the British Government. (Innes. C.A. 1951 Madeas District quzatteers: Malabar ed. P.B.Evans Govt. Press, Madras (1901) P.470).

122. Clarke A.B. 1915 In Kerala, A record of a tour in South of India with their Highnesses The Maharaja and Maharani Gaekwar Laxmi Vilas Press, Baroda.
123. Unlike earlier Valia Nambidis, Vasudeva Raja became the Valia Nambidi in his twenties. He also married twice. - Interview with Sarada Thambatti, Bangalore, November 14, 1992.
124. The speech of the Hon'ble Rajah of Kollengode on the Motion for leave to introduce the Malabar Inheritance Bill. Addison and Co., Madras, 1910.
125. There had been court cases against Valia Nambidi by junior members of Venganad clan, as early as 1862. - Palm leaf documents 37/23 and 37/24 of Kollenkodde Archives, as quoted by Michael Tharakan.P.K. (1985) Ibid P.34.
126. The family contract explained in Palakkad District court Judgement (V.S.No.67/64-sub Court, Palakkad) P.3-4.
127. Stanam properties are properties attached to the Karanavar of the socially important Tharavad, intended to cover the expenditure in maintaining his status.
128. Palakkad District Court Judgement. Ibid.P.4.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER V

Before entering into the reflections suggested by the analysis carried out in this work, it would be useful to recall the terms in which the general contours of the study was formulated. Structural and functional patterns of matrilineal processes and their responses to changes in the broader socio-economic realm of the society was one of the major objectives of the study. Specific emphasis was given to an understanding of the imprints of transition from the female line of devolution to a bilateral one on the gender status.

Time served as our major tool of analysis, the use of which seemed rather scant in prior anthropological literature on Marumakkathayam. Thus at first, we tried to deduce the factors favouring the origin, consolidation and transformation of this system in 20th century.

Marumakkathayam: A historic perspective

A critical review of the long drawn debate on the origin of matriliney in Kerala was thought to be in order and much pertinent in placing our understanding of the system firmly in its historical perspective. The central issue of the debate was as follows:

Was matriliney forced on a patrilineous society by the advent of Nampoothiri settlers in reverse to Engels-Morgan scheme or did the matriliney already prevalent in the traditional Kerala society made to continue undisturbed. The protagonists of the former school give the impression that the high male-female ratio and

the primo-geniture inheritance system among the dominant groups, i.e., the Nampoothiri settlers that caused the reversal of inheritance systems. The challengers of this argument negate any reversal. Their argument is that the Nampoothiri settlers only institutionalised the elements of tribal matriliney among natives. Forming a judgement on a question unsubstantiated by historic evidence is however difficult. But, it does seem logically impossible that a system, in defiance of all the natural laws of development would reverse simply by the advent and pressure of an exogenous force. Our gleanings from this debate is that the matrilineal tribes gradually evolved to matrilineal castes. The Nampoothiri advent might have reinforced these elements of tribal matriliney among the natives.

This meant that the consolidation stage warrants more attention. The temple centered economy evolving from the establishment of 32 Nampoothiri settlements and the economic and ritual powers wielded by the mostly Nampoothiri Uralers of the temple are well documented. There are also references on the 10th century to the hypergamic alliances between uralers and the females of the tenants. Our postulate is that hypergamy of females to the uralers were the strategy devised by the already matrilineal tenants to influence the uralers in their control over economy and rituals. The fact that the matrilineal elements among the tenants and the primo-geniture system of Nampoothiris were mutually complimentary, could have caused the condition of matriliney among the upper class of the natives. This legitimisation of matrilineal kinship by hypergamy among the

upper strata could have percolated to the other classes, thus reinforcing the matrilineal elements of the tribes, even after their transition to castes. The factors like military avocation of men in some matrilineal castes might have been supplementary to this process.

The legislations listed in Appendix II were those that gradually lessened the forces of matrilineal system of inheritance. Hindu Succession Act (1956) was the all India force that made matrilineal inheritance compulsorily bilateral. Better than pointing to the superstructure of Government of India on the substructure in Kerala the earlier legislations such as Nayar Regulations, Ezhava Regulations in various states show that the superstructure was not acting counter to a pressure from below. One sought to identify the causes and nature of this pressure.

What obstructed our search for the precise causes in the formation of these pressure groups demanding the legislations in the literature on the topic weighed down by a fatalistic anticipation of the eventual loss matrilineal institution - especially expressions like "Breakdown Phase".

The role of economic transition in the 19th and 20th century - the commercialisation of agriculture, the deepening and widening of labour market has been emphasised in literature, purely on the basis of economic variables as responses to the society induced by the Great Depression or by prosperities promised by cash economy. The ideology of the cash economy and the individualism inherent in it have not been adequately projected in the

literature. The migration from the Tharavad following the expansion of the labour market had far reaching implications in the kinship structure. A possibility that this was largely the influence of patrilineal notions infused by Western education has also been pointed out. The impact of all these factors are interlinked and seem to follow different patterns in different communities.

In the Kshatriya community on which the study was made, the response to matrilineal reforms in general appeared lagged. Kshatriyas are traditionally considered as an intermediate caste between Brahmins and Nairs. Hypergamy and ritual procedures are the characteristic features of this matriliney. A power base, claimed or real, was also generally associated with a Kshatriya. This specific niche in the caste hierarchy as the defender and protector of wealth derived from their Brahmin associations through hypergamy. Samanths, whose functional position in Malabar seems identical to those of Kshatriyas were for long considered ritually inferior to Kshatriyas. Contrary to their early policy of restrictions into castefold for preserving their claimed exclusivity, Kshatriyas now open their fold to admit Samanths also by extending their endogamous alliances and identities in Kshatriya associations. One deduces that the requirement of mass strength, characteristic of democracy prompts this demographically minute caste to expand its structure.

It was also observed that among the Kshatriya community the pressure group pleading for matrilineal legislations were minimal. Even when such a pressure group was evidenced, as in the

legislation, Travancore Kshatriya Act, its confused articulation was obvious by its subsequent amendment. Once this process of lagged transition from matrilineal kinship was noticed, one found that this afforded us an opportunity to study the process of lineage systems in transition.

Our empirical data on Kshatriya matriliney bases itself on case studies of three clans - Poonjar, Perumpadappu and Venganad, drawn from three erstwhile princely states - Thiruvithamkoor, Kochi and Malabar.

A diachronic analysis of the clan dynamics in each case reveals Marumakkathayam in Kshatriyas as not ~~only~~ a unifeatural lineage system, but as a cluster of disintegratable features. While some of these features of the Tharavad are in various ways related to resource control, production, distribution and consumption, others are a function of rituals, filiations and sometimes even simply social identities with minimal economic consequence. The empirical data was approached with the understanding that legislations necessitating bilateral devolutions made a complete adherence of Marumakkathayam impossible in any case. Even then, one finds the Poonjar Koyikkal clan partially united in production, consumption and totally so in rituals and affiliations. In the case of Perumpadappu clan, the economic structure of the Tharavad is retained mainly as a distribution system. One notes that the clan unity is merely in consumption and least in production. With regard to Venganad clan (Kollengode) the transition seems to have occurred not at the recent past that not only was recapitulation difficult but the

very kinship seems to have been reduced to a cultural map of identities. The processes behind these asymmetrical patterns also seek clarifications. With the strength of a diachronic analysis it is possible to isolate the prime components in this process.

Poonjar Koyikkal Case

Commercialisation of agriculture and its ideological corpus are understood as the main forces that effected the dissolution of matriliney. In the Poonjar Koyikkal clan's case, the timing of the entry of cash crop economy is a crucial factor in determining its economic decisions and structural transformations. An early dislocation of their reigning powerbase as 'Punhattiperumal' by the military unification of Marthanda Varma prompted them to widen their resource bases drawing the possible alternatives from the larger economy. Thus the cashcrop economy came early to Poonjar Koyikkal clan. One thus finds the Clan chief trading his coconuts and pepper, negotiating long-term leases with foreign and Indian planters in the 19th century itself. Thus, the clan reached out to the commercial economy before westernization had prepared their minds against Marumakkathayam. Commercial agriculture and its ideology—reinforced through westernization came as single waves so that the threats and benefits in each could be clearly identified by the clan.

Determinants of collective clan behaviour can not always remain within the clan - A dynamic leadership tilt in crucial situations can officiate changes in kinship or even resist the pressures to change. Before one considers Rama Varma Valia Raja's youthful entry to the decision making role as the pullback mechanism in

the clan's kinship, there was the question what made him capable of challenging and attaining the authority of the clan's Karanavar. This is here that the regional specificity of Poonjar becomes important. Poonjar was already in the vortex of agrarian transition. Already, playing the game by the commercial dictates, the elders could understand the scope of collective income, diversification, new forms of investments which the younger generation pointed to. In short, the ideology of economic initiative was accommodative of new leadership within the matrilineal matrix. A third aspect that simplified this Kshatriya clan's assimilation to the commercial economy without serious kinship transformations could be the relative lack of ritualistic entrapments in the clan. Their Nampoothiri affiliations and ritual engagements were minimal and just sufficient to qualify for kshatriyahood. Even their extant ritual traditions like Pattathanam are intensely economy-related. This advantage of an economy uncumbered by cultural intrusions can be better understood when the process in the Kochi case is also noted.

Kochi Case

Our diachronic analysis of the Perumbadappu clan noted a relatively huge powerbase sustained the years by an enormous ritual base. This ritual base, assiduously built up by legitimising mythifications, associations with Nampoothiri-controlled Temple Urs and hypergamy was aligned at every level, to the Nampoothiri superstructure. The erosion of this superstructure seems to be realised only in the 1890's when the clan chief, known as the Abdicated Raja (Rnd. 1896-1914) cut short

the enormous dowry and binding alliances of females of the clan to old Nampoothiris time factor was determinative in the Kochi case also.

Perumbadappu clan's early exit from mercantile trade, marginalised by the interferences of colonial powers seem to have forced them confine wholly to their ritual base. At this point, it may be noted that the gradual evolution of a trade tradition parallel to the ritual tradition was perceived by the clan as mutually refudiating. This probably effected the locality segregation of the females and their further embedding in rituals like Trittalicharthu. Thus the Perumbadappu clan perceived matriliney in ritual terms and expansion of its economic utility to new avenues was not welcomed. In short, what keeps matriliney alive among the Perumbadappu clan is mainly, the ritual apparatus that has been their common inheritance.

Kollengode Case

Our study of Kollengode indicated once again, a relatively huge powerbase, consisting of high ritual status and forest-based material wealth. In the course of 19th century the value of forest wealth multiplied due to the new demands for timber and other forest produce emerging from the intrusion of the colonial economy. The clan under the leadership of Raja Sir Vasudeva Raja traded this potential wealth for increased social influence and status. Vasudeva Raja revolutionised social behaviour within the clan as well as at the interface with other groups. They could do this primarily because the enormous material wealth emanating from the ecological niche in which they were placed. But in the

long run, they seem to have run into opposition from higher and lower social groups as reflected in the long drawn out legal dispute about their Melkoyma rights over the Kachankurissi Temple.

In short, what the clan did in terms of adaptation was to "westernize" or "modernize" their social practices and behaviour drawing up on their enormous material resources. This strategy, on the one hand, strengthened the position of the clan and particularly of the female members who could get educated and move out into new social spheres.

All these adjustments are not always genderbased. What we find from these case studies is that when a 'royal' clan try to adapt to systemic change, the process of change has to be inevitably slow and diversified. In periods of such transition, the matrilineal inheritance system which was the base upon which the clan's control over material, social and ritual resources came about gets neglected unless it is crucial for the strategies used.

In all three clans the marumakkathayam could not be totally ignored because :

- (1) It continued to provide the matrix within which all the three resources material, social and ritual were to be preserved or multiplied
- (2) The concentration inherent or implied in the impartibility concept of marumakkathayam tharavad was found useful,

provided one was using the strategy of common production (which is the case in Kollengode and Poonjar).

Therefore, what we find is that in the transition of Kshatriyas from matriliney to bilateral system was dictated by persuasions apart from gender-based inheritance. Nevertheless, this transition had tremendous implications for the individual woman's existence within the clan. Their inherited status within the clan assured them considerable share in the redistribution of resources. But, on the other hand, the gender-based status on which is theorized an ideal matriliney and which probably didn't exist was a thing of the past. In the modern world, the woman's position was constrained by the parameters of patrilineal world views. It appears that the female members of the clan are in a comparatively better position in terms of their gender status mainly due to their proportionate accessibility to the clan's resources.

One hesitates to generalise our conclusions on Kshatriya matriliney to other communities. As mentioned at the outset, a series of community specific studies from broad spectrum of more than twenty matrilineal communities in Kerala coming from varying ecological, ritual and economic bases should be examined to bring out the total dynamics of the system. In this sense, the answers we have arrived at only throws up new possibilities and new perspectives of looking at this system.

A P P E N D I X - I
CASTES AS DIFFERENTIATED BY INHERITANCE SYSTEMS

| No. | Makkathayam | Marumakkathayam | Ubhayam or Mixed Inheritance |
|-----|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| 1 | Nampoothiri | Thirumumpus | sub-division of Payyannoor village |
| 2 | Embrantiri | Kshatriyas | Malayala- Kshatriyas Koil- Thampurans Thampans Thirumulpads |
| 3 | Pattar | Samanthans | Adiodi Unniathiri Pandala Eradi Vellodi Nedungadi |
| 4 | Musads (in some regions) | Ambalavasis | Adikal Chakiyar (in some regions) Kurukkal Nambidi Chakyar Nambiar Theeyattu Nambiar Pushpaka Nambiar Nambiar Patarunni Plapalli Pisharadi Poduval Nambeesan Variyar Marar Theyampadi Kurup** |
| 5 | Mannadiyars | Nayars | All sub-castes except Mannadiyars |
| 6 | Chakyars (in some regions) | Nanjinad Vellalas | Kadu- pattars (Cochin) |

** There are also Nayar Kurups in north Kerala

...Contd...Page 2.

APPENDIX - I (Contd)

CASTES AS DIFFERENTIATED BY INHERITANCE SYSTEMS

| No. | Makkathayam | Marumakkathayam | | Ubhayam or Mixed Inheritance |
|-----|---|-----------------|--|------------------------------------|
| 7 | Vilakkathalavans (south Malabar and Cochin) | Arayans | | |
| 8 | Kadupattars | Tiyyas | of North Kerala | |
| 9 | Adigal | Channans | of Travancore | |
| 10 | Pidaran | Ezhavas | of South Cochin | |
| 11 | Kammalar | Krishnavakkar | | |
| 12 | Kanisan | Velans | in some regions | |
| 13 | Chaliyas | Thandans | | |
| 14 | Tiyyas (South Malabar, North Cochin, South Travancore) | Mannan | | |
| 15 | Cherumas | Hill tribes | Vishavar Vralar Ultadar Nayadis Muthuvas Vadakkan -parayans Kana -pulayans Tanda -pulayans | |
| 16 | Pulayas (Malabar) | Kusavans | | |
| 17 | Parayan | Vaniyan | in North Kerala only | |
| 18 | Nayadis | Chaliyans | | |

APPENDIX - I (Contd)

CASTES AS DIFFERENTIATED BY INHERITANCE SYSTEMS

| No. | Makkathayam | Marumakkathayam | | Ubhayam or Mixed Inheritance |
|-----|-------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 19 | Paniyans | Vannans | in North Malabar only | |
| 20 | Kalikolan | Mapillas | in North Malabar only | |
| 21 | Chakkiliyan | | | |
| 22 | Chetti | | | |

NOTE:

The above classification compiled based on Iyer (1912), Puthenkulam (1977) and Balakrishnan (1981) is not likely to be a comprehensive picture.

APPENDIX - II

MILESTONES IN MARUMAKKATHAYAM LEGISLATION

| YEAR | LEGISLATION | PLACE | IMPLICATIONS |
|------|--------------------------------|------------|---|
| 1896 | Malabar Marriage Act | Malabar | Registration of Sambandham at will Right to bequeath through will half the self acquired property to wife and children |
| 1898 | Malabar Wills Act | Malabar | Right to bequeath through will, any property that could have made over as a gift while living |
| 1899 | Travancore Wills Act | Travancore | Right to bequeath through will half the self-acquired property to wife and children |
| 1912 | Travancore Marumakkattayam Act | Travancore | Sambandham was recognised as legal marriage. Half of the intestate male's self-acquired property could be claimed by wife and children |
| 1918 | Mapilla Succession Act | Malabar | Self acquired property of Mappilas (who follow matrilineity) to be governed by Muslim Law |
| 1920 | Cochin Nayar Regulation I | Cochin | a) Sambandham was recognised as legal marriage b) Branches of a matrilineal family permitted to divide and separate. c) Half of the intestate Nayar male's self acquired property could be claimed by wife and children |
| 1925 | Travancore Nayar Regulation I | Travancore | a) Individuals right to demand division of family and per capital sharing of assets were upheld b) Intestate Nayar male's self acquired property could be fully claimed by wife and children. |

APPENDIX - II (Contd.)

MILESTONES IN MARUMAKKATHAYAM LEGISLATION

| YEAR | LEGISLATION | PLACE | IMPLICATIONS |
|------|----------------------------------|------------------|--|
| 1925 | Travancore Ezhava Act | Travancore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Individual's right to demand partition and per capita share of assets b) Intestate Ezhava male's self acquired property could be fully claimed by wife and children |
| 1926 | Travancore Nanchinad Vellala Act | Travancore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Individual's right to demand partition and per capita share of assets. b) Intestate Nanchinad Vellala male's self-acquired property could be fully claimed by wife and children. |
| 1932 | Travancore Kshatriya Act | Travancore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Individual's right to demand partition and per capita share of assets b) Intestate Kshatriya male's self acquired property could be fully claimed by wife and children |
| 1933 | Madras Marumakktayam Act | Madras Residency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sambandham was recognised as legal marriage b) Mother, wife and children declared heirs of self-acquired property c) Tawazis could demand partition of family assets |
| 1938 | Cochin Nayar Regulation II | Cochin | Nayar individual's right to seek per capita partition of family assets |
| 1939 | Cochin Marumakkathayam Act | Cochin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tawazis of Non-Nayar Tarawads could demand partition from one another b) Wife & children declared heirs of half the self acquired property of intestate non-Nayar male |

A P P E N D I X - II (Contd.)

MILESTONES IN MARUMAKKATHAYAM LEGISLATION

| YEAR | LEGISLATION | PLACE | IMPLICATIONS |
|------|---|-----------------|--|
| 1939 | Mappila Marumakkathayam Act | Malabar | Mappila individual's right to demand percapita partition of family assets. |
| 1947 | Madras Marumakkathayam Act (Amendment) | Madras | Legal validity for all marriages in which one partner was dead before Madras Marumakkathayam Act (1933) was passed |
| 1948 | Cochin Marumakkathayam Act (Amendment) | Cochin | Non-Nayar Individual also given right to per-capita partition. |
| 1956 | Hindu Succession Act | All Over India | Right to percapita partition was extended to matrilineal families in Malabar also |
| 1958 | Kerala Marumakkathayam Act | All Over Kerala | Right of wife and children to the entire self acquired property of intestate male extended to matrilineal families in Malabar also |
| 1963 | Mappila Marumakkathayam Act (Amendment) | Kerala | All Muslims dying after 3/9/1962 to be governed by Islamic law |
| 1976 | Joint Hindu Family System (Abolition) | Kerala | Government withdrew the recognition of 'corporateness' of matrilineal Taravād |

Sources :

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APPENDIX - III

Trittalicharthu of 1000 M.E

Letter Five

Submitted that the requirement of the Sahibs, the company-men and the common soldiers who are arriving, workout to about 165 goats at the rate of five goats a day and about 1000-1500 fowls. Since from Kochi-Kanayannor area, only 30-40 goats and few fowls can be arranged and getting more ~~money~~ may prove difficult, it is necessary to issue directions to Thasildars and ThaneNaiks of Mukundapuram, Kodassery, Trissivaperur, Enammavu, Thalappally and Chelakkara to arrange about 100 goats and 500 fowls of good quality.

1000 M.E.Dhanu 21

S/D

Sheshagirirayar

Tripunithura

Source: This letter is the 5th in a bunch of manuscripts kept in one of the palaces in Tripunithura. All 62 letters in the collection are instructions written by a Kochi Government official Sheshagirirayar to another official Nanjapparayan in 1825 A.D.

A GLOSSARY OF MALAYALAM WORDS USED
IN THE TEXT

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Aacharavedi | : Reverential shots heralding a royal occasion or ritual ceremony in the Temples. |
| Ayam | : Property, Wealth |
| Brahmaswam | : Property which belongs to Brahmins. |
| Chakkala Nayar | : A sub-caste of Nayars (oil mongers). |
| Chakyar | : An Ambalavasi caste. |
| Chaaliyan | : Belonging to the weaver caste. |
| Channan | : A sub-caste of Ezhavas, aristocracy among them. |
| Changalavatta-kutty | : Tamil Brahmin boys employed as lamp bearers. Changalavatta, being a heavy lamp, was used only when an accompanying aid was available. |
| Changazhi | : Southern Kerala measure of paddy equivalent to 2 Nazhis. |
| Dakshina | : Gift to elders, especially gifts to Brahmins. |
| Devaswam | : Property belonging to the temple. |
| Desam | : A group of tharas in north Kerala. |
| Elamulakkar | : Junior male members of Kshatriya Tharavads |
| Embrantiri | : Brahmins of Canara in Malabar. |
| Ettupanam | : The money payments for the expenses of confinement. (among Thiyyas) |
| Ezhuthiniruthu | : Initiation to education (Kalari) in early days. |
| Grandhavari | : Family Chronicles (Also of Temples) |
| Hiranyagarbham | : A ritual in which a life sized cow made of gold is gifted to Brahmins. |
| Illam | : Homestead of Nampoothiri Brahmins. |
| Janmi | : Landlord |
| Kaikottikkali | : A clapping dance. |
| Kalappads | : Cultivable land |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Kalari | : A forum for teaching martial arts and the three R's. |
| Kalyanam | : Literally, an auspicious event, generally marriage. |
| Kanam | : A right on land. |
| Kanapanam | : The brid-price. |
| Kara | : A group of tharas in south Kerala. |
| Karanavar | : The male head of the Tharavad who is the seniormost maternal uncle holding supervisory powers over the common family property. |
| Karman | : The rites. |
| Karyasthan | : The paid master. |
| Kathukuthu | : Piercing of the ears for wearing ornaments. |
| Ketteduppu | : The pilgrim's baggage. |
| Kettukalyanam | : See Thalikkettukalyanam. |
| Koviladhikarikal | : Patron of the temple. |
| Koil Thampuran | : The consort of Thiruvithamkoor princess. |
| Kovilakam | : Palace. |
| Kshetram | : The temple edifice. |
| Kudiyan | : Cultivating tenant. |
| Kulichekam | : The land gift offered to soldiers in north Kerala. |
| Kuthuvilakku | : A type of lamp used in Kerala. |
| Madham | : The Brahmin's house. |
| Melkoyma | : Suzerinity over temples. |
| Männan | : Washermen community |
| Mana | : The Nampoothiri's house. |
| Mappilla | : The Malabar Muslim. |
| Marumakan | : Sister's son |
| Marumakkathayam | : Lineage through sister's sons and daughters. |
| Mundu | : Dhoti. |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Muthalpidikkaran | : | Rent collector. |
| Muthal sambandham | : | Holding of common property. |
| Nattupattar | : | A name for Ezhuthachans. |
| Nayar Pattalam | : | Nayar militia of Thiruvithamkoor |
| Ochirakkali | : | Mock fight on Ochira temple grounds. |
| Onam | : | The national festival of Malayalees |
| Onathallu | : | Mock fight during Onam festival. |
| Panam | : | Currency of olden times in Kerala. |
| Para | : | A full measure |
| Pathittupattu | : | An anthology of the Sangham period 5, 6 century A.D. |
| Pathivu | : | Monthly allowance. |
| Pathivu(in accounting parlance) | : | Routine allowance |
| Pattu | : | Song |
| Pudava | : | Cloth |
| Pula | : | Pollution |
| Samantha | : | A sect of Kshatriya |
| Sambandham | : | The old accepted practice of Nampoothiri males entering into liasons with women of lower castes. |
| Seshakriya | : | The obsequies |
| Sudra | : | A caste in Chathur Varna |
| Taavazhi | : | Collateral branches of a clan from a maternal ancestor. |
| Tandan | : | A caste name |
| Thara | : | Small locality. |
| Tharavad | : | The homestead of the Marumakkathayam family. |
| Thali | : | Normally, a piece of gold which sanctifies the marriage bond. |

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|--------------------------|---|--|
| Thalickettu- kalyanam | : | Thali tying ceremony and feast. |
| Theiyam | : | Corruption of Daivam, meaning God |
| Therandupattu | : | Puberty rites. |
| Thirumulpad | : | A sect of Kshatriyas |
| Trithalicharthu | : | The tali ritual celebrations of females in the erstwhile Kochi royal family. |
| Ubhayam | : | Rice fields (in southern Kerala); Four fruit trees - coconut, arecanut, Jackfruit and pepper in Malabar. |
| Ulladans | : | One of the aboriginal tribes of Kerala. |
| Ur | : | A village. |
| Uraler | : | Temple trustee. |
| Valichattans | : | Bonded labour associated with land |
| Vaniyan | : | The oil mongering caste |
| Vannan | : | The laundering caste |
| Velan | : | Coconut tree climbers by profession |
| Velakali | : | Mock war dance. |
| Veluthedan | : | Nayar launderer |
| Vidhyarambham | : | Ritual start to education. |
| Viruthi | : | Land gift offered by the feudal chieftain to newly enrolled soldiers. |
| Warrier | : | Temple serving caste |

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