SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENTS IN MALABAR

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<tr>
<td>AICC</td>
<td>All India Congress Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEM</td>
<td>Basel Evangelical Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDM</td>
<td>Civil Disobedience Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>Church Mission Society</td>
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<td>CSI</td>
<td>Churches of South India</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSP</td>
<td>Congress Socialist Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCC</td>
<td>District Congress Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSS</td>
<td>Harijan Sevakan Sangham</td>
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<tr>
<td>INC</td>
<td>Indian National Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>KPCC</td>
<td>Kerala Provincial Congress Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMS</td>
<td>London Missionary Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSS</td>
<td>Nair Service Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIUC</td>
<td>South India United Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>SNDP Yogam</td>
<td>Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam</td>
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<tr>
<td>TUC</td>
<td>Trade Union Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>ULCCS</td>
<td>Uralunkal Labour Contract Co-operative Society</td>
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The present study explores the social reform movements in colonial Malabar. Focus has been given to document the characters and effects of the social reform movements initiated by the Basel Evangelical Mission, various spiritual leaders, and the Indian National Congress. It is a fact that the social reform movements initiated by various individuals and agents had effectively transformed Malabar society into what we now call a modern society. There are scholars who critically view this transformation as a transition of Malabar society and its people as the subjects of colonialism, colonial modernity, and western rationality. But I would argue that the reform movements wrought through the hands of certain spiritual leaders had their positive effects on the Malabar society. It created a feeling of equality among the people, politicized them, and paved the way for revolutionizing the society. Therefore, I would argue that the work of the Missionaries and social reformers who often resorted to spiritual/religious ideas to reform the society was not a return to orthodoxy or traditionalism. Neither was it an action generated out of the colonial subjectivity, but a pragmatic position conducive to the then existing social order.

Society liberates as well as limits the activities of men. It controls human behaviour and liberties. No society can exist static for ever. The

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1 Ramakrishna Mukherjee, Society Culture Development, New Delhi, 1991, p.11.
adoption of progressive thoughts and attitudes always make changes within the society. Reform represented a specific reading of the need for change and conscious effort to make change. The reform movements aimed at a total and complete change in the social and cultural system. The social reform movement saw a period of social upheaval. It is viewed essentially as adaptive mechanisms in a period of rapid social change. They are the important agents of social transformation and new vision. The social reform movements based on challenge, protest and revolt imply a deliberate effort to bring about a change in social attitudes, culturally defined role expectations and actual pattern of behaviour of people in a desired direction through the process of persuasion and public education. They seem to emanate from one major premise of the liberal philosophy of the recognition of the dignity of the human individual. It is aimed at promoting equality or at least reducing social inequities of one type or another.

The second half of the 19th century witnessed the emergence of certain major social and religious reform movements throughout India and among all religious groups. It was the middle class from the upper caste society who gave leadership to the movements. But they often challenged social discrimination on the basis of one’s birth. Their activities had brought

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qualitative changes in the social structure and relationships. The reformers with humanistic, rational and secular outlook fought for the eradication of caste and gender inequalities, rigid social conventions, outdated customs and other evils that existed in the society. They made the society aware of the new force of dynamic change sweeping across the world and brought home to the people the realisation that unless they stirred themselves and summoned all their inner resources and adjusted their outer behaviour they would be swept off their feet. The development of social consciousness as a result of the social reform movements in various parts of India coincided with the nationalist consciousness thus becoming a part of the nationalist movement. Thus the social reform movement was an ensemble of political, social, cultural and economic aspects.

The wave of social reform activities surged over Kerala in the late 19th century and early decades of 20th century. The colonial domination, spread of English education and western rationalism brought changes in the nineteenth century Kerala society. The newly emerged educated middle class followed a critical attitude towards the traditional institutions, beliefs and social relations. They supported the struggles for bringing structural changes. The reformers gave leadership to the people to fight against the caste-based social discrimination, social injustice, superstitions and other evils deeply rooted in the society. In Malabar, which is my focus of study, the social reform

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6 G. Devarajan and T. Mohankumar, Social Reform Movements in Kerala, Haryana, 1990, p. 5.
movements started in the middle of 19th century and lasted till the middle of the 20th century. There were a number of social reform movements. Some of them were initiated by Christian missionaries and some by colonial administrators. Beyond that, the newly educated colonial subjects (people of Malabar) were also actively involved in changing their age old customs and practices. Beyond that, there were a set of spiritual leaders who preached and acted for reforming Malabar society. But, interestingly, unlike the case of Travancore and Cochin, in Malabar caste-oriented reform movement hardly had any deeper root. In the present study I attempt to unravel the dynamics of these multi faceted social reform movements in Malabar. I would argue that these movements were decisive in bringing about social changes in Malabar, especially in the first half of the 20th century.

**Malabar: An overview**

Malabar which is now the northern region of present Kerala State was given the name by the Arabs to denote the entire Kerala coast. Al-Biruni appears to have been the first to call the coast, Malabar. Malabar is a hilly or mountainous region, a name well-suited to its physical characteristics. It is a territory that extends from the northern landmark of Mount Deli to Cape Comorian in the south. A part of this west coast area was under the direct administrative control of the British colonial authority from 1792 till the attainment of independence. British Malabar was a district under the Madras presidency with headquarters at Calicut and sub collector's office and district

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court at Tellichery. Today in the state of Kerala there is no such political or administrative unit called, 'Malabar'. It is just a name, a memory, a cultural entity.

The study focuses on the various strands of social reform that emerged in Malabar which include the role of Basel Evangelical Mission, the reforms formulated by Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, Vagbhatanandan, Swami Ananda Theerthan and a number of freedom fighters.

The social reformers by questioning the then existing customs and practices conceived and disseminated the concept of social freedom, justice, and equality among the lower classes. The movements fostered among the lower caste people resulted in creating greater self respect, self confidence and courage among them to fight for their rights that, hitherto, were denied to them by the upper castes. The activities of social reformers enlightened the common man of the need of a proper education which was essential for all round reformation of the society. Education helped the people to gain a critical attitude and spirit of enquiry. The exposition of the reformers gave a new philosophy of action to the nationalists of Malabar and they strengthened the campaign against social evils.

Sources and Method

The primary sources for the study include archival records, original works of the social reformers, newspaper reports, Gazetteers, personal interviews etc.

The original works of the social reformers are the most important primary source which throw light on their ideologies. Brahmanandaswami Sivayogi wrote a number of philosophical and spiritual works like 'Mokshapradeepam', 'Anandadarsham', 'Anandasutra', 'Anandakummi', 'Vigraharaadhanakhandanam', 'Sidhanubhuti', 'Sthreevidyaposhini', to name a few. These works show his concept of human mind and soul, principle of Ananda religion, female education and the criticisms against religion, caste, God worship and evil customs. Vagbhatanandan's works 'Atmavidya', 'Adhyatmayuddham', 'Prarthananjali', 'Vagbhatanandante Sampoorna Krithika', and others describe his concept on religion, God and God worship and the opposition to caste system, untouchability, idol worship, Talikettu Kallyanam, Tirandukali and other evil customs. His 'Atmavidyakahalam' weekly stood for the nationalist and the peasant cause. The weekly gave full support to Gandhiji's leadership in the freedom struggle and criticized the exploitation of poor peasants by the landlords. Swami Ananda Theerthan's work 'Smaranakal' examines his important reform activities for the eradication of social evils and the uplift of depressed classes in Malabar.

Data collected through personal interviews are yet another important source material which I have used for the study. The personal interviews conducted with Nirmalananda Yogi, a disciple of Sivayogi and the president
of Sivayogi's Sidhasramam at Alathur and Swami Ananda, Yogasala, Kannur were useful for the study. Rev: Dr. G.S. Francis, Basel Mission Church, Tellichery shared his knowledge about Basel Evangelical Mission and its role in making social change in Malabar. Manjeri Kandi Sukumaran and Shameer Babu of Atmavidyasangham Office, Kappilpeedika, Azhikode furnished the details of the thoughts and reform activities of their spiritual leader Vagbhatananda. They also provided the details of the earlier and the present works of Atmavidyasangham. The talks with important disciples of Swami Ananda Theerthan like Swaminath Padinjaremana, the secretary, Swami Ananda Theertha Trust, Payyannur, T.V. Vasumitran, Vice President, Swami Ananda Theertha Trust, Payyannur and T.K. Kunhambu, Treasurer, Swami Ananda Theertha Trust, Payyannur were immensely helpful for knowing the details of Swami Ananda Theerthan's campaign against untouchability and the Harijan uplift programmes.

The reports in newspapers like Mathrubhumi and Malayala Manorama were also used as source materials for the study. As scholars have noted, the Mathrubhumi offered full-fledged support to the national movement. The paper contained detailed reports on Harijan uplift programmes, campaign for the eradication of untouchables, events like Guruvayur Satyagraha and other struggles of nationalists.

C.A. Innes, Malabar-Gazetteer Vol. I & II, William Logan's Malabar Manual Vol. I’ and W.W. Hunter's The Imperial Gazetteer of India Vol. VI have been treated as yet another kind of primary source in the study since they provide a detailed picture of Malabar society in the 19th century.
The methodology followed in this study is descriptive and analytical. Along with giving a detailed narrative account of the social reform movements in Malabar, the study would also engage in analysing how these movements resulted in the transformation of the society on modern lines. The pattern of documentation which I have followed in this study is the method of citing sources, using the terms 'Ibid' to mention the book just referred before and 'n' to indicate the work which has already been cited in the same chapter.

**Review of Literature**

There are a few studies attempting to describe the social reform activities of Malabar. But so far, none of them has endeavoured to analyze in depth the condition within which the reformers raised the idea of reforming the society and the pattern of their ideological stands prescribed for doing so. Below I will succinctly review the nature of the existing secondary literature on the social reform movements in Malabar.

There are a few works discussing how the Basel Evangelical Mission (hereafter BEM) intervened in the reform of Malabar society. *Christian Heritage of Kerala* edited by K.J. John traces the role of BEM in bringing about social change in Malabar. The book throws light on the activities of BEM in the field of education, industry, health and other fields. Jayaprakash Raghaviah's *Basel Mission Industries in Malabar and South Canara (1834-1914)-A study of Social and Economic Impact* also examines the role of the Basel Mission industries in the context of social and economic environment under which they functioned. Chummar Choondal traces the role of
missionaries in the development of Malayalam literature and journalism in his *The Missionaries and Malayalam Journalism*. K.K.N. Kurup's *Peasantry Nationalism and Social Change in India* has a chapter on the Basel Mission in Malabar providing a brief analysis of Basel Mission activities and the role of Dr. Herman Gundert in the promotion of education, Malayalam literature and journalism.

Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi’s thoughts and deeds attracted scholarly attention and they are studied from different perspective. There are his biographies, critical and appreciative reading of his philosophy and on Ananda Cult, analysis of his spiritualism and assessment of his perception on the society. *A Passage to Bliss Supreme* edited by P.V. Gopalakrishnan is a brief account of the life and deeds of Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi. The book analyses the important aspects of Sivayogi’s thoughts, the basic tenets of Ananda cult, concept on religion and God and the criticisms against social evils. A.K.Nair's *Sri Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi* contains the facts regarding the life and thoughts of Sivayogi. The book mainly focuses on Sivayogi's views on life, religion, caste and the concept of Ananda or happiness. Pavanan's *Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi* describes Sivayogi's personality, views on human mind, concept of Ananda and his opposition to religion and caste-ridden society. M.S. Nair has attempted to explore the philosophy of Sivayogi and its importance in the society in his work *Manassu Enna Daivam*. His another work *Sivayogiyude Chinthakal* examines Sivayogi's thoughts on religion, caste, action, reason, morality, non-violence, freedom, education, mind and yoga. It is a collection of selected quotations
from Sivayogi's works. N. Ushadevi in her *Contribution of Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi to Indian Philosophy* presents the inner essence of the philosophy moulded by Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi.

The philosophy of Sivayogi attains significance in respect of the social reformations taking place all over Kerala. Sivayogi's philosophy enlightened the common people who were subjected to the adverse effects of social evils, superstitions and religious fallacies. C. Krishnan Kutty's *Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi – A Social Reformer of Kerala* traces the movement and the ideology of Sivayogi. The book throws light on Sivayogi's conception of social change, religion, caste, idol worship and other connected activities. The work *Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi– Navothana Guru* edited by Sudarsan Kunnathukal examines Sivayogi as a philosopher and social reformer. The book shows how Sivayogi retaliated against social evils and how his thoughts helped for a regeneration of human mind and society – Bheeman Guruji's *Asathiaythil Ninnnum Sathiayathilekku* and P. Govindan's *Anandopaharam* are relevant as they throw light on the life and thoughts of Sivayogi.

Vagbhatananda too received scholarly attention. K.K.Pavithran's *Vagbhatanandan Atmeeya Himalayathil*, a biographical work traces the thoughts and activities of Vagbhatananda in making social formation in Malabar. Another important biographical work, *Maharshi Vagbhatananda Gurudevar* by Swami Brahmavrathan provides a clear picture of the life and deeds of Vagbhatananda. The book *Vagbhatananda Guruvum Samoohika Navothananavum* by M.S. Nair is helpful in getting the accounts of the thoughts and social renaissance activities of Vagbhatananda and
Atmavidyasantham. Pattiam Ramakrishnan's Navothanacharyan Vagbhatanandan analyses the role of Vagbhatananda in the social reform movement in Kerala. A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel's Swami Ananda Thirth – Untouchability: Gandhian solution on Trial is an important study which throws light on the social reform programme of Swami Ananda Theerthan.

Swami Ananda Theerthan, a true disciple of Sree Narayanana Guru by opting Gandhian constructive programmes to serve Harijans as a means of his mission thought and worked for the removal of untouchability and the uplift of Harijans. E.M. Ashraf's Swami Ananda Theerthar, Vanidas Elayavoor's Theerthaprayanam and V.K. Kunhiraman's Swami Ananda Theerthan are other important books which examine the role of Swami Ananda Theerthan in the social reform movements in Malabar.

K.K.N. Kurup in his Modern Kerala – Studies in Social and Agrarian Relations has attempted to trace the educational and social progress, socio-religious reform movements, agrarian problems and the impact of land reforms in Kerala. P.K.K. Menon's History of Freedom Movement in Kerala, Vol. II furnishes details about the national movement in Kerala. The book gives a brief account of the nationalist struggle for the right of depressed classes. Perunna.K.N. Nair in his Keralathile Congress Prasthanam describes the major events and movements which took place in Malabar as part of the freedom struggle. A Sreedhara Menon's Kerala and Freedom struggle is helpful in getting the history of nationalist struggles against untouchability and other social evils. In addition to these books, certain unpublished thesises and articles from various souvenirs and journals are also
used as other important secondary sources of information for preparing this thesis.

**Chapterisation**

The thesis has eight chapters including introduction and conclusion. In the second chapter the condition of Malabar society in the 19th century has been discussed. The principles of social freedom and equality found no place in the 19th century society where the caste system, untouchability, superstitions, serfdom and irrational social customs created a degenerated society. The caste system based on hierarchical division was largely responsible for the various disabilities in the society. The high castes or *savarnas* enjoyed several immunities and privileges which were denied over centuries to the low castes or *avarnas*. The *avarnas* were denied admission to temples, schools and public services. The law that prevailed in the land was not equalitarian. The backward classes especially the depressed classes were bound to the land and suffered from many social and economic disabilities. The chapter in a wider perspective describes the evil system of casteism, untouchability, superstitions, slavery, family organisation, position of women and illogical religious customs. The chapter provides the material milieu for the succeeding chapters.

The third chapter titled "Basel Evangelical Mission and social change in Malabar" describes the activities of Basel Mission in Malabar. The chapter examines how the activities of BEM prepared the ground for a social change in Malabar. The chapter deals in detail the works of BEM in the field of
education, literature, journalism and industry. Basel Evangelical Mission were the pioneers of English education in Kerala. The issues of conversion, native resistance towards the missionary activities, the way the lower caste people were converted, the impact of their activities in the traditional caste ridden society etc., also have been emphasised in this chapter.

The fourth chapter, "Sivayogi: Rational Man, Spiritual Leader and Social Reformer” deals with Sivayogi's philosophical and reformist ideas for regenerating the society. Sivayogi's rational and humanistic ideas played an important role in creating social awareness among the lower castes of Malabar. Sivayogi criticised the drawbacks of the existing social condition. He propagated his philosophical, religious and spiritual ideas by making lectures and by composing books. The chapter includes his conception on religion, caste, God, idol worship and social evils. The principle of his 'Ananda religion', encouragement to women's education, significance of his movement are also analysed in this chapter.

The fifth chapter "Vagbhatananda – A Social Reformer with Spiritual mind from below” focuses on Vagbhatananda's attempt to liberate people from the fetters of caste, evil customs, rituals and superstitions. He was a revolutionary sage and not a defender of orthodoxy. He used his knowledge in Advaita Vedanta as a weapon for opposing casteism, idolworship, untouchability and other social evils. Vagbhatananda's thoughts, writings and the formation of Atmavidyasangham and its works against social evils are analysed in this context. The chapter also attempts to examine
Vagbhatananda's opposition to colonial rule, feudal ownership of land and the support given to Gandhi and the national movement.

In the sixth chapter, “From Preaching to Action: Ananda Theerthan and Social Reform” an attempt is made to trace Swami Ananda Theerthan's struggle against social evils and his attempt to elevate the Harijans. Swami Ananda Theerthan’s activities gave a new light and strength to the Harijans in North Malabar. He acquainted himself with them, gave educated and raised them as persons of self respect and morale. The chapter also deals with the establishment of Sree Narayana Vidyalaya for imparting education to the Harijans. The struggles for the entry of untouchables to temples, schools and public offices etc., are discussed in detail in this chapter.

The seventh chapter "National Movement and Social Reform" discusses the role of nationalists and their struggles for the reformation of society. The national movement coincided with the social reform movement. The chapter also examines how the struggles for the rights of untouchables gave strength to the national movement in Malabar. In the eighth and concluding chapter a general conclusion of the study is given. The chapter describes how the social reform movement helped to create socio-political formation in Malabar. It also evaluates the relevance of the reform ideas in the present society.
CHAPTER II

MALABAR SOCIETY IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Caste is the most general form of social organisation in India. It is an integral element of Hindu life.\(^1\) Caste as a segmentary system means that people view themselves as belonging to units of different orders in different contexts.\(^2\) Caste system had split the society into mutually exclusive social groups and prevented social fusion more than any other social institution in the world. It is seen today as an obstacle to all progressive measures in the society and national unity.\(^3\) It was essentially related to the production and distribution of material as well as ideological sources. Its formation was based on the transformation of economy from hunting and food gathering to settled agrarian economy. It became more rigid with the emergence of feudalism. The status of a man born in a particular caste was determined by the rank of that caste in the caste hierarchy. Since the caste system was hierarchically graded, it was based on social and legal inequalities.\(^4\) The inequality of status in caste terms has the sanction of Hindu religion. The caste system provided unlimited power to the high castes to exploit the low

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2. M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, New Delhi, 1997, p. 120.
castes. The origin of caste was first racial and then occupational but its importance is neither religious nor moral but social and political.

The caste system was unheard of in the ancient Kerala society. It was the Aryan settlers who introduced the caste system in Kerala. It is thought that the Aryanisation of Kerala had reached its peak in the 8th century A.D. It was in the period from the 8th to the 11th centuries that Kerala was enclosed in the strait jacket of the caste system. Till then, the social stratification in Kerala was based on functions and not on birth. The advent of Brahmins and the projection of the Aryan concept in the earlier period and the advent of new migrants of Paraswarama Brahmins gave a new impetus to caste formation.

The Sangam age witnessed the rudimentary beginning of social stratification. Though the four-fold division of society based on birth had not percolated to the lower strata of society, the presence of Brahmins in the courts of chieftains and their influence upon them are evident in the Sangam literature. The land grants by the chieftains to the Brahmins in the transitional stage from kinship reduced the distance to the caste and society and gave rise to a new system of production relation transcending the framework of kinship. As a landed institutional agency of Brahmin landlords the temples also played a crucial role in the multiplication of castes and sub castes.

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The Kerala society witnessed the formation of caste groups all over the agrarian regions during the 9th and 10th centuries. Therefore it could be stated that caste system in Kerala was a byproduct of the development of an agrarian society and economy. The caste system in Kerala by joining hands with the janmi system reached its growth in the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries. Kerala was a hotbed of casteism. In no other part of India have caste norms and caste practices been more rigidly or more meticulously observed. It was developed in the form of a hierarchy based on the rigid rules of purity and pollution. That was why Swami Vivekananda called Kerala the 'mad house of caste'.

The social system of Malabar in the 19th century was well-entrenched in the principle of caste and kinship. Caste system as an institution created separation and segmentation in the part of each and every section of Malabar society. Even after the advent of the British as a political power the native practices were maintained on the basis of hierarchical order from the sacred to the unworthy. The fourfold classification of Varna system leaves a gap in Kerala as there is no counterpart of the Vaisyas in the Kerala social order. At the top of the social hierarchy was placed the Nambudiris (Malayali Brahmins). The Kshatriyas came next in the order. A group of Antarala jatis or interne diary castes constituted by the Ambalavasis (Temples servants) and

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9 Ibid., p.401.
samantans were placed below the Kshatriyas. Then there were Nairs who formed the militia of the country. The low castes like Kammalas (artisans), Ezhavas or Tiyyas (toddy tappers), Mukkuvars (Fisherman) came below them and the lowest were the agrestic slaves, Cherumar or Pulayar, Parayan and others. The upper castes like Nambudiris, Kshatriyas, Ambalavasis and Nairs enjoyed several immunities and privileges. The principles of social freedom and equality found no place in the Hindu social organisation. People were made to live in a society conditioned by inferior relations, recognising their relative positions not as being degrading but as elevating. The low caste people had not the courage to challenge the established order. They thought that it was their bounden duty to perpetuate the unequal and reactionary society.

The Nambudiri Brahmins who formed a very minor part of the population occupied a distinct position in the social order. They were exempted from all kinds of social and religious disabilities. They enjoyed a perfect liberty of action. They had an overwhelming and decisive influence upon the lower castes. It is noted that, "his person is holy, his directions are commands, his movements are processions, he is the holiest of human beings, he is the representative of God on earth." The Nambudiri Brahmins were the absolute owners of the major portion of the landed properties in Malabar.

They had an absolute taxfree proprietorship of the soil.\textsuperscript{16} The predominance of the Nambudiri Brahmin community over the rest of the society to a great extent originated with their ownership of land. As the owners of the chief means of production they enjoyed all facilities and privileges. The law of the land gave them all protection they needed. The rulers were dependant on Nambudiri Brahmins for the administration of justice.

The concentration of land both Janmam and Kanam in the hands of a few formed an important characteristic of the conditions of production in Malabar during the colonial period. Janmam was the full proprietary right of landlords in the soil subject to the payment of the revenue to the government.\textsuperscript{17} The Brahmin landlords gained janmam right over vast areas of cultivated land. They did not cultivate the land themselves but leased out to tenants under a variety of tenurial arrangements.\textsuperscript{18} Kanam was a tenure partaking of the nature of both a mortgage and a lease. It was one of the commonest tenures in the 19th century. Kanam right was the right to supervise or protect all the inhabitants of a particular nadu or country wherein the land lay, and to enjoy for this service a portion of the next produce of the

\textsuperscript{17} W.W. Hunter, \textit{The Imperial Gazetteer of India}, Vol VI, London, 1881, p.250.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Census of India}, 1901, Madras Presidency, Part III, Madras, 1902, p.231.
soil (ie, pattam) equal in amount to that enjoyed by the janmi or landlord. 19

The landlords leased their lands to Kanakkaran or Kanamdar (intermediary tenants) who were primarily of non-Brahmin order. The Nairs seem to have been the foremost among them.20 The Kanakkaran took possession of the land on advancing a sum of money (kanapanam) to the janmi and agreeing to pay rent at the rate fixed according to the quality of the land. In the beginning there was no specified duration of the Kanam tenancy. In course of time a period of twelve years came to be fixed as the usual duration of the tenancy. If agreed by both the parties the tenancy may be renewed for a further period of twelve years for which the Kanakkaran was required to pay a renewal fee fixed by the janmi.21 The Kanakkaran could transfer or sub mortgage his interest during the period of tenancy. The tenants were oppressed by the landlords in various ways, the most injurious of which was the practice of giving lands on melcharth (overleases). It was given by the janmi to a third party even before the expiry of the Kanam tenancy.22

The Kuzhikanam, another tenure, was mainly granted for the improvement of land which was either unproductive or whose yield was very

20 Rajan Gurukkal, n.8, p.399.
22 Kerala Patrika, Calicut, 14 December, 1895, Native Newspaper Report (NNPR), Madras, 1936, p. 35.
small. The tenant was entitled to enjoy the land rent fee or for a nominal fee for twelve years. At the end of that period he must act an ordinary Kanam lease from the janmi. The tenure Verumpattam was the holding of the actual cultivator under the Kanakkaran. It was an annual lease which gave few rights to the tenant. In many respects the Verumpattakkaran was socially subordinate to the janmi and Kanakkaran. He was also part proprietor to the extent of one-third of the produce. Though the Verumpattakkaran was entitled to one-third of the net produce according to customary law, in practice he did not receive anything more than the cost of cultivation. His share was always encroached upon by the intermediary tenure holders. He was practically labourer on subsistence wages.

The Nairs as Kanakkars stood at the top of the hierarchy. Below them came the subgroup of Nairs, Tiyyas and Mappilas as Verumpattakkar. The low castes like Pulayas and Parayas as agricultural labourers stood at the bottom. They had no control or right over land. Under the British rule the landlords became more powerful than ever before as a result of the patronage extended to them by the ruling class. The British recognised the rights of landlords in land as absolute property rights. They were more concerned with the land revenue. They did not preserve any of the customary rights of the

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tenants and agricultural labourers and left them entirely at the mercy of landlords. They supported feudal lords’ claim for the collection of rent, feudal levies etc. By recognising the rights of landlords, the British smoothly accommodated the social framework under their control.\textsuperscript{27} The result of this exploitative socio-economic order was the steady and continuous pauperisation of the poor peasants.

The Nambudiris possessed the right of consecration and the interpretation of rituals. They also had the exclusive right to preach religious doctrines, to officiate as priests and to function as teachers.\textsuperscript{28} They were the owners and trustees of the temple properties. All the Nambudiris except those of Payyannur village followed makathayam or patrilineal system of inheritance.\textsuperscript{29} The eldest male member was the head of the illam. He managed the illam property and the entire family affairs of the illam. He was respected and obeyed by all the members of the illam.

Even the Nambudiri's who were at the apex of the caste structure suffered from the operation of obsolete customs. A peculiar custom of primogeniture in marriage was followed among the Nambudiris. Only the eldest son was allowed to marry within the caste which alone was recognised as genuine marriage. All other younger brothers could only have liaison or

Sambandham with the females of Kshatriyas, Antaralars and high caste Nairs.\textsuperscript{30} This practice was followed in order to prevent the disintegration of the illam through the division of property. This marriage was considered a virtual marriage by the woman but for the Nambudiris it was not so. These relationships were loose and at best semi permanent arrangement for a 'nights' sleep' as the Nambudiris called them which could be terminated without notice by either party.\textsuperscript{31} The wife and children of these relationships were excluded from the circle of kinship. They had no right in the property of younger Nambudiri brothers. This system gave rise to various problems like decrease of Nambudiri population, increase in the number of widows etc. Many Nambudiri women never got a chance to marry.\textsuperscript{32} The prevailing customs forbade them to marry from lower caste men like Nairs. The young Nambudiri girls were given in marriage to aged Nambudiris which resulted in unhealthy children and early widowhood.\textsuperscript{33} The widows of Nambudiris were not permitted to remarry.

The Nambudiri women were kept in strict seclusion throughout their lives in order to prevent them from entering into many illegitimate relations which could endanger the purity of the caste. They never went out of the house and were never sent to school. So many of the Nambudiri women

\textsuperscript{32} William Logan, \textit{n. 15}, p. 127.
remained illiterate. To make matters worse there was the institution of Smartha Vicharam, the caste tribunal which tried Nambudiri women accused of sexual misconduct. It may be noted that the accused women along with those men who were mentioned by them were excommunicated from their respective castes under royal orders, if found guilty.\(^{34}\)

The Kshatriyas who were next in the order of social precedence also formed a smaller section of the population. They consisted of Rajas, ruling chieftains and Naduvazhis or rulers of subdistricts. They had political, judicial and military responsibilities in their respective territories. They also administered temples and other religious institutions in collaboration with the Brahmanical priests.\(^{35}\) The Zamorins of Calicut, Chirakkal, Arakkal and other royal families in Malabar owned huge proportions of land including wastelands, forests and other lands. Marriage relations by means of Sambandham existed among Kshatriya women and Nambudiri men. However Kshatriya men were forbidden from marrying the Nambudiri women. The union of Kshatriya with Nair women gave rise to the caste of Samanthas. They were next to Kshatriyas in social status and included Eradi, Vallodi, Nedungadi, Unithiri etc.\(^{36}\)

The presence of intermediary castes or antarala jatis of temple servants can be considered as a special feature of the caste system in Malabar. Being

\(^{34}\) A. Sreedhara Menon, \textit{n.26}, p.57.

\(^{35}\) K.K.N. Kurup, \textit{n.27}, p.9.

temple servants and often residing in close proximity to temples, they had
greater chances of intimate associations with the Brahmins. They were as a
rule well-educated in Sanskrit. Pisharadi, Variyar, Marar, Poduval,
Nambeesan etc belong to this category. They used to do services such as
sweeping the inner parts of the temple, cleaning the vessels and other
accessories used in worship, fetching of firewood, preparing garlands,
drumming at the time of worship and the lighting of oil lamps etc. 37

The next superior caste, the Nairs, had a dominant position in Malabar
society on account of their family relations based on Sambandham with the
Nambudiris. They seems to have been the formost among the tenants of the
Nambudiris. They were the Kanankkars or held supervision right over
Kanam. Traditionally the Nairs were the militia of the country to be called
for military service at any time. 38 They trained themselves in arms and
constituted an army maintained by kings or ruling chieftains. The Nairs lived
in matrilineal joint families called taravads which constituted corporated
property owning groups. 39 The Karanavan, the senior most male of the
family, was the head of the family. All other members of the family were
subjected to his authority. The Mysorean invasion was a blow to the
prosperous Nair taravads. However with the British occupation of Malabar,
the taravad returned to its former position. Some prominent Nair taravads
like Kavalapra, Nilambur and Koothali were the owners of large tracts of

38 Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes in South India, Vol V, Delhi, 1975, p. 162.
39 H.S. Graeme, Report of Revenue Administration of Malabar, Dated 18 January
1822, Calicut, 1898, p.8.
agricultural lands in Malabar. The Kavalapra Nair family leased their lands to
the Tiyyas and Muslims.\textsuperscript{40} The Koothali Nair, one of the big land owners of
Kurumbranad, had the right of overlordship over four temples and the tenants
of the paddy lands held from these temples paid their rent in paddy.\textsuperscript{41}

The polluting castes like Tiyyas, Kammalas, Kanisans, Mukkuvas,
Cherumar or Pulayas, Parayas and several other castes were subjected to gross
social and economic disabilities. All the domestic concerns of the lower
castes, all their social activities and all their liberty of thought and actions
were regulated by the arbitrary will of the upper castes. Not one of them in
their religious capacity was allowed to move the little finger except on
consultation with the upper castes and disobedience to their orders was often
visited with their displeasure and the resulting depreciation of their means of
livelihood and even banishment from the society.\textsuperscript{42} Among the lower caste
groups in Malabar, the most prominent was the caste of Tiyyas. Their
traditional occupation was tending and tapping of coconut trees, but many of
them were agriculturists, traders, shopkeepers, private servants etc. Though a
large number of them worked in agricultural fields only very few owned land
and mostly they were Verumpattam tenants and agricultural labourers. They
also served in the military along with the Nairs. Some of them were
wellknown warriors who used the title, chekon.

\textsuperscript{40} K.K.N. Kurup, \textit{Kavalapra Papers}, Calicut University, 1984, p.11.
\textsuperscript{41} Dilip. M. Menon, \textit{Caste, Nationalism and Communism in South India-Malabar
1900-1948}, New Delhi, 1994, p. 43.
In the lower strata of the caste-based society were the depressed castes like Pulayas or Cherumars, Parayas, Kuravas, Nayadis etc. They were subjected to exploitation and humiliation by the upper classes. They were destined to compulsory labour and free services. They were systematically excluded from all positions of power and prestige.\(^{43}\) The Pulayas were the people who were directly involved in the agricultural operations. They tilled the land without having any kind of right over it.\(^{44}\) They did not have a life of their own. Their entire life was depended on the masters. They lived to bring pleasure and provide labour to the higher classes. The Pulaya men, women and children worked during the harvest time. The Parayas, another important depressed class, were out castes. In some places they were utilised in agriculture, but generally their occupation was basket making and the making of bamboo mats.\(^{45}\) The lowest race of people in Malabar were known by the name Nayadis or hunters and their condition was not better than the two legged animals. Outside the hierarchical division of the Hindu community there were independent trading groups like the Muslims and Christians. The Muslims or Mappilas who lived in the coastal towns in Malabar were mainly engaged in trade and cultivation.\(^{46}\)

\(^{43}\) T.K. Ravindran, \textit{n.14}, p.X.
\(^{44}\) K. Saradamoni, \textit{Emergence of a slave caste-Pulayas of Kerala}, New Delhi, 1980, p.27.
Slavery as an elemental institution was widely prevalent in Malabar society. The origin of slavery was closely associated with the caste system.\textsuperscript{47} Slave labour was a major source for production in the 18\textsuperscript{th} and first half of 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries in Malabar. The factory records of Tellicherry left by the English bear a good testimony of slavery in Malabar.\textsuperscript{48} The form of slavery in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century Malabar was largely agrestic. The lower castes like Cherumars or Pulayas, Parayas and Kanakkans were condemned to agrestic slavery. The greater part of the labour involved in cultivation was performed by the Cherumars or Pulayas.\textsuperscript{49} They constituted about half of the whole slave population of Malabar district. The agrestic slaves were at the lowest rung of the feudal setup. Their condition was almost similar to cattles that were used to plough the field. They toiled day and night in the soil and its fruits were exploited by the privileged classes of the society. They had no land, no basic civic rights, and were actually held as slaves belonging to the feudal lord whom they served. But the land system as it goes by the name Janmi-Kudiyan system never recognised the tiller of the soil, the slave.\textsuperscript{50} Dr. Francis Buchanan who visited Malabar at the end of AD 1800 had stated that the Nambudiri proprietors cultivated their estates with the help of their slaves called Cheruman or Cherumar.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{47} K.K. Kusuman\textsuperscript{a}, \textit{Slavery in Travancore}, Trivandrum, 1993, p.15.  
\textsuperscript{48} K.K.N. Kurup, \textit{n.12}, p. 70.  
\textsuperscript{49} C.H. Jayasree, "Slavery in colonial Malabar" in Kesavan Veluthat and P.P. Sudhakaran (Ed), \textit{Advances in History}, Calicut, 2003, p.211.  
\textsuperscript{50} Adoor. K. Ramachandran Nair, \textit{Slavery in Kerala}, Delhi, 1986, p.25.  
\textsuperscript{51} Francis Buchanan, \textit{A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar}, Vol II, Madras, 1807, p. 562.
The system of slavery was hereditary and a slave continued as a slave until his death. Thus the service of a slave to his overlord was one of a lifelong contract. They were the absolute property of their lords. The severity of slavery was slave trade. The lord had the right to sell them along with the soil. It very often separated the parents from their children, husband from wife and brother from sister.\(^{52}\) The price of a slave varied from Rs. 3 to Rs. 14. In times of famine the children were sold at the rate of four annas per head. The wages given to them by their masters were insufficient for their bare subsistence.\(^{53}\) They received only occasional allowance in the form of paddy or food from the Janmi, Kanakkaran or Verumpattakaran.\(^{54}\) Any slave running away from his legitimate owner and joining the working ranks of another master if caught was subjected to brutal punishments at the hands of the former master. The slaves were not employed as domestic servants or personal attendants because of the supreme concept of pollution and purity. The slaves had a great regard and affection for their masters despite the extreme exploitation of their labour. This was possible because the higher castes could convince them that they were obliged by birth to serve the higher castes.

The abolition of slavery was implemented by the English East India Company in Malabar only by the middle of 19\(^{th}\) century. In 1833 they


declared that no person would be disabled from holding any office or employment on account of his religion, caste and place of birth. Government of India Act V of 1843 abolished slavery in Malabar. The provisions of the act were widely published throughout Malabar.\textsuperscript{55} Though the act abolished slavery there was no improvement in the condition of agrestic slaves. Slavery no longer existed in the eye of the law, but practically the inferior tribes of Malabar continued to be in bondage to their masters.\textsuperscript{56} However to the agrestic slaves, who sweated to serve the janmis or the new agrarian capitalists of the plantations, true freedom remained a mirage.

Untouchability (pollution or ayitham by touch) was the most venomous evil of the Hindu society. Untouchability was not a separate institution, it was a corollary of the institution of the caste system.\textsuperscript{57} It was nothing but the symptom of disease, the caste system. It was the most inhuman form of social oppression. Under no institution was man so deeply humiliated and crushed as under that of untouchability.\textsuperscript{58} It was the chief source of almost all disabilities the depressed classes suffered. The untouchables were subjected to bitter exploitation by the upper castes. There was the complete segregation of the Hindus of one caste from their brethren belonging to other castes in the society. Untouchability existed in a dreadful form in Malabar society. The lower castes from Kammalas downwards were

\textsuperscript{55} Edgar Thurston, \textit{Ethnographic Notes in Southern India}, Part II, Delhi, 1975, p.445.
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Census of India}, 1871, Madras Presidency, Vol I, Madras, 1874, p. 352.
\textsuperscript{58} A.R. Desai, \textit{n. 4}, p. 264.
included in the group of polluting castes. The members of polluting castes had to keep themselves at the prescribed distances from those of upper castes. The Nayadis occupied the lowest order in the caste ladder. The distance a Nayadi had to keep from a Brahmin was 300ft. The prescribed distance of other untouchable castes were for Kammalas, 24ft, Tiyyas 32ft, Kanakkan, 48ft, Pulayan, 64ft and Ullathan, 72ft.

Unapproachability (pollution by approach) and unseeability (pollution by sight) were also so perfectly worked out that expressions such as Tiyyapadu and Cherumapadu indicating the distance at which a Tiyya and Cheruman had to keep away from a Caste Hindu were common in Malabar society. Even the mere sight of a Nayadi or Pulaya was enough for a Nambudiri to consider himself polluted. When the upper caste people came out in the public roads an attendant of theirs went before them shouting 'P.O. P.O.; (get away, get away) so that they would not be polluted by a person of low caste even by a chance encounter within the prohibited distance. Failure on the part of the low castes to make way for the upper castes on the public road even led to their being murdered with the cunnivance of the custodians of law and order.

The varying degrees of pollution were observed even in the relations between upper castes. The approach by a Nair to a Brahmin was permissible but he must not touch him. If pollution rules were broken the higher castes would impure and they had to perform certain purificatory rites to regain their

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normal status. A plunge bath in a tank or stream was the method of washing off pollution.\textsuperscript{60} If the temple pond or house was polluted by the polluted caste men, the impurity would be removed by a special rite called Punyaham performed by Nambudiris. The upper castes followed pollution rules strictly and observed all the formalities. The untouchables who violated the pollution rules were subjected to severe punishments. It was the paradox that the lower castes who were themselves subjected to the social disability of untouchability practiced discrimination in their dealing with the castes considered as inferior to them in the social scale. The Pulayas and other depressed castes were considered as untouchables by the Tiyyas. They were denied entry into the temples owned by the Tiyyas. In one of the most humiliating practices the Harijans were forced to give the offerings like money, paddy and cocks etc to the temples of upper castes and even to the temples belonging to backward castes such as those of Tiyyas by standing outside the walls of the temples.\textsuperscript{61} There was no intermarriage or even interdining not only between castes but also between the members of various subcastes.

The low castes were the victims of the social tyranny for centuries and continued to live under serious social and religious handicaps. The low caste people were treated in the most inhuman and barbarious manner by the high castes. They were denied even basic human rights. They were denied

\textsuperscript{60} A. Sreedhara Menon, \textit{Social and Cultural history of Kerala}, New Delhi, 1979, p. 68.

admission to temples, palaces, schools and places of public resorts. They were not allowed to use public roads and highways as there was always a certain fear of causing atmospheric pollution to high caste people. They were denied admission to the roads in proximity to the temples and the houses of Caste Hindus. The irony of the situation was that while a non-Hindu like a Christian or a Muslim was not barred from entry in to public roads, approach roads to temples and admission to public schools, those Hindus who happened to be members of the low castes were kept out of these places and subjected to social humiliation. The low caste Hindus who were converted to Christianity or Islam immediately got those privileges conferred on them without any protest from the Caste Hindus.

Education was a monopoly of the upper castes. They restricted this facility to lower castes in order to protect their interests. By denying education to the low castes, they could easily suppress them and exploit their services for the benefit of upper castes. They also believed that education of lower castes would disturb the caste structure in which they enjoyed supremacy. Ezhuthupallikoodam or the village school for the education of non-Brahmin children functioned in each kara or village under an Ezhuthachan or teacher. The school functioned either in the house of the teacher or in the house of some important persons of the locality. The Tiyyas also used to run Ezhuthupallikoodams, but such institutions were less in

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62 M.S.A. Rao, n. 30, p.22.
63 A. Sreedhara Menon, Kerala History and its Makers, Madras, 1990, p.221.
64 P. Bhaskaranunni, Pathonpatham Nootandile Keralam (Mal.), Thrissur, 2000, p. 1053.
number. Besides Kalari education was also imparted to students where training was given in the use of arms. In addition to this practice, reading and writing in Malayalam was also taught. The Nairs, Tiyyas and even Christians and Muslims could attain training in Kalaris. There was a total exclusion of depressed castes from all educational institutions. The educational backwardness increased the degradation of these castes. They were unaware of their rights and privileges. As a result the high castes exerted an allround authority in every walk of life.

The members of depressed and polluting castes had no voice or place in the counsels of the state and they could hold no office under the government. There were also at one time manifold restrictions in regard to their dress, ornaments, modes of conveyance, use of domestic vessels, manner of constructing houses etc. The low castes could not dress like the upper castes. They were forbidden to wear fine clothes. The style of dress prescribed to the lower castes consisted of a single cloth of coarse texture, to be worn alike by males and females no lower than the knee and no higher than the waist. The low caste people were not permitted to wear gold ornaments, wear shoes, use metallic utensils and to keep milch cows. The low caste man was never allowed to construct a house like the house of an upper caste. Tiling the roofs was only the prerogative of the royal families and

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65 M.N. Srinivas, n.11, p.93  
temples. Others could have only thatched roofs. The house itself is called by different names according to the occupants’ caste. The house of Paraya is Cheri, while the agrestic slave Cheruman lives in a Chala. The houses of the blacksmiths, goldsmiths, carpenters, weavers and the Tiyyas inhabited were styled Pura or Kudi. An ordinary Nair resides in a veedu or bhavanam, temple servants in Variyam or Pisharam, Raja lives in Kvilakam or Kottaram, the Nambudiri Brahmins in an illam while his fellow of higher rank calls his house as mana or manakkal.

The lower castes including the Tiyyas were not allowed to sit or stand near the Brahmins, Nairs and other upper caste people. He must stand before an upper caste Hindu in awe and reverence assuming a humble posture. The holding of umbrellas was prohibited to all castes except Brahmins, though rains were pouring up on them. Food was given to the low caste labourers in leaves or in some broken vessels. The food of high castes was referred to as elixir (Amruthethu) and that of the low caste was black brew (Karikkadi). The low castes experienced restrictions even in the sale and purchase of goods. The low castes had no right to use the language of the upper castes. He must address a caste Hindu as 'Thampuran' and woman as 'Thampuratty'.

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67 M.S.A. Rao, n.2, p.22
68 William Logan, n.15, p.85
69 Adoor.K. Ramachandran Nair, n. 50, p.37.
About himself he had to refer to as *adiyan*. The polluting castes were prohibited from using Sanskrit names.

The administration of justice was based on the maryada or the custom of the land. Dharmasastras were the source of these customs. Brahmins were the custodians of Dharmasastras. They were the law givers and interpreters. It was the special privilege of Brahmin judges called Vaidikars to give judgements in all important civil and criminal cases. The administration of justice was neither impartial or fair. Law was administered in the most discriminatory manner. The penal code was extremely severe as far as the low castes were concerned. The severity of punishments was consistent with the caste status of the accused. The death penalty was imposed even for ordinary offences like theft, killing of cows etc. Trampling to death under an elephant, blowing from the mouth of a canon, chithra vadham or hanging spread over three days, mutilation etc were among the common forms of punishment.

The tax system was also discriminatory. The levy of taxes on some pretext or other on the backward communities was the surest way of raising revenues for the state. The Brahmins were always exempted from the payment of all taxes due to their superior status. The Nairs also never paid taxes for the lands possessed by them. The low castes paid tax on

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72 K.K.N. Kurup, *n.* 12, p. 47.
They had to pay various kinds of taxes for their huts, boats, looms, nets, oil mills, fishing, hunting and other types of poll taxes. They also had to pay a certain fee for the conduct of their marriages. It was also customary to make payments or presentations to the landlord or Naduvazhi on ceremonial occasions and also on the death of a person. It is interesting to note that each man of the lower caste had to pay a tax for the hair he grew on his head and each woman had to pay a breast tax. The tax defaulters were subjected to inhuman punishments. The series of these iniquitous taxes, fines and gifts imposed heavy burden on the depressed sections of the society.

The position of women was most distressing. Women held a low position in the society. The birth of a girl was unwelcome, her marriage a burden and her widowhood inauspicious. The family was dominated by the male members. The absence of education among women was the main cause for their low status in the society. Parents would not give education to their daughters due to the existence of some blind beliefs about women education. The women were not allowed to move freely in society. The women of lower castes including the Tiyyas were not allowed to cover the upper parts of their body. The low caste woman must expose her breast at the approach of the Brahmins. Otherwise she will be regarded as immoral. The custom of the low caste women going into Nambudiri illams removing the upper garment

73 K. Saradamoni, n. 44, p.34.
75 K.P Padmanabha Menon, n. 45, p. 201.
was strictly observed throughout Kerala.\textsuperscript{76} The low caste women were compelled to have sexual relationship with Nambudiri and Nair landlords.

There was no uniform system of inheritance among the Hindus. Majority of the Brahmins followed makkathayam or matrilineal system of inheritance while the Kshatriyas and the ruling samantans, Nairs, Tiyyas and some other backward classes in Malabar followed marumakkathayam or matrilineal system of inheritance.\textsuperscript{77} According to marumakkathayam system, the inheritance was traced through female line or a man's legal heirs were his sister's children. The children had to be looked after by mother's family and the paternal wealth and prosperity was never given to the children and wife. The husband was only a 'genitor' for the taravad of his wife, which maintained their sons and daughters.\textsuperscript{78} The marumakkathayam system caused considerable tensions and discontent among the members of the family.\textsuperscript{79} Men and women, who would have formed industrious and independent families, were now huddled together in a huge camp called taravad house. It destroyed individuality and sense of responsibility. It could not stand the advance of education and civilization.\textsuperscript{80}

The Hindu society also suffered from economic impoverishment arising from the wasteful expenditure connected with the observance of

\textsuperscript{77} M.S.A Rao, \textit{n.13}, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{78} P. Chandramohan, \textit{n.28}, p. 457.
\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Report of the Malabar Marriage commission with Enclosures and Appendices}, Madras, 1891, pp. 38-40.
irrational social customs such as talikettukallyanam, tirandukuli, pulikudi etc. Many Hindu middle class families were economically ruined as a result of these unnecessary and costly ceremonies. These ceremonies prevailed mainly among the Kshatriyas, Ambalavasis, Nairs and on a small scale among the Tiyyas, Kammalas, Mukkuvas, Karisams and other castes.  

Talikettukalyanam or talitying ceremony is somewhat analogous to what a Devadasi undergoes before she begins her profession. Talikettukaliyanam was performed on a girl or a batch of girls between the ages of 11 and 13. In a recent case in Calicut there were 27 girls underwent the process at the same auspicious hour under the same roof. The ceremony prolongs for four days in the case of well-to-do families.

The Kanisan, the village astrologer, was consulted for the auspicious day and hour of the ceremony. Erecting of the pandal, a temporary shed, was an elaborate work marshalling the labour of many people. The pandal was decorated with cloth, garlands, lamps and palm leaves. The Brazier supplied the standing oil lamps required for the ceremony and the Chaliyas, the wicks. After entering the pandal erected for the purpose, the bridegroom is conducted to a seat of honour and there his feet are washed by the brothers of the girls, who receives a pair of cloths on the occasion. The astrologer shouts the

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muhurtham (auspicious hour) and the manavalan\textsuperscript{84} (bridegroom) ties tali (a small piece of gold or other metal, like a locket on a string) around the girls neck. The services of a Nambudiri were registered to tie the tali for the girls amongst some royal families and rich Nairs. The celebration of the ritual was accompanied by much pomp and display. Inside the pandal dancing, music and other amusements were performed as part of the ceremony.\textsuperscript{85} After the ceremony a feasting ('Ayani Unu') of guests and others takes place. According to the custom, a marumakkathayam girl must undergo the talikettu ceremony before she attains puberty. The assumption was that with the tali tying the girl had become an eligible bride. The tali-tier had no right to cohabit with the girl. After the ceremony he receives a suitable present and departs.\textsuperscript{86} Talikettukaliyanam had no legal sanction. In fact it was a mock marriage and a lot of money was wasted on this marriage.

The puberty ceremony or Tirandukuli is another important ceremony generally performed in the society. It was a public declaration that the girl had reached the age of maturity.\textsuperscript{87} When the menstruation occurs for the first time, the chorus of women of her family inform this to the neighbours by making a loud musical sound. The ceremony was conducted at the house of the pubertied girl. It lasts for four days during which the girl the is kept in a separate room under pollution. According to the custom, seeing the sky, a

\textsuperscript{84} T.K. Gopalpanikker, \textit{n}. 42, p. 143.
\textsuperscript{86} Edgar Thurston, \textit{n}. 38, p. 326.
\textsuperscript{87} P. Bhaskaranunni, \textit{n}. 64, p. 339.
crow or a cat in these four days was inauspicious to a pubertied girl. On the third day the girl's relatives are treated to a splendid feast. In the fourth day, the girl is taken to bath in a pond where she takes cloth from the washer women or Vannathi and this is called 'Vannathimattu'. Amongst the cherumars and the hill tribes, the girl is usually put in a separate hut for seven days. Songs and devil dances often form part of the ritual of purification. Pulikudi or the drinking of tamarind juice is a ceremony performed during pregnancy. The Pulikudi is variously performed in the fifth, seventh or ninth month of pregnancy. On the auspicious day and hour selected by the village astrologer for this ceremony, the brother takes a little of tamarind juice in a jack leaf folded like a spoon, and let it run down the blade of a knife into his sister's (pregnant women) mouth. He does this three times. The ceremony ends with a feast to all relatives, neighbours and friends.

The institution of marriage was associated with the social evils such as child marriage, polygamy and polyandry. Polygamy was common among the Nambudiris. The Nambudiris regardless of their age or consideration of marital happiness married a number of times in return for high dowries. The dowry system impoverished even the richest families. The customs and practices observed at the time of marriage, birth and death of a person also were absolutely absurd and irrational. The traditions of a mythical nature exerted a powerful influence upon the lives of the people of Malabar.

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88 C.A. Innes, n. 21, p. 165.
89 T.K. Gopalpanikker, n. 42, p. 54.
belief in the mythical accounts of demons or evil spirits and monsters were very common in Malabar. The society also practiced various kinds of primitive worships like serpent worship, hero worship, ancestor worship, worship of trees etc. The serpent worship was especially common in Malabar. The people worshipped the serpent offering it milk, eggs, fruits etc.\(^91\)

It was the deplorable social condition that paved the way for the emergence of social reform movements in Malabar during the later half of the 19\(^{th}\) century. The socio-religious reform movements in other parts of India also made their entry into Malabar. Among them the Theosophical Society entered first in Malabar. The first branch of the society was opened at Palakkad in 1882.\(^92\) Later its activities spread to Vatakara, Calicut, Kannur, Manjeri, Ponnani and other places in Malabar. The society under the leadership of Mrs. Annie Bessant organised the educated and modern minded youths and started the work for reforming the Malabar society. Its emphasis on the unity of god, human brotherhood, and opposition to caste inequalities attracted the attention of the leaders of polluting castes. The Tiyya leaders like Mitavadi Krishnan, Murkoth Kumaran and Rarichan Moopan became the members of the society and cooperated with its activities. Manjeri Rama Iyer,


an ardent follower of Annie Bessant was another prominent figure associated with the activities of the Theosophical Society in Malabar.\footnote{Mathrubhumi, 6 December, 1927.}

The Theosophists campaigned against social evils and worked for the education of women in Malabar. The ‘Sanathan Dharmam' magazine started from Calicut in 1911 was the mouthpiece of the Society in Kerala. In 1914 Bessant organised a group of people called 'stalwarts' to fight against the inequalities in society. The Society organised 'misrabhojanam' or 'interdining' at its auditorium ie 'Annie Hall' in Calicut. It also started a school for panchamas at Palakkad. Mrs. Bessant viewed that the closing of certain roads to polluting castes was a shame to the Hindu community. She criticised the doubledealing of Hindus and said that without sharing the benefits of present rights and liberties, the Indians had no right to ask for freedom.\footnote{K. Maheswaran Nair, "Keraleeya Navothanavaum Mathanaveekarana Samoohika Parishkarana Prasthanangalum" in K.S. Sreekumar (Ed), 
Samskara Keralam Quarterly, (Mal.), Thiruvananthapuram, April-June, 1997, p. 49.}

Brahmasamaj began its activities in Malabar with the establishment of its branch at Calicut in 1898. Dr. Ayyathan Gopalan was the moving spirit behind this venture. Brahmasamaj being the advocates of monotheism, universalism and human dignity worked for the eradication of social evils and the uplift of the untouchables.\footnote{K. Balakrishna Kurup, Kozhikodinte Charithram, (Mal.), Kozhikode, 2006, p. 176.} They were against the denial of the basic rights of the lower sections of the Hindu society. They gave importance to the education of the depressed classes and started Panchama School in
Calicut. They led the depressed classes through the roads where entry was
denied to them. The Keerthanas of the Samaj propagated the ideology of
religious harmony and monotheism. Kallingal Rarichan Moopan, Advocate
C. Krishnan, Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, Vagbhatananda and Manjeri
Rama Iyer co-operated with the activities of the Brahmasamaj. Its ideology
influenced the social reform activities of Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi and
Vagbhatananda. Though the Samaj did not flourish well at the organisational
level its impact on later social reform movements was tremendous.

Ramakrishna Mission was another important organisation, which gave
importance to the eradication of social evils, upliftment of depressed classes,
emancipation of women and promotion of widow's remarriage. The mission
began its activities in Malabar by starting an asram at Calicut in 1913. Later
in 1915 another branch of the Ramakrishna mission asram was started at
Koyilandy. The mission believed that service to humanity was the real
worship of god. The mission urged the people to imbibe the spirit of liberty,
equality and free thinking. The Mission started schools, hospitals and
widow homes attached to its asrams in Malabar. They admitted all sections of
childrens into the schools irrespective of caste, and the hospitals gave medical
treatment at free of cost. The mission also conducted interdining for reducing
the spirit of caste system.

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96 M. Achuthan, *Swathanthriya Samaravum Malayala Sahityavum* (Mal.),


The work of the Arya Samaj against untouchability and the rigidities of caste system are immemorable in the social reform history of Malabar. The Arya Samajists started their activities in Malabar during the period of Malabar Rebellion. They toured every nook and corner of the affected areas and gave relief to riot victims by opening relief camps at different places and distributing food items, dress and other materials. The main objectives of the Samaj was to bring back those Hindus who were converted to other religions. But the Pulaya converts to Islam fearing the practice of pollution refused to come back to the Hindu religion. It opened the eyes of the samajists and they began their activities against pollution and other social disabilities in the Hindu religion. The Samaj organised a struggle against the restrictions imposed on low castes to walk through the streets of Kalpathi Agrahara in Palakkad. The premises of the Tali Temple at Calicut was another centre of activity of the Arya Samaj. The low caste Hindus were not permitted to do work in the temple premises because of pollution. The Samaj interfered in the matter and they through persuasion and propaganda partially succeeded to change the minds of orthodox Hindus. But they could not win the battle of temple entry. The Samaj also organised interdining as a challenge to caste system and untouchability. Though the Arya Samajists did not have any concrete programmes for the uplift of the depressed classes, their movement undoubtedly served much in strengthening the sense of self-respect among the depressed classes in Malabar.

99 Mathrubhumi, 26 January, 1930.
The Servants of India Society (SIS) was another important organisation that worked among the depressed classes in Malabar. It took up the cause of education, rural reconstruction and social reform. The SIS started its work in Malabar as a relief agency after the Malabar Rebellion starting its centre at Calicut. A delegation of SIS under the leadership of G.K. Devdhar visited the affected areas and conducted relief work. The SIS constituted Devdhar Malabar Reconstruction Trust (DMRT). The trust worked for the uplift of depressed classes by imparting education to them. The DMRT schools were started at Tanur, Pavur Kunnu and Eranjipalam. The DMRT Higher Elementary School at Tanur was an important centre of the social reform activities of the region.\textsuperscript{100} The SIS used bhajans to create awareness among the people. In the campaign against social evils the SIS and Harijan Sevak Sangh worked hand in hand.

The teachings of the great saint and social reformer, Sree Narayana Guru have had a tremendous influence on the social, religious and cultural life of Malabar. Sree Narayana movement made its entry into Malabar during the early decades of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Sree Narayana Guru was born in an Ezhava family at Chempazhanthi, near Trivandrum on 26 August 1856 and was given the name Narayanan which led to his being known by the diminutive 'Nanoo'. Narayana Guru acquired deep knowledge in Malayalam, Sanskrit and Tamil at a very early age and later wrote a number of works in these languages. His deep knowledge in Vedanta and Upanishads made him an original thinker in...\textsuperscript{100} Aravind Sharma, Modern Hindu Thought- The Essential Texts, New Delhi, 2002, p. 215.
South India. He married at the age of 26 but did not lead a normal family life. He left home and became a seeker of spirituality. Subsequently he took to Sanyasa and led the life of a wandering mendicant. He travelled through the length and breadth of South India. During this time he mingled with the people of all religions, castes and sects.

Sree Narayana Guru revolted against Brahmin ascendancy and strove to mitigate the rigors of caste. His mission was to liberate the people from the chains of caste, burdensome customs and traditions. He considered caste system as the greatest evil that seemed to be a threat for humanity. According to him whatever may be the difference in faith, dress or language all people belong to the same caste. He enunciated the famous dictum, 'One caste, One religion, One god for man'. Guru also said, 'whatever be one's religion, it is enough if the individual becomes good.' As an advocate of unity and equality in society he preached the imperative need for tolerance and goodwill among all communities. He campaigned against the observance of customary rituals and ceremonies. He was an advocate of inter-dinings and inter-marriages as a means of breaking down the barriers of caste.

Sree Narayana Guru set up shrines dedicated to Siva as a parallel system to that of the caste Hindus who denied the entry of low castes in their temples. The first temple was established on Sivarathri day in 1888 at

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Aruvippuram in Neyyattinkara taluk. His right as an Ezhava to consecrate temple was questioned by the orthodox Hindus. He replied that “I have installed only an Ezhava Siva”. This was the beginning of his mission to reform the man, the community and the society as well from within. He later discouraged the worship of idols and substituted mirrors in certain temples so that the worshippers might remember the truth as we are, so are our gods too. Sree Narayana Guru's works were closely associated with the SNDP Yogam, the representative organisation of the Ezhavas formed in 1903.

The waves of Sree Narayana movement highly influenced the Tiyya elites of Malabar. In July 1906 a meeting of Tiyya elites was held at Tellicherry to consider matters regarding the progress of their community. The meeting formed an association known as Sri Jnanodaya Yogam and decided to construct a temple. Sree Narayana Guru consecrated the Jagannatha Temple at Tellicherry on 13 February 1908. He also consecrated the Sreekandeswara Temple in Calicut and Visweswara Temple in Palakkad constructed by the Tiyya elites in these regions. The Tiyyas in Cannanore formed an association known as Bhagavat Bhakti Pradipa Yogam in 1917. The Yogam constructed the Sundareswara Temple in Cannanore and it was consecrated by Sree Narayana Guru. These temples served as a symbol of caste solidarity among the members of the Tiyya community in Malabar.

104 C.K. Kareem, Kerala and Her Culture- An Introduction, Trivandrum, 1971, p. 46.
106 Champadan Vijayan and Sreedharan Champad, Uthtaraparvam (Mal.), Tellicherry, 1977, p. 35.
Thus Sree Narayana Guru succeeded in kindling a new spirit among the educated Tiyyas of Malabar.

The social reform movement led by the organisations like Theosophical Society, Brahmasamaj, Ramakrishna Mission, Arya Samaj and Servants of India Society had only marginal effect on the social life of Malabar. They did not flourish well at the organisational level. They accepted the importance of social reform on an ideological level. They did not have any concrete programme for the social and economic uplift of the untouchables. The Sree Naryana movement also did not gain deep roots in Malabar society. They oppressed the low castes as vehemently as the caste Hindus oppressed them. They denied entry to the depressed classes into the temples constructed by them\(^{107}\). It was only through a prolonged struggle that the depressed classes were allowed to enter the temples consecrated by Sree Narayana Guru in Malabar. They also did not allow the castes below them to walk through the streets in their localities. The Tiyya elites in Malabar were not ready to make links with the depressed classes. They gave prime importance for improving their ritual and social status more than to the social and economic uplift of the untouchables as a whole. Thus the role of Sree Narayana movement in the social reform activities in Malabar is not so remarkable.

The last decades of the 19\(^{th}\) century marked a remarkable period in the history of social renaissance in Malabar. The custom-ridden society

\(^{107}\) *Mathrubhumi*, 27 March, 1923.
underwent revolutionary changes. A spirit of reform swept over the whole of Malabar. A number of social movements, either reformative, or transformative had taken place during the last decades of the 19th century and the subsequent decades. The works of Basel Evangelical Mission, the thoughts and reform works of intellectual leaders like Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, Vagbhatananda and Swami Ananda Theerthan apart from the influence of the nationalist movement succeeded in bringing about social change in Malabar.
CHAPTER III
THE BASEL EVANGELICAL MISSION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN MALABAR

The advent of Protestant Christian missionaries in the beginning of the 19th century marked a turning point in the history of Kerala. In their zeal for spreading education, abolishing slavery and forced labour, fight for women's liberation and eradication of caste difference and untouchability they became precursors of social reform movements in Kerala. The Basel Evangelical Mission played a significant role to bring social change in the 19th century Malabar. Although the activities of Christian missionaries aimed primarily at either the protection of the interests of European capitalists or at the proselytization of the members of the backward community to Christianity, their activities did spread enlightenment among certain sections of society. It had also resulted in dispelling, to an extent, superstitions among the people of Malabar and engendering in them a feeling of self respect and equality.¹ Overall, the Basel Mission did the pioneering effort to the modernisation of the Malabar society.

The Birth of Basel Mission

The Basel Evangelical Missionary Society was formed in connection with the despotic rule of the French Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte. In the

early days of the 19th century the European nations were trembling under the boots of the ever progressing, relentless army of Napoleon. All major European powers desperately needed the defeat of Napoleon. So in order to fulfill their dream Russia, Germany, Austria and Britain formed military alliance in 1814. This was formed at Basel, a small town in Switzerland, and they stayed there for a few weeks awaiting a better chance to attack Napoleon. The French General automatically reacted and warned that his canons would blow up Basel to bits. At this desperate moment, a group of Christian believers in the allied force met at Basel for a group prayer. From there they took a solemn oath that if the united force would ever win the battle against Napoleon they might form an evangelical mission for conducting missionary activities and charitable work all over the world.

Finally in June 1815 Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo and it left a deep impression in the minds of the soldiers who took the oath. As a fulfillment of their oath they decided to form a missionary society. Thus on 25th of September 1815, a new missionary society, ie the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, was formed under the Presidentship of Rev. Nicholas van Brunn. But the society is better known as German Basel Evangelical Society

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3 Ibid., p.232.
5 26th Annual Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission Society in South West Coast of India for the year 1865, Mangalore, 1866, p.11.
because behind its formation, the initiative was taken by German soldiers. Gradually its headquarters was shifted from Basel to Germany. In the initial period one of the primary aims of this society was to train young men in the task of carrying the gospel of peace to the different parts of the world. So on 26 August 1816 a theological college was opened under the auspices of the mission committee. Within six years this small college became the biggest seminary in Europe. So when the contributions increased, naturally the Basel Mission Society was emboldened to establish missions of their own in Africa, the West coast of India and China.⁷

**Basel Mission in English Colonies**

Till 1833, the English East India Company was not ready to allow any mission society in India except the English based societies. In 1833, the British Parliament passed the Charter Act, by which all missionary societies belonging to any country were given permission to work independently in all British colonies including India.⁸ Earlier to the activities of the Basel Evangelical Mission, the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Church Missionary Society (CMS) had engaged in missionary activities in Travancore and Cochin. A striking feature common to all missionary activities was that they worked among the weaker and depressed sections of society from where they got the bulk of converts.

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The Basel Mission in Malabar

It was the Basel Mission inspector Blum Hardt who laid the foundation of the Basel Evangelical Mission works in India. In 1834 with the financial assistance of German Prince William the BEM Society sent its first three missionaries viz., Rev Samuel Hebich, Rev. John Lehnar and Rev. Cristoph Grener to India. The missionaries landed at Calicut on 13th October 1834 and travelling northwards commenced the work with their head quarters at Mangalore in South Canara. Consequently missionary activities were started in three districts of West Coast comprising Bombay, Karnataka and Malabar with Mangalore as its headquarters. When compared with other missionary societies, the BEM had many peculiarities and more limitations. Unlike that of other missionary groups the BEM had never tried to convert anybody forcibly and they never tried to impose any particular religion upon them. Instead they only tried to teach Jesus Christ's principles along with other social humanistic and moral values.

At the time of the arrival of Christian missionaries the social system of Malabar was well entrenched in the principle of caste hierarchy and differentiation. The status of the individual in society was determined by the norms of caste. The traditional institution of caste system, feudalistic land ownership and various the social evils like untouchability and unapproachability etc., were prevalent in the society. The higher castes

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9 E.J. Edona, n.7, p.16.
enjoyed all the rights and privileges, while the lower castes were deprived of them. The lower castes had no freedom to enter into the temples. They were not allowed to walk through the public spaces and education was almost denied to them. The degraded condition of the lower caste people invited the attention of the early missionaries. The Basel Missionaries approach towards the people attracted many low castes and they felt that conversion to Christianity could liberate them from the then existing social bondages and discriminations. Therefore, many low caste people were converted to Christianity: The conversion made them independent of caste restrictions and untouchability. Now they could not only walk along the road without the fear of polluting the upper castes, but also could go near to the brahmanic temples, both were otherwise restricted. Also, newly emerging public places like post offices and schools were made open to the converted. The freedom enjoyed by the converted people attracted many low caste people into Christianity.  

To attract more people to Christianity, the missionaries of Basel Mission thought that, social changes need to be brought about by extending educational facilities to the low caste people. With this objective they started educational institutions in different parts of Malabar. The pioneers in thought in Malabar were the missionaries like Dr. Hermen Gundert, Rev. Samuel Hebbik, Rev. J. Hermelink and Rev: John Michael Frist. They paid great attention to the educational efflorescence of Malabar. Dr. Herman Gundert

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was the outstanding figure among them and he was considered as the founder of the Basel Evangelical Mission Church and its educational institutions in Malabar.¹²

**Herman Gundert:**

Dr. Herman Gundert arrived with Mr. Grovers in Madras in July 1836. Herman Gundert was an eminent linguistic scholar and soon he got familiarity with Indian languages. During his early period of missionary work in India he carried out an active work in Madras as a strong worker of the Church Mission Society at Tirunelveli.¹³ While he was engaged in work, Gundert received an invitation to join the Basel Mission at Mangalore. At the Mangalore headquarter of Basel Mission, he was deputed as the first missionary to Malabar. Thus he moved to Tellicherry where he established the first unit of Basel Evangelical Mission.¹⁴

**Basel Mission and the Introduction of Modernisation of Schools in Malabar:**

As we know, after the Macaulay's minute of 1835 the British opted English as the medium of instruction in India. Thus the Indians got a chance to study English and western education. Its introduction into Malabar was

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done by the Basel Mission.\textsuperscript{15} But the main intention of the Mission in introducing English education was not devoid of their political interests. Therefore, through imparting modern education the Missionaries were trying to proselytize the lower caste to Christianity and also were creating a new local petty bureaucracy. It is clearly stated in the missionary reports that the mission always believed schools as a powerful force for the evangelisation of India.\textsuperscript{16} The prevailing social system in Malabar forbade the lower castes from attaining proper education. Therefore, the school established and run by the Basel Mission admitted all irrespective of their caste or religion. The educational works started by the Basel Evangelical Mission attracted the low caste people in Malabar and their schools helped to remove the barriers of caste from the Malabar Society\textsuperscript{17}

The educational activities of Basel Mission served as a model for the British government to follow. The school buildings were solid, airy and spacious where children sat on benches and used desks and wrote on slates and paper. There were text books to learn.\textsuperscript{18} The Basel Mission gave importance to elementary education. Dr. Hermen Gundert was instrumental in initiating this activities. He established an elementary vernacular school at

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\textsuperscript{15} S. Achuthavarier, \textit{Kerala Samskaram}, (Mal.), Thiruvananthapuram, 2003, p.189.  \\
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{64th Report of Basel Evangelical Mission Society for the year 1903}, Mangalore, 1904, p.1.  \\
\textsuperscript{17} Kerala History Association, \textit{Keralacharithram (Mal.)}, Vol.I, Kochi, 1973, p.1202.  \\
\end{flushleft}
Tellicherry on 14 May 1839. In the beginning there were only 12 students in the school. Gundert visited both bungalows and huts, met the parents of children in person and explained them the necessity of educating their children. As a result of his incessant efforts students belonging to all communities began to enroll in his school. Later he started another elementary school at Nettur near Tellicherry. As a recognition to his effort, in 1852, the Madras government appointed Dr. Gundert as the first School Inspector in Malabar and South Canara.

At school, Gundert's main intention was to lay a proper literary foundation in Malabar. He taught Science, History, Geography, Malayalam, English and Bible in the school.

**Samuel Hebbik and other schools:**

Another great Basel Missionary and architect of English education in Malabar was Rev: Samuel Hebbik. Like Gundert, he also started his work at Mangalore. Then he was insisted to stay at Kannur by the authorities. From Kannur he extended his works to the nearby areas such as Taliparamba, Sreekandapuram, Chirakkal, Thayyil and later in Palakkad. Under his initiative, a primary school was opened at Bernessery near Tellicherry in 1841. He appointed a popular Tiyya man named Ambu Gurukkan as

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Malayalam teacher in the new school and it helped to promote education among the Tiyyas of Kannur and nearby areas.\textsuperscript{22}

The support of the British aided the Basel Mission in spreading modern education in Malabar. With the help of the British, the mission started a school in Tellichery in March 1856 with 74 students. A Parsy student gave donation of Rs.1500/- . Then the school was known as BEM Parsy school.\textsuperscript{23} When we examine the mission period from 1845 to 1899 we can see the growth of mission schools in Malabar area. Mission schools were started in Kasaragod, Taliparamba, Melparamba, Ottappalam, Vaniyamkulam, Vadakara, Koyilandy, Koothuparamba, Kannur, Payyanur, Palakkad, Vadakancheri, Kozhikode and Tellichery etc. In 1900 about 48 Basel Mission schools were functioning in different parts of Malabar.\textsuperscript{24} Many schools started by the Basel Mission are still functioning as important educational centres.

The Malabar Christian College situated at the centre of Kozhikode city was the important educational contribution of the Basel Mission. The Malabar Christian College was developed from a primary school established by the mission at Kallayi in 1848.\textsuperscript{25} The school was later shifted to Calicut city with the intention of attracting students in and around the city. The institution was upgraded as a Middle school in 1872 and a high school in 1879. It was

\textsuperscript{22} P.K. Gopalakrishnan, \textit{n.11}, p.507.
\textsuperscript{23} Interview with Rev. Dr. G. S. Francis, BEM Church, Tellichery, 22. 05. 2004.
upgraded as a second grade college in 1907. On the breaking out of First World War in 1914, the Basel missionaries had to give the work and leave the country. The college was then being managed by the local Christians. In 1919, Madras Christian College took over the institution and it was known as the Basal Mission College. Later it was renamed as the Malabar Christian College.

Edward Brennen:

Another important name in the history of the development of the Basel Mission education in Malabar was Mr. Edward Brennen, a Basel Missionary and a master attender in the harbour. He deposited Rs.12,000 for starting a free school for giving modern education to all persons irrespective of religion, caste and creed. The school was opened at Tellicherry in 1862. Since its opening the school has passed through many vicissitudes. In 1866 the school was taken over by Basel Mission and named as BEM Brennen school. Basel Mission gave up the school in 1871. So from 1872 onwards the school was known as Brennen District school. In 1891 the Brennen school was affiliated to the Madras University as a second grade college. The government took over the college in June 1919. In 1925 a secondary training school for teachers was amalgamated with the college. In 1947, the Brennen college was upgraded as a first grade college. The college produced many famous

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26 Scaria Zacharia, n.19, p.21.
27 Malabar Christian College Calendar, Kozhikode, 1998-99, p.3.
28 C.A.Innes ,n.25, p.297..
scholars and contributed much to the development of education in North Malabar. The Basel Mission at Palakkad was an out station of Kannur. The mission started Primary schools in Mankara, Panayur and Vadakancheri. In 1866 the BEM started a high school at Palakkad and later it became the well-known Government Victoria College.

**Girls’, Vernacular, and Training schools:**

The Basel Mission gave sufficient encouragement for female education. The Basel missionaries were the pioneers to start female education in Malabar. They started a number of girls' school in all important towns in Malabar. The elementary education was made compulsory for female converts. The mission opened two types of schools for female education, ie. Boarding schools and Day schools. The first girls' school of the BEM was opened in 1839 at Nettur near Tellicherry. Julie Gundert, wife of Dr. Herman Gundert opened an English school and Female Day school at Tellicherry in 1840. A school for girls was started at Kozhikode in 1882 and Vadakara in 1886. In Kasaragod region the BEM opened nine schools for girls. The girls were taught reading, writing and also sewing and knitting. As a result of the work of the Basel Mission a large number of girls who were under the yoke of caste rigidity got chance to receive proper education by refusing the social customs of that time.

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32 Albresht Frenz and Scaria Zacharia, n.12, p.85.
The BEM also started Anglo-Vernacular schools where elementary education was imparted with little English education. The first Anglo-vernacular school was opened at Calicut in 1859 and later at Tellicherry, Palakkad and Cannanore. These schools later faced many difficulties due to the establishment of government schools. Subsequently mission closed Anglo Vernacular schools. The middle schools started by the mission also raised the standard of education. In the middle school instructions were given in religious and elementary subjects. The first middle school was started at Tellicherry in 1863. Most of the students in the middle schools came from the orphanages. The students who were promoted from the middle schools were admitted in the training schools of the mission.

Basel missionaries were pioneering in founding boarding schools in Malabar. The boarding schools were started at Cannanore, Calicut and Tellichery. Besides this the Mission started Nursery schools, Sunday schools, Day schools, Parochial schools, Night schools, Seminaries and orphanages etc. as part of their evangelical works in Malabar. The students in these institutions were given instructions in Bible history, church history, geography, Arithmetic etc. By aiming at the upliftment of lower castes such as Cherumans, Parayans, Pulayas, Karuvans, Nayadis, Paniyans etc. the

mission started Panchama schools. In 1900, there were about 22 primary schools for Panchama children in Malabar.

Another important achievement of the BEM was the establishment of a training school for teachers. The first school of this category was established at Tellicherry in 1865. Those who were successful in the middle school were selected for study in these training schools. The mission training school trained men for elementary higher grade teachership. Only the Christian students were admitted into these schools. The main motive behind starting the training school seemed to be the replacement of non-christians teachers by Christian teachers in BEM schools. The mission started the Theological Seminary at Nettur for the theological education of malayalee candidates.

The industrial schools were another important accomplishment of the Basel Mission. The BEM started industrial school at Manjeri where the poor people got free boarding and lodging. There they underwent a three year course in welding, carpentry and spray painting. In the field of adult education the Basel Mission played a great role for creating social consciousness among the rural masses. The mission opened schools for adults at Calicut and Tellichery. The Mission also started education camps in different places and gave education to the workers and lower classes.

34 Devadas Madai, "Basel Mission Tulunattil' in 'Samanwyam'-Youth Fellowship CSI St. Mary's Church, Kulappuram, Souvenir, Kulappuram, 1997, p.34.
Press and print culture:

The Basel Mission used press as a medium for the propagation of Christian religious faith. This indirectly strengthened the development of Malayalam language and literature. In 1840, the mission established a press at Balmetta in Mangalore, where religious and educational books were printed in both Indian and foreign languages. Soon the BEM established a new press in Malabar which, in effect, inaugurated a new stage in the development of Malayalam language and literature in Malabar. In February 1846 Dr. Herman Gundert opened a lithographic press at Nettur near Tellicherry. The Mission published a Malayalam fortnightly magazine called 'Keralopakari in May', 1874 for the circulation in Malabar church. Keralopakari was printed by using letter press printing method. Besides the religious news, Keralopakari published world news, news on weather, agriculture etc. The introduction of sophisticated printing technology and the publication of text books for the schools by the Mission were great boost to the development of education in Malabar.

Dr. Herman Gundert made significant contributions to several branches of Malayalam language and literature. He devoted more attention to literary and educational work. He at first contacted local people like Ooracheri Gurukkal of Chokli near Tellicherry and learned considerable knowledge in

38 A. Sreedhara Menon, Kerala History and Its Makers, Madras, 1990, p.207.
Malayalam. He also learned Tamil and Kannada languages which helped him to make a comparative analysis of three Dravidian languages.

Herman Gundert was considered as the pioneer of Malayalam journalism. He started the first Malayalam monthly 'Rajyasamacharam' in 1847 and the publication of it continued till December 1850. The journal was more interested in publishing news related to Christianity, religious propaganda, and conversion. Simultaneous to the publication of Rajyasamacharam he, with the help of Fr. Miller, began publishing another monthly named 'Paschimodayam' in October 1847. Paschimodayam was a Malayalam science magazine meant mainly to publish articles with the political interest of annihilated the superstitious believes on sun, moon and planets existed in the minds of the people of Malabar. Paschimodayam also dealt with the subjects like history, religion, geography, and astrology.

Gundert also wrote and published works dealing with aspects of astronomy, geography, kerala history and folklore. He published Bible stories in Malayalam and translated the Old Testament and the New Testament into Malayalam. In 1851 he compiled the first Malayalam Grammar book. Among his other works include Kerala Pazhama, Keralolpathi, Malayalarajyam and Pathamala.

The most monumental work of Gundert is the Malayalam - English Dictionary popularly known as the 'Gundert Nigandu' published in 1872. In

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40 Devadas Madai, n.37, p.17.
the preparation of this work, he made use of all the available Malayalam works, both published and unpublished. It showed the humanity and strength of Malayalam language. It is more scientific and authentically documented and gives good reference on the etymology of words. Therefore his work immensely helps both native and foreign students who wanted to pursue the Malayalam language. In addition to these, Gundert also authored texts books of history, Malayalam, literature, geography, astronomy and a few other subjects taught in the Mission schools in Malabar. In those times when printed books were not in common use Gundert's works contributed much to the development of Malayalam language and literature.

The contribution of the Basel Mission in the field of education in Malabar is praiseworthy. Their involvement brought about changes in the educational and socio-economic realms of Malabar society. The English education helped the people to improve their knowledge of the world and imbibe modern western ideas. The spread of educational facilities made the lower caste people's rapid advancement in social scale. In the schools of the Basel Mission almost every communities was represented, therefore, they were able to bring changes in the attitude towards castes among the students of Mission schools.

41 Chummar Choondal, n.13, p.27.
44 P. Chandramohan, n.1, pp.261-262.
The Tiyyas’ of Malabar were a prominent group who best made use of the facilities provided by the Mission. By enrolling themselves into Mission Schools the Tiyya boys and girls acquired new skills required to survive in the age of colonialism and after.\textsuperscript{45} They got employment in colonial bureaucratic structures which also resulted in the improvement of their social and economic positions. Colonial documents shows that by the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century several bureaucratic postions became a sort of monopoly for the Tiyya community. The highest post that a native could reach in those days of British administration was that of a Deputy Collector. It was a Tiyya of Tellichery named Churayi Kannan who first became a Deputy Collector.\textsuperscript{46} Tiyya men were also appointed as Tahsildars, subjudges, doctors, lawyers, teachers, and other employees in the colonial government services.

The educated Tiyya were instrumental in beginning journals, both in English and Malayalam, to spread the idea of social reform through education and bureaucratic services. The 'Malabar Spectator' later known as 'West coast Spectator' edited by Puvatan Raman Vakil and 'Mitavadi' by C. Krishnan were well known among them.\textsuperscript{47} The mission appointed qualified low caste teachers to impart knowledge to the children in the Basel Mission schools. Some of the English educated teachers renowned for their scholarship were the members of the Tiyya community.

\textsuperscript{45} Murkot Kunhappa, \textit{n}.2, p.236.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Ibid.}, p.86.
Though education among women was a slow process, the encouragement given to female education by the Missionaries inspired some Tiyya women to go for higher education. The first women doctors of Malabar namely Ayyathan Janaki and Murkoth Madhavi were among a few low caste women who had got basic education at the Basel Mission schools.

A job in the government service was much desired in Malabar because it removed the caste grievances of an individual who belonged to an inferior community. The educated Tiyyas who constituted an emerging professional group in Malabar had been comparatively well-placed in economic status with a fixed income. They enjoyed considerable social prestige. Their status and social upliftment was more related to their English education and professions. Gradually the people who got freedom and education from the Mission schools started protests against the social evils like casteism and untouchability. They also questioned the domination of upper classes in all fields of activities in society. Thus the seeds of English education sown by the Christian missionaries and nurtured by the colonial government began to blossom and bare fruits in the form of open resistance against caste domination and discrimination.

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**Basel Mission and Socio-Economic Constructive Activities:**

Apart from the educational work the Basel Mission also gave importance to take up other socio-economic activities for the betterment of

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48 S. Achuthavarier, *n.15*, p.189.

49 K.K.N. Kurup, *n.46*, p.86.
Malabar society. The Mission undertook the economic activities in Malabar mainly to rehabilitate the converts and thereby to increase the social and economic status of the depressed castes. One of the best means that was available to them was commercial and industrial enterprise\textsuperscript{50}. The prevailing laws of inheritance in Malabar prevented the convert to claim his share of property because the property was jointly owned by the members of the family. He was forced to abandon his professional trade ancestral property and also his relatives. In these circumstances the missionaries were compelled to shoulder the responsibility by providing suitable means of livelihood for all converts.

The missionaries made attempts to settle the converts as agriculturists on land which they acquired or bought from the government. But due to the lack of interest and idleness of converts, the agricultural activities ended in failure.\textsuperscript{51} So the Mission decided to withdraw from agricultural field and concentrated on industrial establishments. The industrial establishments operated by the Mission were a unique mode of missionary work in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. The organization of industrial activities was marked by a high level of decentralisation. The Mission tried to implement modernisation through the

\textsuperscript{50} Jayaprakash Raghaviah, \textit{Basel Mission Industries in Malabar and South Canara (1834-1914)- A Study of its Social and Economic Impact}, NewDelhi,1990, p.27.

establishment of factories. Through this they aimed to train the people as independent artisans.\(^{52}\)

The Basel Mission industrial activities became under the central control of the Industrial Commission started by the mission\(^ {53}\). In 1882, the Industrial Commission was amalgamated with the Mission Trading Company. It enabled higher capital investment and expansion of industrial activities in Malabar. The Mission Trading Company undertook the trading activities of the mission. The Basel Mission gave training to converts in traditional crafts like wearing and carpentry with the help of native craftsmen. But this move was not a success. Later the Mission started numerous industrial establishments like tile making, weaving, mechanical workshops, bookbinding, tailoring, blacksmithing, watchmaking etc. in different parts of Malabar.

An important industry started by the Mission was tile making industry. Tile factories sprang up in Malabar under the banner of the 'Malabar Trading Company.'\(^ {54}\) Basel Mission opened tile factories at Puthiyara, Feroke, Kodakkal and Olavakkodu. These industrial establishments provided work for a large number of converts and also for the natives. The manufacture of tiles was years old profession undertaken by a particular caste in this region. The traditional pattern of tilemaking was improved and contemporary know-


\(^{53}\) Jayaprakash Raghaviah, *n.*, p.28.

\(^{54}\) Chummar Choondal, *n.*, p.35.
how was introduced in its manufacture. Bullock power which was previously used in tile factories was replaced by steam power. The Mission factories in Malabar utilised cheap labour potential available at that time.\textsuperscript{55}

The tiles manufactured by the Mission were more advanced than the traditional ones and the Mission introduced new patent in this field. Initially the factories produced flat tiles which are being used for roofing. Subsequently the factories built ridge tiles, sky lights and ventilater grooved sphire tiles, hanging wall tiles, ceiling tiles of many different designs, flooring tiles, chimney bricks, drainage pipes, earth ware, terracotta vases, flower pots etc. All buildings under the Basel Mission such as schools, hospitals, factories etc. were thatched by their own tiles. The products were sold not only in India but also exported to many foreign countries.\textsuperscript{56} In the tile factories 45 percentage of employees are non converts. The tile making industry was the most profitable business ventures of Basel Mission in Malabar.

The weaving and spinning industry established by the Mission also provided job for a large number of converts and natives. The most important of these establishments were opened at Cannanore and Calicut. While smaller branches were started in the rural centres like Chombala and Tellicherry. All the weaving factories were established by the Mission before 1882. The 'Kakki' Mill cloth largely made for uniforms in the armed forces were


\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Census of India},1911,Vol.XII, Madras,1912, p.205.
manufactured by the Basel Mission for first time in India.\textsuperscript{57} The Basel Mission factories differed from the traditional forms of cotton weaving. They imported spinning machinery to India from Europe and it revolutionised textile production. The introduction of Fly shuttle and use of jacquard loom gave a new wave to weaving. It improved local industry based on traditional rooms. For raw materials they introduced scientific method of cotton cultivation. Women were employed in large numbers in the weaving establishments during the early stages. As per the employment record of the weaving units as on 1877, out of the total 392 workers, 216 were woman - all employed in one category, ‘thread makers and spool winders’.\textsuperscript{58} But the weaving establishments did not possess adequate arrangement for the elimination of dust which was very harmful to health. By the first decade of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century a high rate of pulmonary tuberculosis was seen among the labourers.\textsuperscript{59}

The Mission also undertook the industries like mechanical workshops, book binding and printing, carpentry workshops and also trading activities. The mechanical workshops started by the Mission at Calicut and Cannanore conducted the repair works of the machinery of weaving and tile factories.\textsuperscript{60} Its functions were considerably widened in later years. It trained a large

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{58} Jayaprakash Raghaviah, n.50, p.60).
\item \textsuperscript{59} E.J. Edona, n.7, p.151.
\item \textsuperscript{60} 40\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report of Basel Evangelical Mission Society for the year 1879, Mangalore, 1880, p.87.
\end{itemize}
number of apprentices and mechanics. Many of them were able to find employment outside the industrial set up of the Mission. The book binding and printing establishments mainly undertook to print the religious and educational books of the Mission. The carpentary workshop started in 1852 at Calicut trained the converts in carpentary profession.

The country faced severe economic crisis in 1880. A large number of people lost their occupation following famine and diseases. The Mission factories absorbed many of the famine affected people. In the beginning of 20th century Basel Mission was the largest industrial entrepreneur in Malabar. Its eight weaving industrial establishments and seven tile factories gave employment to thousands of Christians and non-Christians. The outbreake of First World War in 1914 caused the cessation of activities of the Basel Mission industries in Malabar.

The Basel Mission's industrial establishments rehabilitated the converts and increased the social and economic status of the depressed castes. The industries started by the Mission led various low castes like Tiyyas and Dalits to achieve a process of social mobility and seek an existence outside their caste based occupations. The Mission industries destroyed the caste barriers existed in the society. The people belongs to different castes lived and worked together in the caste stratified environment of Malabar society. By giving employment to thousands of low caste people they could alleviate poverty and create better living conditions. The important economic impact of the Mission

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61 Jayaprakash Raghaviah, n.50, pp.58-59.
industries was transfer of technology, creation of a skilled labour force and diversification of the economy.

**Health:**

The Basel Mission also undertook social service like providing medical assistance to the needed. At that time, the medical care facilities were very poor in Malabar. There was no organised medical assistance and western medicine was practically neglected. The people of Malabar were highly superstitious and they depended on traditional medicines to cure diseases. Dr. E. Lieben Darfer was the pioneer to organise systematic medical work in Malabar. In 1892 he opened the first Mission hospital at Calicut. In 1903 Mission opened leprosorium at Chevayur near Calicut. It was an asylum for those who had been rejected by the society. The Mission carried out evangelisation works among the lepers. Later Mission dispensaries were opened at Codacal and Vaniyamkulam. Mission also opened a small dispensary at Sultan Bathery in Wynad district for medical work among the tribal people.

In the early years the natives were skeptical towards the Basel Mission medical institutions, therefore, they did not approached it much for medical aid. Later they came for treatment in Basel Mission hospitals. Many natives especially the low caste people benefited with the medical works of Basel Mission. The Basel Mission brought new medicines available at that time in

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Germany and utilised them for charitable purposes. The spread of medical care enabled the pastors and evangelists to maintain good contacts with the people in the villages. Many epidemics like cholera, typhoid, smallpox, tuberculosis and plague were effectively cured in the Mission hospitals. The Mission also created social consciousness about the importance of fatigue, sanitation etc. and through this checked the spread of diseases mainly in coastal areas. The medical works of Mission caused the spread of medical care activities in Malabar.

The Basel Missionaries' relations with the British government paved the way for the emancipation of slaves. The abolition of slavery by the British government brought about great changes in the life of the lower caste people in Malabar. The missionaries educated the slaves on a large scale and they got enlightened by the beginning of the 20\(^\text{th}\) century.\(^{63}\) The Basel Mission made good efforts for the cause of women's liberation. Basel Missionaries took for special care for widows. The widow homes were opened in different parts of Malabar. They also started a fund to care and help the widows. The mission also gave jobs to widows' and education to their children. The missionaries' stand against the dowry system the important social evil also brought great changes in Malabar Society. These efforts of Basel Mission enlightened the life of women. They gained freedom from their traditional chains and freedom to employ themselves. The Basel Mission's social service activities such as the starting of 'Normal Homes' to the destitute children, 'Special Homes' to the mentally and physically

\(^{63}\) R.N. Yesudas, \textit{n.10}, p.199.
handicapped people, Old People's Homes etc. benefited much for the progress of lower class people in Malabar. The Basel Mission introduced new dress and life style to the converts. The abandon of traditional hair style and the wearing of dress according to their will by the converts affected the caste ridden social structure of Malabar.

The Evangelisation policy of the Basel Missionaries had created dislike among the Hindus in Malabar. Though the Evangelists and Utilitarians belonged to same school of thought there were some differences in their political and administrative policies.\textsuperscript{64} Like the Utilitarians, the Basel Missionaries also believed in the racial and cultural superiority of European nations and they were supporters of colonial administration. In general they evaluated Christianity as light and Hinduism as full of darkness.\textsuperscript{65} They criticised and satirised the Hindu festivals and ritual dances, ie, Teyyam, Poorakkali and the festival of Kalpathi (Palghat) etc. The missionaries treated the Teyyams as devil dance. When the wheel of the chariot broke down and the idol capsized during Kalpathi festival, they interpreted the incident as a punishment for mocking the missionaries by the Brahmins.\textsuperscript{66} They prepared the primary reading material in Malayalam on the basis of the gospel. Among the stories, a popular one from the \textit{Panchathantra} was included. The story narrates how a Brahmin carrying sheep for sacrifice, was mocked by some crooked persons that he was carrying a dog. Finally the Brahmin gave up the

\textsuperscript{64} K.K.N. Kurup, \textit{n.8}, p.110.
\textsuperscript{65} \textit{Ibid.}, p.97.
sheep believing that it was a dog. Although the story was didactic, it was against Brahmins. The themes of most of the songs used in the mission schools were biblical in spirit.

The books written by the missionaries were also not free from religious prejudices. The books contained criticism against the native customs and manners. The missionaries had the tendency to establish the superiority of Christianity. They tried to distort history according to their interests. The text books like 'The Malayalam country and History' (1869) states that most of the native people had lost their belief in false gods and idolatry. They accepted such belief due to the fear of others. The historians like K.M. Panikkar had criticised the missionaries for their alliance with colonial masters. According to him, the missionaries were prejudiced and narrow minded in their approach to non-Christian ideas.67

The Basel Evangelical Missionaries had faced resistance from the local rulers, upper caste Hindus and other privileged classes of Malabar Society. The opposition was not organised in a systematic way. In Malabar region the upper caste Hindus, ie., Nambudiris, Nairs and Mappilas disliked the propagation of Christian faith. The English education and freedom given by the Basel Missionaries to low caste people created resentment among upper caste Hindus, because they wanted to bring the lower strata under their hegemony. Compared to the Hindus, the missionary activities were not

spread wide among Muslims.\textsuperscript{68} When conversions increased individual and mass attempts were taken up by the relatives of the concerned individuals to get them back to their religious fold.

\textbf{Resisting the Missionaries:}

The missionaries faced stiff resistance from the natives when the missionaries used to address the natives in local fairs and festivals in Malabar. The festivals of the natives were held every year in the places like Calicut, Cannanore, Payyavur, Taliparamba, Palghat and other places in Malabar. The fairs and festivals formed an essential part in the life of local people where they gathered to see festival, to meet friends and to conduct trade. The Basel Missionary, Rev. Samuel Hebich and his associates visited the festivals of Taliparamba and Payyavur, where they faced joint opposition of the natives. Finally they were forced to withdrew the place. The missionaries also faced the oppositional natives in the Vaniyamkulam and Calicut festival. In Chombala, a young Tiyya woman who resolved to stay in the mission compound was taken forcibly by her relatives. The Mappilas also disliked the propagation of Christianity in their areas. In Panur, near Tellicherry, the Mappilas opposed and questioned the preaching of Christian gospel by the missionaries. When the missionaries when to preach at Panur, the Mappilas also sent an opponent preacher to preach at the same place. The Mappilas in Codacal and Chombala areas also conducted movement against the evangelical works of the Basel Mission.

\textsuperscript{68} K.K.N. Kurup, \textit{n.46}, p.460.
In some places of Malabar, Christians were not given employment in the paddy fields. In Chombala, a landlord offered to a tenant land at low rent if he did not break his caste.\(^{69}\) The Brahmins and other high caste Hindus sent rival preachers to every place where the missionaries preached. In the places like Taliparamba, Palghat etc the Hindu preachers conducted preaching to counteract the activities of missionaries. In the preaching they requested the natives that do not any account become Christians, they attract people by gifts of money, clothes etc and bring them to Christian religion.\(^{70}\) This was resorted to spread a general feeling against the evangelical activities of the missionaries and to resist numerous conversions.

Apart from this, the Basel Missionaries had to face the antagonism of the French government in Mahe and the Roman Catholic missionaries. The activities of the Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj and the Theosophical society in Malabar acted as a counter force to the Basel Mission's activities. The Arya Samaj started Suddhi movement to bring back those Hindus who were converted to other religions. Brahma Samaj made its entry into Malabar in 1898 with the establishment of its branch at Calicut.\(^{71}\) They gave more attention to the depressed castes. Brahma Samaj warned the people not to send their children to mission schools. The Theosophists and the nationalists

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\(^{69}\) K.K.N. Kurup, "The attitude of the missionaries towards the traditional society of South India during the 19\(^{th}\) century," in K.R. Basavraja (Ed.) Proceedings Volume of VII Annual Session of the South Indian History Congress, Quilon, 1988, pp.96-97.


propagated the concept of national education. Annie Besant called upon the Hindus to establish their own schools, as in Mission schools their religion was blasphemed. They opposed the domination of religious ideals in the educational activities of the Basel Mission. They also attacked the prevailing caste system, untouchability and other evils in the society. As part of this religious revival several national institutions were established in different parts of Malabar. The religious revival by the end of the 19th century indirectly caused the rise of nationalism and socio-religious reform movements in Malabar.

The Basel Evangelical Mission suffered a set back with the outbreak of the first world war. Germany was the enemy country of Britain in the first world war and they regarded German missionaries as spies. The British power confiscated all the properties of the Mission and the German missionaries were forced to leave their respective stations. Then the Swiss missionaries took up the properties of the Mission. Later the properties were transferred to a trust called "Mission Trust of South India". In 1919 the Basel Mission church stood affiliated to the South India United Church (SIUC). The SIUC was a union of various protestant churches of South India.

After the second world war, the Basel Mission Church Council in Malabar sent a petition to the home board of Basel Mission to allow them to enter into the union scheme of South Indian Church. As a result the Basel

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72 K.K.N. Kurup, n.8, p.108.
73 Ibid., p.109.
74 E.J. Edona, n.7, p.205.
Mission church joined the Church of South India (CSI) in 1947. The other two Basel Mission churches, in South Canara and Bombay took more time to join the CSI. At present six main stations come under the jurisdiction of the CSI Diocese of North Kerala. The schools established by the Basel Mission during the period function today as CSI BEM schools. Some of the factions in the CSI still carry on disputes regarding the control of properties and management of these educational institutions.

**Conclusion:**

The Basel Evangelical Mission is a landmark in the social, economic cultural and educational activities of Malabar. It laid the foundation for the future development of Malabar. Although evangelisation and spiritual happiness were the proclaimed aims of the Mission, their fight against casteism, superstitions and other social evils resulted in tremendous changes in the attitude and approaches of the people. They helped to improve many low caste people who were condemned by the accident of birth to a caste. The people who sought to escape from caste burden got protection and dignity.

The Basel Mission's involvement in the educational activities brought about a great change in the prevalent Malabar society. The lower caste people got the chances to receive education and it improved their social and economic position. The educated youth began to criticise and fight against the social evils like caste system, untouchability, superstitions, irrelevant traditional beliefs etc. The educational works of Basel Mission caused the
growth of literacy rate in Malabar. The English education helped the people to think about nationalism and freedom and it caused the rise of nationalist movement in Malabar. Many students studied in the Mission schools became the active participants of the national movement in Malabar. The female education influenced the later women liberation movement in Malabar. The educational activities pioneered by the Basel Missionaries forced the government to interfere in the education of the people. So they paved the way for the system of Modern education in Kerala.

The period also marked a new stage in the development of Malayalam language and literature. It not only promoted Christian religious literature but also secular literature related to history, geography and civics. A large number of books written by the missionaries in various subjects helped the development of Modern Education in Malabar. The journals started by the Mission influenced many and by the dawn of the 20th century several native newspapers appeared in Malayalam and many of them spread the spirit of nationalism. The Basel Missionaries were responsible for the economic elevation of lower castes. By providing job to many, the Basel Mission industries improved the living condition of the people. The Basel Mission's social service activities like Medical works, Orphanages, Widow homes, Old people's homes etc. also made advancement in the life of the people of Malabar. The Basel Mission's activities to a extend contributed in eliminating feudalistic social relations in Malabar.

The Basel Evangelical Mission activities awakened the low caste people to a sense of self respect and better living. The mission works helped
the lower caste people to know about the concept of freedom, justice and social equality. They opened the door towards modernity and tried their best to uplift the people to a literate, progressive and organised class. The awakening caused the elevation of a deprived humanity and influenced reform activities of social reformers in Malabar society. Anyhow the Basel Evangelical Mission played a vital role in the modernisation of the traditional Malabar society.
CHAPTER IV
SIVAYOGI: RATIONAL MAN, SPIRITUAL LEADER AND SOCIAL REFORMER

The social change in Malabar during the 19th century had been initiated by the social reform movements. It was the Basel Evangelical missionaries who prepared the ground for such a change through their educational and other activities creating social awareness among the lower castes of Malabar. Thus in the last decades of the 19th century, the unprivileged classes felt a strong desire to challenge the existing social order and structure.1 Towards this end they got the active support and leadership from the social reformers of the time. Among them the spiritual and reformist ideas of Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi deserve special mention.

Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi deserves a prominent place among the social and religious reformers of Malabar. His reform activities are to be understood and accepted with a rational spirit.2 He was an independent thinker, a spiritual leader and a strong rationalist of that time who made it his mission to criticize the drawbacks of the existing social condition.3 Unlike other social renaissance leaders of Kerala, Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi

2 N. Ushadevi, Contribution of Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi to Indian Philosophy, Alathur, 2000, p.11.
rejected the existence of god, idol worship and other traditional customs. The social milieu of Malabar, which was immersed in various outdated customs and beliefs was the subject of deep reflection and concern for Sivayogi. His approach inspired the common man to discriminate between good from evil in every aspect of life.

Karat Govindankutty Menon turned Brahmanda Swami Sivayogi was born on 26 August 1852 in Kollengode, a village in Palakkad district. He was born in a well-to-do Nair Tarvadu as the ninth son of Nani Amma of Karat Nair family and Kunjikrishna Menon of Vallengi Ravunyaram at Kollengode in Palakkad. The members of the Nair families in those days were brought up under the strict discipline of the orthodox Hinduism, where customs and superstitions exerted great influence. But Govindankutty’s thoughts never coincided with the conventional values, though in his early life, the family circumstances had forced him to follow the laws of the orthodox Hinduism by performing daily rituals, devotions to individual idols, offerings and chanting hymns and spells.

After his preliminary studies at home, Govindankutty was enrolled in to the Kollengode Board Elementary School. Then he was sent to study Sanskrit in accordance with the traditional Gurukula system. He studied Sanskrit under Sri Padmanabha Sastrikal of Alampallam, a village near Dharmaraj Adat, *Navothanathinte Suvarnasobhakal*, (Mal.), Thiruvananthapuram, 2006, p.22.


N. Ushadevi, n.2, p.11.

C. Krishnankutty, n.1, p.22.
Kollengode. As an ardent and intelligent student, he could easily master the language. Later he studied various branches of Sanskrit such as Vyakarana, Kavya, Nataka and Alankara under Kudallur Sastrikal. During those days he was beginning to express himself as a poet. This age witnessed the growth of reflective thought in Govindan Kutty. Refreshing new ideas and thoughts began to develop in his mind. This is considered as the formative period in his critical approach to tradition.

Govindan Kutty got a suitable occasion to clear his doubts when his teacher, Sastrikal, quoted and explained a prayer song. After hearing and realising the meaning of the prayer song, he asked his 'Guru', whether God, who is believed to be eternal and unchanging, could be installed in temples. He also enquired and asked his guru, 'who is God?' 'Where is his abode?', and 'What is he doing?'. His teachers and parents failed to give suitable answer to such questions. In his childhood itself Govindan Kutty was perplexed over the caste differences and untouchability. He happened to see people belonging to some lower castes, keeping a distance from him and from the temples. As an explanation to this he was informed by his mother about the practice of untouchability. But he was not prepared to accept such theories at

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their face value and began to reflect restlessly over the prevalent social and religious practices.\textsuperscript{12}

After completing the Sanskrit studies, Govindan Kutty was sent to Eranakulam for having education in English. There he got an opportunity to acquaint himself with different religions and cultures.\textsuperscript{13} The English education helped him to know about the progressive aspects of western culture, such as the firmness of reason and direct experiences, negation of differences among human beings in society and rejection of superstitions and evil customs, in all fields of life. He read a number of English books and newspapers, and developed his knowledge in the English language.\textsuperscript{14} It also helped him to broaden his vision. He went back to his native place after completing his middle school education at Eranakulam.

He boldly decided to follow a belief based on reason and direct experience instead of blind belief in ancient scriptures. He rejected the social and religious practices like hereditary caste system, untouchability, idol worship and animal sacrifices. He pointed out the fact that there was no need of any kind of worship. He quarrelled with his uncle and boycotted the Bhuvneswari pooja\textsuperscript{15} performed at his taravad employing Brahmin priests. The independent thinking and austere life he led made the villagers to respect

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p.4.
\textsuperscript{13} A.K. Nair, n.10, p.21.
\textsuperscript{14} M.S. Nair, n.3, p.25.
\textsuperscript{15} Bhuvaneswari Pooja is a ceremonial offering to Bhuvaneswari, Godesses of the whole world. It was performed for the happiness and prosperity of the family.
him. This period marks the formative years of the philosopher, social reformer and rationalist in him.

It was during this time that the Karattu taravad was partitioned. He then shifted to a new house with his mother and other members of his family because of the partition of his Taravadu.\(^{16}\) So the responsibilities of a householder or *Tavazhi Karanavar* fell on him. Even in the midst of such responsibilities he found time to read Puranas, Ithihasas and other literary works in order to evaluate them in the light of reason and experience. His only sister, Devaki Amma, reflects on this habit, "My elder brother's hobby was to read and write. His friends used to rebuke him for this habit and called him *Mauni* or *Muni*. He also taught the meaning of Sanskrit slokas to children at this residence".\(^{17}\) His parents was displeased with his lack of interest in worldly matters. They tried to change his state of mind by marriage. So he was forced to marry Maruthur Thavukutty Amma from Vadanannur Mukku near Kollengode.\(^{18}\) Tavukutty Amma was an educated women and she soon understood the mind of her husband, so that he could mould his married life into an ascetic one as practiced by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Sarada Devi. Then Thavukutty Amma became his true disciple and came to be known as Yogini *Mmatha*. She became the president of *Siddhasramam* and *Ananda Mahasabha* after his demise.

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\(^{17}\) A.K.Nair, *n*.10, p.23.

Along with the responsibilities of a householder Govindankutty had to accept the job of Amsam Menon. It was the hereditary right of the Karat Taravadu. Consequently Govindan Kutty became Govindan Menon to his natives. Though this job was most desirable in those days, he felt otherwise. Unprepared to be submissive before superiors and to follow their orders he resigned the job and also sent a poem mentioning his reason for resignation. The poem traces the diplorable condition involved with the job. After this he began to spend the time teaching Sanskrit to the youths of neighbouring localities. He believed that the study of Sanskrit is essential for knowing India's cultural heritage.

Later, Advocate Parambathu Govindan Menon, a native of his village, invited him to the Calicut Native High School to work as a Sanskrit Munshi (teacher). His short stay at Calicut was a turning point in his life. At Calicut he got a wide circle of friends, including English educated scholars and social reformers. Chief among them were, Dr. Ayyathan Gopalan, active participant of the Brahmasamaj, Sri. C. Krishnan, editor of Mitavadi daily, Advocate Manjeri Rama Iyyer, Sri. Appu Nedungadi, (the author of Kundalatha), Chengalath Kunhirama Menon, the editor of Kerala Patrika and Puliyampatta Kunhikrishna Menon, the Malayala Manorama managing editor. Thus he got an opportunity to share his progressive streams of thought with his friends.

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19 Revenue official of the Village.
20 Later this school became Ganapath High School, Calicut in memory of the School Manager, Sri Ganapath Rao.
The circle of friends at Calicut were impressed by the scholarship of Govindankutty Menon in various subjects.

Brahma Samaj made its entry into Malabar in 1898 with the establishment of its branch at Calicut. Dr. Ayyathan Gopalan was the leading spirit behind this movement, Samaj laid emphasis on monotheism and universalism by opposing social evils. Govindankutty Menon being impressed with the ideology of Brahma Samaj cooperated with their activities. He wrote a poem titled *Brahmasamkkeerrtanam* on the request from the Brahmasamajists to be read in Brahmasamaj meetings. It was later published in book form. The Brahmasamajists then honoured Govindankutty Menon by calling him reverently 'Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi' as an appreciation of his wide knowledge. The new name became famous in the social and religious circles in India. His association with the Brahmasamaj helped him to sharpen his views on religious customs and traditions. He accepted a new way of life at Calicut by practicing Rajayoga for the realization of supreme reality.

The disposition of his mind towards asceticism developed further and he decided to lead the life of an ascetic. The ascetic life practiced by the school manager, Ganapathi Rao also influenced him. He considered his wife as a disciple and both of them vowed to lead a life of *Brahmacharya*. At

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22 A.K. Nair, *n.10*, p.29.
Calicut, he got more opportunities to work as a teacher and was invited to join the Kerala Vidyasala\textsuperscript{24} at Calicut. But he rejected the offer because he was not interested in the busy town life. He wished to live peacefully in a village as an ascetic by practising yoga. Having got an opportunity to become a Sanskrit teacher in the Board Middle School at Alathur Village. Thus he left Calicut in 1899 to become a teacher in the Alathur Middle School.\textsuperscript{25}

In 1899 he began to lead the life of an ascetic. He built a asramam (Hermitage) at Vanur, near Alathur and named it Siddhasramam. By this time, he had become popularly known as Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi. The orthodox sections of the society considered Sivayogi as an atheist and revolutionary. But the people who understood the meaning of his words considered him ‘the light of truth’. He strongly criticised superstitions and evil customs and advocated for the enlightenment of the people. Sri K.P. Kesava Menon and Sri K.V. Surya Narayana Iyyer were the important disciples of Sivayogi, who achieved wide popularity in later years.

**Works:**

After retirement from the professional service as teacher in 1907, Sivayogi completely immersed into an ascetic life. It helped him to spend more time in practicing yoga. He toured different parts of Kerala and propagated his ideals by giving lectures.\textsuperscript{26} He also spread his philosophical, religious and spiritual ideas by composing 16 great books popularly known as

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Today it is the famous Zedmorin’s Guruvayurappan College, Calicut.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} M.S. Nair, \textit{n.3}, p. 25.
  \item \textsuperscript{26} N. Ushadevi, \textit{n.2.}, p.16.
\end{itemize}
Among them only one is in Sanskrit and others are in Malayalam. The first book which contains the principle of Yoga, that is, *Sivayoga Rahasyam* was published in 1893. Sivayogi's emphasis on social equality, freedom and education to women is seen in his important book *Sthree Vidya Poshini* published in 1899. *Siddhanubhuthi*, published in 1903 traces the soul as casteless and criticizes casteism, poojas and other religious customs. His *Anandakalpadrumam* (1905) proclaims the attainment of bliss through Rajayoga.

*Mokshapradeepam*, published in 1905, is an elaborative treatize on the important principles of Sivayogi. In this work he vehemently criticized the caste difference, idol worship and animal sacrifice. He says that in all human beings there is a power, that is, *Ananda* and that is attained through mental control through the practice of yoga. He makes a sincere effort to enlighten the people through the simple way of yoga. *Mokshapradeepam* gives an account of the ideals of *Anandamatha*. This work created a strong outburst in the world of religious fundamentalists. In his work *Anandasutra* (1910), he says that the experience of bliss would uplift the people from worldly miseries. The valuable collection of letters received by Sivayogi from the newly enlightened people is the content of his work, *Anandasopanam* (1913). Sivayogi's *Rajayogaparasyam* (1914) is a guide to the knowledge of Yoga. His criticism against idol worship is revealed in the work,

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27 P.V. Gopalakrishnan (Ed.), *A Passage to the Bliss Supreme*, Alathur, 2000, p.11.
28 M.S. Nair, *n.3*, p.27.
Vigraharadhanakhandanam (1916). He says that image worship will not give happiness and prosperity to mankind.29

Sivayogi logically discussed and explained the meaninglessness of all customs and institutions. His works like Ananda Vimanam (1916), Anandamatha Parasyam (1919) and Anandadarshamsam (1928) helps the people to develop a reflective thought to discriminate between good and evil.30 He described the evils of caste system as the diseases of the society in his another important book, Anandakummi (1920) written in the form of Kummi songs. Sivayogi’s philosophical and spiritual ideas reached its zenith in Anandadarsham (1927). This is the only work of Sivayogi in Sanskrit written in verse. In this work he explains the evils of all religions and described the principle of Anandamatha.31 The concentration of one’s mind helps to experience eternal bliss.32 Anandadarsam is a description of the practical realities in life. Through these works Sivayogi formulated a new thought based on reason and experience.

The Siddhasramam at Vanur was not spacious enough to receive and accommodate a large number of followers. By using the income earned through the sale of books he established a new Siddhasramam at Alathur in 1924.33 The Alathur Siddhasramam remained as the centre of his teachings.

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30 N. Ushadevi, n.2, p.22.
31 C. Krishnankutty, n.1, p.48.
32 P. V. Goplakrishnan, n.27, p.23.
33 Dharamaraj Adat, n.4, p.30.
Here he taught his disciples, the eternal bliss acquired by Rajayoga and also cleared their doubts. The *Siddhasramam* of Sivayogi differed from other Asrams. Unlike the other Asrams, there is no *Namajapa*, *Pooja*, worship of images, pictures and photos and other offerings in the *Siddhasramam*. He always told his disciples to receive his dogmas after discriminating its good and evil. Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi passed away on 10th September 1929. After his samadi the members of Ananda Mahasabha received Yogini Matha as the next president of the Siddhasramam and Ananda Maha Sabha as per the desire of Sivayogi. When Yogini Matha died in 1956, her important disciple, Nirmalananda Yogi took over charge of the Asramam and Ananda Mahasabha. Nirmalananda Yogi played an important role in connecting Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi’s ideas and ideals with modern doctrines.

Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi reached the highest position and turned out to be a Rajayogi through the continuous studies, independent visions and experiments. He opposed social evils and feudal relations that existed in the 19th century Kerala society. He never appeared as an agitator in the open field, but criticized the social evils through his works and lectures. Sivayogi was an ardent critic of religion and caste system. He believed that religion and

34 Repetition of the name of deity in Prayer.
35 Ceremonial offering to God.
36 Ananda Mahasabha was the central organization of Anandasamajists founded by Sivayogi in 1918.
38 Krishnankutty, *n.11*, p.28.
caste create division in the mind and work of the people. He opposed the influence of religion, caste distinctions, domination of priestly class, idol worship, religious rituals, etc. Sivayogi says that the religious customs such as worshiping at temples with liquor and meat, animal sacrifice and the practice of untouchability and caste distinctions are against the welfare of humanity.

**Thoughts:**

Sivayogi was a vehement critique of religion, caste, Gods and Goddesses, heaven and hell, devil, idol worship and animal sacrifice. He opposed it through experience reason and sound. He exhorted that man should accept as real only what is rational. A rebel against the blind beliefs without any movement or power of action, he declared that the only aim in human life is mental peace. The mind which is free from all sorts of impurities can eradicate evils. Happiness could be attained through the control of the mind. The main stream of Sivayogi's social philosophy is based on the development and control of the mind. With his characteristic extra-ordinary power of intellect coupled with his inherently critical perception Sivayogi set out to discriminate the true from false ideas and the principles contained in religious scriptures. He condemned the Hindu texts which justified the social and religious evils. He attacked Karma Kanda and

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40 Interview with Nirmalananda Yogi, President, Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi's Sidhasramam, Alathur, 29.5.2007.
Jnanakanda by saying that these works contained false and misleading notions. He argued that the great scholars gave excessive importance to these works. These works were written by them before attaining purity of mind and real spiritual knowledge. He was of the opinion that the four important parts of Karmakanda, that is, holy sacrifice, fasting, charity and pilgrimage create enemity and distance in human life.

Sivayogi considered the caste system as a mere super-imposition. He upheld the equality of all human beings saying that the identity like religion, caste, nobility of birth, family, nativity etc., are all imbibed in childhood by association with a particular group. They were not the orders of God. They are all man's own creations. They were a threat to human life and brings only sorrow. It was a pity that it was man's quarrel over man that created distinctions. Caste and religion are obstacles to human thought. Creatures appear in different forms due to their distinguishing features. Hence they belong to different species. But no such difference of features is seen among human beings. Animals from different sects are unable to enjoy sexual relations and thereby to give birth to children. It is not possible for an elephant to give birth to a lamb. Such a phenomenon is absent in the case of human beings representing various castes, Men and women from any caste can enjoy sexual relations and give birth to children. The children of Brahmin,
Khsatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras are similar at their infancy. If I am a Brahmin, I am a Kshatriya etc., are true we should be able to see the symbols of caste like the sacred thread at the time of birth. Moreover if a Hindu embraces Islamic religion becomes a Muslim and if he embraces Christianity he becomes a Christian. This will never occur if religion or caste is inherent to human beings. He says that caste system has been treated by some intelligent persons to deceive the ignorant masses. The more you give importance to caste differentiations and separations, the more you are moving towards misery.

He condemned the caste organisations as they would help only to preserve sectarianism, inequality and division into high and low castes. It is the ignorance of the people which caused the fight for religion and caste. One great false hood in the world, according to Sivayogi, is the belief in the existence of different religions in the world. There is no God who provides wealth and skill but it is our own mind, which creates wealth. Any effort without the control of mind would become futile to achieve this. The triumph over the mind is the greatest victory.46

Sivayogi vehemently criticised the social evils like untouchability, unapproachability and unseeability. He says that these practices were prevailed only in the Hindu religion. No other religion has paid any need to such practices. It will not give any peace to a society which sticks on it. It was the creation of upper castes. He was against the domination of upper castes

46 Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, n.21, p.51.
and the religious ceremonies, conducted under the leadership of Brahmin purohitas. He considered religion as a prison which denied liberty to the people and the Brahmin purohitas as the wardens of this prison. The low caste men believed that only a Brahmin has the right to worship God. So they asked the Brahmins to convey their offerings to God for attaining heavenly bliss. But it was the caste oriented society which prevented the low caste people from the worship of God and reading of Upanishads, Vedas and other Sanskrit works. It became the monopoly of the high castes and they claimed superiority in society. It is like saying that, "only a few can look at the moon, others not, and only a few can breath the air, others not." Sivayogi argued that such laws were baseless and meaningless. So it is ridiculous to believe that the Brahmins can only worship Gods, read the Upanishads, and Vedas and conduct religious ceremonies.

The high caste people in Hindu religion considered themselves as the rightful possessors of all kinds of privileges. They mingled with men of other religions without becoming impure. If any one is converted to other religions, that is, Christianity or Islam, he would out to be recognized by the upper classes. The high castes did not consider birds and animals as low species. They use the milk and meat of cows and goat, as foods of nutrition. From nowhere, the world of living things originated in Brahma. Brahma is the mother of all life and at the extreme of protecting human beings. Everyone belongs to the family of Brahma (Taitreyo Upanishad). So Sivayogi held the view that all human beings in the world are Brahmans and there are is no such upper

class Brahmins in society. The division of the people into Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras and different such castes is against reason, experience and knowledge. Sivayogi opines that religion should be free from superstitious belief and give pleasure in our life. 48 A true devotee cannot have the residue of sugar cane, but only its sweet juice. When sugar and sand are mixed together, ants will eat only sugar. So we have to accept any religion only after a deep examination, avoid bad things and select only good things. 49

Sivayogi comments that any religion which creates quarrel between men could be defied. The religious scriptures and religious leaders caused the formation of caste, caste difference and other caste inequalities in society. Sivayogi questioned the ideas put forward by Brahmin priests which enslaved the people, both ideologically and spiritually. 50 Sivayogi argued that one god to Christian, one god to Muslim and different gods and goddesses to Hindus are the imagination of the people. According to Sivayogi, all beings in the world are born from the happiness of their parents. Where they are born in to is their caste and what they desire is their religion. All beings are born from happiness and all desire happiness. So happiness or bliss (Ananda) is the only true and inherent religion (Anandamatha) in the world. 51 All other religions in the world were created by man and they were an obstruction to the united

48 Interview with Swami Jnanodayan, Ananda Yogasala,Yogasala Road, Kannur, 16.02.2002.
49 Brahmamanda Swami Sivayogi, n.21, pp. 2-3.
50 Dharmaraj Adat, n.4, p.44.
51 M.S. Nair, n.5, p.32.
and peaceful life of men. He has revealed that his aim was to unite all people who fight in the name of caste and religion under the true religion called Anandamatha. Anandamatha will bring happiness to all.

Sivayogi disproved all the arguments on the existence of god as depicted by different religions. To him God is not creator, nor savior, nor destroyer. Sivayogi developed a reasoning that there is no god other than the mind. It is foolish to worship God by fasting and undergoing other mental and spiritual tortures. Sivayogi questioned the divine belief determined by the Purohitas. He says that God has no need to command Vedas and religion to human beings. He does not any evil prestige to be worshipped by men through religion. According to all religions, God is the creator of all the world, most powerful being and protector, a kind hearted almighty. If so he should have the ability to control all men of the earth worshipping him by this abundant power, and then there will not be any atheism in the world. If God is omnipotent, he cannot punish the men by giving sorrows and he must be able to create them as beings full of perennial happiness. As a result, there would be no evil qualities and crimes in this world.

People worship gods for attaining true pleasure in life. If so, God need not create a heaven and a hell for rewarding or punishing human beings. He argues that human beings pray due to pathos like fatal disease, poverty, untimely death, natural calamity and mutual slaughter. But no god ever was

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52 Interview with Nirmalanda Yogi, President, Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi’s Sidhasramam, Alathur, 29.5.2007.
able to rescue the people from their misfortunes. Many religions described God as destroyer. A man who kills his sons is wicked and never deserves respect. The father who kills his sons will be punished according to the law of the land. As such, God is also to be punished. This proves that religions which praise God will be indirectly describing him as a criminal. Sivayogi says that this kind of God is to be kept aloof. Instead of realising this truth, people worshiped him. God cannot be called compassionate because he is described as the destroyer of the crated beings. Compassion is said to be the blessing of God. Sivayogi is of the opinion that the belief that God will provide wisdom and health to devotees has no ground. A man need not join a religion just for seeing the sun or fulfilling his thirst. He should control his mind in the midst of his passions. The decay of mind creates sorrows and concentration and control of mind creates happiness.

Sivayogi holds that if God is the protector of the 'world', as supposed by religions, nothing can be destroyed. It is really surprising to see that God will appear on earth to kill the sinners and rescue the poor. He cannot save any man from the evils of caste and religion. If God was able to satisfy all the wishes of people, there would not be any misery for the devotees as is found at present. So the worshiping of God was meaningless. Inspite of being a worshiper of Agni, if one touches Agni, it will burn his fingers. He also criticised the belief of the Christians that the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was

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54 Pavanan, n.11, p.135.
55 Brahmamanda Swami Sivayogi, n.39, p.93.
for washing away the sins of the world. It shows the wickedness of God. Sivayogi rejected rebirth of human soul. If re-birth was found by the knowledge and power of mind, caste and religion should have no place in human life. Sivayogi considered that the soul of man is his mind.

The fundamental cause for all problems in society according to Sivayogi was the existence of different religions, different castes and different Gods. He hated and criticised the fanaticism of religion and god. The poor men on earth fight and destroy themselves for the unknown, invisible power of the universe. Sivayogi holds the view that God was not prepared to give real knowledge to men. The description of God by religions people as giving blessings to all can be taken as the outcome of false old values. God is unconditioned and various kinds of descriptions of God are to be condemned. The theory of religious people that mysterious powers can be attained by Yoga and by the worship of God is wrong. God is not an individual power with emotions, nor a supreme good and an ever-pervading spirit. Sivayogi had a cyclical view regarding the progress of humanity. The common thing of everyone in the universe are birth, growth and decay. The evolution and transformation of all living beings are caused due to the existence of a 'power' which is nameless and universal. It is equal to the 'atom power' in modern science.

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56 Ibid., p.96.
57 Krishnankutty, n.1, p.32.
58 Brahananda Swami Sivayogi, n.39, p.10.
59 A.K. Nair, n.10, p.108.
He opposed the idol worship and holy sacrifice that existed in the Hindu religion. God is visible only to men of sound mind, mind is supreme power and that power is God and it is not a senseless and lifeless stone. Idol worship will give happiness neither in this world nor in the other world. Many Hindu rulers had constructed temples and conducted ceremonies in order to propitiate, gods but they had lost their power and kingdom due to invasions.⁶⁰ If idol worship gives prosperity, the rulers should not have lost their power. Why do the Brahmins go after other professions leaving idol worship and poojas, if it would bring them heavenly blessings. Neither knowledge and social status nor mental purification can be attained through idol worship. One is not cured of diseases and achieve prosperity in life through such practices. It is false hood and ignorance to say that the worship of a lifeless idol by a conscious man can get happiness and salvation in life.⁶¹ We use stones for different purposes. So it is difficult to say that a stone idol is superior to other stones.⁶² He says that even the priests who installed the idol and conducted the ceremonial offerings were not free from diseases and other sorrows in life. He considered temples as centers of ignorance. So it is ridiculous to construct temples to worship idols by spending a lot of money and labour.

⁶⁰ Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, n. 29, p.1.
⁶¹ Ibid., p.6.
Sivayogi opines that we could not get into heaven by worshiping the idols of important deities. The human body is the real temple and mind is the important idol in that temple. Delight could be experienced only from avoiding pathos and dejections from our life. We must keep our body and mind together to get actual pleasure of life in this world. We have to remove the sorrows of mind for ever, rejecting any offerings to the idols of temples to get real satisfaction of gladness. Sivayogi conducted a number of speeches against idol worship in different parts of Malabar. It was during this time that Sree Narayana Guru constructed temples and installed idols in Kozhikode, Tellichery, Kannur, Palakkad and Thrissur. Mitavadi Krishnan and Brahmasamajam president, Dr. Ayyathan Gopalan invited Sivayogi to Calicut for conducting speech against idol worship. He reached Calicut and his speech against temples and idol worship impressed the people much and he got a number of disciples there. Sivayogi criticised the construction of temples and installation of idols in different parts of Malabar by Sree Narayana Guru. He opposed the practice of idol worship and other rituals and ceremonies performed by the Brahmins. He believed that the temples and idol worship only intensified the ignorance and sorrows of mankind.

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64 Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, *n.29*, p.13.
65 Interview with Nirmalanda Yogi, President, Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi’s Sidhasramam, Alathur, 29.5.2007.
67 Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, *n. 29*, p.16.
Sivayogi was against the killing of animals for religious ceremonies and also for eating. People kill innocent creatures because their God does not give the knowledge that there is no other sin equal to violence. Sivayogi says that if animal sacrifice is permitted by God and is therefore not a sin, the other wicked actions of men are also to be considered as admitted by God. He also objected to the ceremony of offering the blood of sacrificed animal to the god.68 In his view, the temples which conducted animal sacrifices is equal to the slaughter house. The Brahmins considered the killing of cow as a great sin but they conducted animal sacrifice for Yagas or holy sacrifices.69 Sivayogi says that on one side they worshiped God as compassionate, protector and creator and on the other they worshipped God as blood thirsty and offered animal sacrifices in praise of God.

Sivayogi is of the opinion that it is the lack of compassion that incites people to kill innocent creatures. He considered non-violence as the supreme virtue and all other virtues like truth, happiness and sympathy are included in it. Kindness is the greatest virtue and violence is the greatest sin.70 Where there is violence, there is no happiness. Sivayogi conducted discussion with his disciples on violence, importance of non-violence and other important issues. To him violence is the greatest sin in the world and all other sins are subsidiary to it.71 According to Sivayogi, non-violence is not merely to abstain from killing but also not to do any physical and mental harm to any

69 Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, n.21, pp. 152-153.
70 M.S. Nair, n.5, p.40.
living beings. He maintained that all living beings have got the right to freedom and happiness. He regarded non-violence as the greatest dharma in the world. Sivayogi asked his followers to practice non-violence and develop good qualities. The importance given by Sivayogi to non-violence had deep impact on Kerala society. His followers worked hard to stop the practice of killing animals with-in the temple premises. As a result the temple authorities began to discontinue the practice of slaughtering animals in temples as part of the rituals.

Sivayogi opposed the observance of irrational social customs such as Talikkettu Kallyanam (Tali tying marriage), Tirandukili, Pulikudi and Child marriage. In his opinion it was the ignorance of the people which led to the practice of such customs. He is believed that the observance of these customs lead to economic devastations of the society due to the luxury involved in such practices. It was a major cause for the decay of many Nair Taravads. He also spoke against the begging of alms and other beliefs and concepts which existed in society. If the begging of arms is recognized as a merit, the poor people have this merit at its best. Some persons think that by remaining naked one can be a sage. If that is right, mad men, children and animals are to be considered as sages at first.

Sivayogi criticised the importance given to the bath in the Ganges. He says, if a bath in the Ganges bestows purity, all animals in that river must possess it.\textsuperscript{72} He argued that a bath helps the elimination of dirt from the body.

\textsuperscript{72} M.S. Nair, \textit{n.5}, p.35.
The real bath is the elimination of dirt from the mind. If the man who wears the divine ashes obtains liberation, the dog which rolls in the ashes must also have obtained liberation. He questioned the fasting or upavasa taken by the people for getting god's favour. If the persons who can float on the surface of water are Yogis, the frog is to be considered as the first and foremost yogi.

He attacked all kinds of ceremonies and customs performed after the death for attaining liberation. According to him, the real liberation can be attained while living in this world itself. He considered *Pula* as an unnecessary ritual and asked his followers to make burial rites inexpensive. He opposed the pilgrimages to holy places. The pilgrimages to the holy places like Kasi, Haridwar, Rameshwar etc bring only unhappiness. If the pilgrim centre, Kasi, is a place of merit, the whole people of that place will have merit. But many thieves and murderers are also seen there. Sivayogi proclaims that the pilgrim centres are located in the mind of an individual, which is free from the malices like passion and hatred.

Sivayogi thought that the essential quality of human beings is knowledge alone. He asked his followers to acquire self-knowledge, to know the reality and to work for removing the ignorance of the people. He brings out the fact that the earth is full of ignorant Karmis and is devoid of intellectual yogins. Religion and caste created only non-independent, ignorant and superstitious men. Sivayogi proved his theories with valuable

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knowledge, reason and experience. He stressed reason as the guide to human progress. By attacking all the irrational things in society he calls upon every individual to reflect on and realise the facts regarding religion, caste, and society and thereby to lead a meaningful life.

**Anandamatha:**

Anandamatha (Religion of bliss) founded by Brahmanda Swami Sivayogi was a new movement based on spirituality beyond religion. Anandamatha is entirely different from the religions we know. Sivayogi founded Anandamatha or Ananda cult in a period when religious reformation were active throughout India. His Anandamatha is free from all sorts of superstitions, ceremonies, ritual and caste distinctions. Fundamentally it is a new way of life and a new mode of thought. Anandamatha aimed at the rescue of man's mind from the clutches of religion, caste, ceremonies and rituals. It was the product of an ideology of social protest. He introduced a new view of life based on rationality. By founding a new cult, Sivayogi tries to expose the baselessness of the propagated theories on God. Anandamatha is a doctrine aimed at the self-realisation of the individual and the welfare of

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76 Dharmaraj Adat, n.4, p.48.
78 N. Ushadevi, n.2, p.27.
the society. Sivayogi treated and explained Ananda with a new outlook and vision.\textsuperscript{79}

Anandamatha gives importance to practical realities and exhorts men to face the miseries in life with courage, practical wisdom and Rajayoga. The Ananda cult became a social movement soon after the resignation of Sivayogi from Sanskrit Munshi profession in 1907. Anandamatha was an association of the people who were seeking Ananda or happiness as the primary aim in life. Ananda or everlasting bliss has always been life's goal for all living beings. The human life basically desires Ananda. Now-a-days religion perpetuates the social evils such as casteism, idol worship, rituals and ceremonies. But in Anandamatha there is no rituals and ceremonies, idol worship, belief in heaven or hell after death, casteism and other superstitious beliefs.\textsuperscript{80} The Samkhya philosophy on nature, the sidha tradition on yoga, the Charvaka philosophy based on reason, the Buddhist and Jainist philosophy and the teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads influenced Sivayogi to preach a new vision of life, Anandamatha.\textsuperscript{81} Sivayogi had much admiration for the Buddha's teachings and his fight against Brahmanical Hinduism. The basic tenets of Sivayogi's Anandamatha very much resemble those of Buddhism.


\textsuperscript{80} Dharmaraj Adat, "Brahmananda Sivayogiyude Anandadarshanam” in Deshabhimani Weekly, (Mal.), Kozhikode, March 20, 2005, p.16.

\textsuperscript{81} S.K. Vasanthan, n.23, p.116.
Sivayogi's conceives 'Ananda' as the substance of the universe and it is contained in all living beings in the universe. Anandmatha is a revolution of thought against religion, caste and god centered thought. Sivayogi says that human beings do not have any caste or religion. There exists no castes such as Namboodiri, Nair and Ezhava and religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, etc. Moreover we do not have the feelings of a native or a foreigner. All living beings in the world are born from 'Ananda' and all desire 'Ananda'. We are all of Ananda caste, Ananda religion and Ananda nation.82 Sivayogi saw the mind as the most important factor in human being. He understood the fact that the basic cause for the inequality in society is in the human mind. Sivayogi's Anandamatha is a revolutionary thought centered on the human mind.

According to Sivayogi, the nature of the mind is beyond all description. The immortality of the mind was the cause of the numerous crimes and evils in the world. It is due to the defect of their mind that people lead immoral life and this results in the degradation of their values. He asked all human beings to develop a good mind by removing all dirt and defects from the mind. He reminds that pure mind is the power of man, peaceful mind is the pathfinder of man and the mind itself is the God. The only peaceful and pure minded people can develop human values and love. The turbulent and impure mind brings about the destruction of the individual and society.

82 Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, Anandamathaparasyam, (Mal.), Alathur, 1967, p.3.
Sivayogi exhorted that mind and soul are not different. Mind itself is the soul, life, imagination and thought. Mind is a moving power like the water flow. The happiness of mind is heaven, unhappiness is hell and the disturbance of mind is sorrow. The people who have a mind, which is free from worldly objects will be able to conquer the empire of salvation. The term salvation, according to Sivayogi, is the concentration of mind, attainment of Ananda and relief from all pains. Sivayogi is of the view that all wonderful happenings in the world are related to the power of the mind. Thoughts and feelings take shape as well as die in the mind. Whatever a man possesses, he is completely at sea if he does not have peace of mind. He proclaims that the victory over the mind is the very great victory (Manojaya eva mahajaya). Man become perfect when he secure victory over mind. He says that 'man improves when mind improves'.

Anandmatha believes that man's primary aim is to achieve pleasure in life which is possible by the control of mind. Sivayogi says that there are different forms of mind such as water appears as ocean and rain. Men can experience Ananda with the help of yoga which deals with the concentration and control of mind. The mind has to be withdrawn from worldly objects and

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84 Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, *n.39*, p.165.
87 M.S. Nair, *n.5*, p.47.
has to be kept concentrated on a special spot. During that time we can get calmness and a higher experience in mind, that is happiness or Ananda. Rajayoga is the simplest and earliest method that can be adopted for attaining Ananda.\(^88\) The Ananda cult observes that through proper meditation man can uplift his individual powers hidden in him for his life's success. The absorption of the mind in the bliss will certainly help people to get rid off all kinds of sorrows.

Anandamatha is against the faith of heavenly bliss and previous birth. It is neither theology nor atheism. It acknowledges the all pervading force in the universe, the power of Ananda. All creatures in the world have their source, growth and aim in the power of Ananda.\(^89\) Sivayogi considered nature not as an imaginary thing but a reality. He once said, Anandamatha is a different human religion against the organised religion which is full of superstitions customs and ceremonies. All other religions proclaimed the worship of God for relieving sorrows and achieving joy. But men seem to be tortured by Chants, Yogas, meditation and Starvation.

Sivayogi comments that all faiths in the world should preach love and goodness and religion should not be made an instrument of hostility. In recent times it is unfortunate that religion has been made into a fetish to build barriers among the people and divide mankind into separate caste groups.\(^90\) He says that it is ridiculous that even with great devotion to God one cannot

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90 Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, n.80, p.8.
escape from the sufferings of diseases, untimely death and other sorrows. It is false to believe that God is kindhearted, God will give pleasure and happiness in this life and life after death.

He proclaimed that we should avoid the religion which goes against our ideals with a rational point of view. What is required for the present time is a universal religion, a religion of Bliss or Anandamatha that would bring into its fold all the followers of the several religions and all atheists who do not believe in the existence of god who world live amicably a life of harmony and peace. He believed that all social institutions are illogical and sought to teach his fellow beings that the community can attain happiness only if human mind is kept pure. He argues that the caste differences are not born along with one's birth. It is a later developed institution. The only religion which is born at the time of one's birth is the Ananda religion.\(^9\)

Sivayogi says when the mind gets concentrated there arise many objects like sun, moon, fire, light, star and various colours. Sometimes attractive sounds can be heard. Following these there emerges an indescribable bliss, taste and smell. This experience will be beyond description, and slowly the mind will be absorbed into supreme bliss or Ananda. Following the absorption there will be no pains and sorrows. This is the greatness of Anada experience and it will result in liberation of the self. The control of the mind results in the control of the senses. If the man has obtained the control over the senses, he can live peacefully and obtain

Ananda. According to Sivayogi control over the mind helps people to cultivate good qualities, increase will-power, create rational thoughts and helps to wipe out evil qualities like passion and hatred.

Anandamatha provides eternal pleasure to both atheists and theists. It believes that the only God in the whole world is Ananda and all worldly people are its followers. Sivayogi says that everybody in the world seeks pleasure. Some select evil ways like theft, alcoholism, etc., for getting pleasure in life. There is no question of God in their ways of life. A child gets pleasure by getting a beautiful toy, but the grown up men cannot seek pleasure from toys and they find pleasure in different activities. He says that the experience of Ananda is necessary for every man to suppress the evil emotions like fear, hatred, enemity and revenge from their mind. Sivayogi opines that a devotee worships God for getting happiness in life. Thus the devotee also desires happiness or Ananda.

He declared that nobody can reject the idea of the control of the mind and the attainment of Ananda. No living being is ready to suffer sorrows instead of enjoying happiness. Ananda cult is open to all, irrespective of religion, caste, creed, race and sex. It promotes the integrity of a single community, that is, the community of human beings. All of us are born in Ananda and all of us desires Ananda in life. Anandamatha is the only natural

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92 Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, n.80, p.22.
93 Dharmaraj Adat, n.4, p.53.
religion of man and all other religions are artificial and unreal. The basic
tenets of Ananda faith are described thus:

"Ananda (Eternal bliss) is supreme
Absorption of mind in itself is eternal bliss
Conquest of mind is the greatest success
Not to cause pain is the highest virtue
Sacrifices, prayers, idol worship and similar
Ceremonies result in only ignorance and pain!
Ananda is the only natural religion to all,
Others are imaginary, artificial and unreal."  

Sivayogi opines that the merging of mind with the real state of mind will help men to abandon sorrows and to achieve happiness or Ananda. According to him, there are two types of Ananda, internal and external. Internal Ananda exists in all men and that is constant and great. External Ananda is worldly pleasure and that is inconstant. He says that everlasting pleasure is derived from the control of our mind through successive practice and it can not be obtained from any external sources.

Sivayogi explained *Rajayoga* as the science of the control of the mind. Patanjali’s concept of yoga and Bhojadeva’s commentary on Yoga sutras influenced Sivayogi's concept of the Rajayoga. But he rejects their belief that

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94 Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, *n*.39, p. XXVII.
96 Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, *n*. 80, p. 22.
God is the only entity. According to him the Rajayoga or Anandayoga is the only fruitful way to embrace Ananda. The might of man's mind is the greatest achievement in life. The Rajyoga helps men to realise the truth of the ultimate reality through his own mind. It leads to the attainment of happiness and the absence of sorrows.

The meditation at the middle point of the eyebrow is the quickest means to get the mind absorbed. It is the easy means to reach the goal of the Rajayoga. The concentration of mind at sushmna never results in knowing one's own self. The supreme consciousness of mind results in the experience of eternal bliss. Sivayogi is of the view that the mind is like water which attains various forms in accordance with the shape of the vessels. The absorption of mind occurs when the mind experiences any of the signals of Ananda, which is unique and true.

The concept of the Rajayoga is internal. It can be practiced by those people who regulate their diet and think rationally on every aspect of life. He explained the concept of the Rajayoga in a simple manner which was easily intelligible to the common man. He calls up on everyone to practice the Rajayoga and experience Ananda or supreme bliss. Men or women without the distinction of religion, caste, creed and political learnings can experience

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98 M.S. Nair, n.5, pp. 50-51.
100 Brahmamanda Swami Sivayogi, n. 21, pp. 22-23.
101 Interview with Nirmalananda Yogi, President, Brahmamanda Swami Sivayogi’s Sidharsamam, Alathur, 29.5.2007.
the Rajayoga. It is a wrong belief that the Rajayoga is the monopoly of the Hindus alone. Every human being without the label of religion and god can practice the Rajyoga and attain Ananda. Sivayogi described the theories of Ananda in his important books such as Ananda sutra, Ananda Vimanam, Ananadadarsam, Anandadarsamsam and Anandamathaparasyam.

Institutions:

Sivayogi founded Anandasamajam with its head quarters at Alathur Sidhasramam. It aimed at the propagation of Anandamatha. His disciples started Anandasamajams and Yogasalas in different parts of Kerala. In 1918, the meetings of Anandasamajists under the presidentship of Sivayogi formed a central organisation Ananda Mahasabha to coordinate the activities of all Anandasamajams and Yogasalas. The Sabha had its units even in Srilanka, namely, the Colombo Anandasamajam. After the formation of the Sabha, the Anandasamajams and Yogasalas increased in number. Sivayogi instructed Anadasamajists to work for the self-realisation of all men beyond the restrictions of religion, caste and creed by communicating his ideals.

Sivayogi was not interested in political issues but had a concept about the purpose of the state. State was conceived as an institution to promote the well-being of society. He demanded the state to ban all evil and superstitious

102 P.V. Gopalakrishnan, n.27, p.30.
104 Pavanan, n.11, p.51.
105 Ibid., p. 53.
practices. He was aware of the qualitative difference between pre-colonial native states and states under the British rule. He had much appreciation for the British rule because under the British rule there was individual liberty for all, irrespective of caste and creed. The British rule provided an opportunity for all to work according to his own intelligence to acquire material benefits and to enjoy equality.

**Vision on Education:**

Sivayogi knew the value of education and believed that it was only through education people would know the consequences of social evil and they would develop awareness about the magnitude of the problems. Lack of education caused more blind beliefs and evil customs in society. He said that,

"Education is the only goodness of man
And not outer garments and ornaments
For becoming skilful fellows
Study well without any hesitation
A man's life without education is meaningless
For knowing truth, earn knowledge"  

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107 M.S. Nair, *n. 5*, p. 43.
Sivayogi's arguments for women's education and gender equality are important among his revolutionary ideas. The conservative noble men restricted the idea of sending women to schools. There was no equality among these two sexes of mankind in society. He says that there is no meaning in gender inequality. It is knowledge that gives happiness to man. It is jealousy, fear and selfishness of man that lie behind the taboo on women's education. He believed that the entire torture and inferior status suffered by women of that period was due to the lack of proper education among them. He thought that for the realisation of freedom and equality to women, the education of women is necessary. He strongly felt the need of educational institutions for women.

He gave decisive encouragement to women's education. He wrote Sthreevidyaposhini in 1899 which gave concrete arguments in favour of women's education. He criticised the existing beliefs which prevented women's education. He considered child marriage and early widowhood as the cause of all social evils in society. It did not give education to women. In spite of the Hindu belief and worship of Saraswathi as the goddesses of letters women were prohibited from obtaining education by the caste rules. He opposed such meaningless restrictions of the society.

He emphasises that women are competent to undergo education and acquire knowledge. An educated woman will be sensible of her servitude. He

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reminds that for creating a healthy new generation, it is essential to give education to women. Being a mother, a woman had her own role in rearing up the future citizens of the country. The education to women can inculcate social values in child's mind. Thus the progress of the country largely depends upon the education of women. So it is wrong to say that education to women will have negative results.

He argues that nobody can rob us of our knowledge. It will increase by imparting it to others. Knowledge will advice us to tell the truth and not to do harm to others. The holy works of the Hindus like the Vedic Samhitas, Puranas and Ithihasas contained the concepts of freedom and equality of the sexes. During the Vedic period woman was a symbol of power, performance and knowledge. It was the later male-dominated society which denied education, freedom and equality of women and denigrated her as a slave, private property and object of sexual pleasure.

Sivayogi was an important critic of the disregard shown towards women. He opposed the saying that 'No need for education of women'. He considered it as 'restricting the moon for somebody's sight or the right to breathe air only for men. Through education we get knowledge and through knowledge the mind become pure. The real knowledge will give supreme happiness to men. Everybody in the world has the right for education irrespective of man or woman. At present there are a separate

\[110 \text{ Ibid., p.12.}\]

\[111 \text{ Dharmaraj Adat, } n.4, \text{ p.63.}\]

\[112 \text{ Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, } n.109, \text{ p.8.}\]
school for girls and a women's college at Alathur under the management of Alathur Sidhasramam in memory of Brahanada Swami Sivayogi. Sivayogi's arguments for education, equality and freedom to women contributed much to the social mobility in Kerala society.

Vagbhatananda, another important social reformer of Kerala was the most famous of the disciples of Brahananda Swami Sivayogi. Vagbhatananda was immersed in Sivayogi’s doctrines on Yoga vidya and opposition to idol worship. In 1911, Vagbhatananda established Rajayogananda Kaumudi Yogasala at Kallai near Calicut and conducted speeches with regard to Sivayogi's doctrines of Rajayoga in different parts of Malabar. Vagbhatananda also started a magazine, Sivayogivilasam from Calicut in 1914 for propagating the ideals of Sivayogi. It was Sivayogi who gave the name Vagbhathananda to V.K. Gurukkal to express his gratitude in defending him against criticism. Though Vagbhatananda was a disciple of Sivayogi for a long period he began to criticise the views of Sivayogi at a later period. Vagbhatananda strongly refutes the views of Sivayogi on God, Mind and Rajayoga (For details see Chapter-V). Inspite of these differences Vagbhatananda maintained cordial relations with Sivayogi. When Sivayogi died in 1929, Vagbhatananda’s newspaper Atmavidya kahalam carried an

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113 Pavan, n.11, p. 64.  
115 M.S. Nair, n.3, p.29.
editorial on Sivayogi and he made a condolence speech in the meeting conducted at Ganapath High School, Calicut.\textsuperscript{116}

Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi’s world of thought reached the public through the works of Kavitilak Pandit. K.N. Karuppan, A.K. Nair, Ayyathan Gopalan, T.K. Ananda Yogi, Sankutharakan, T. Ramapanikker, Nirmalananda Yogi, and other important disciples. Brahmananda swami Sivayogi’s Siddharamam at Alathur has been publishing the \textit{Saragrahi} monthly for the last sixty years as a symbol of renaissance and cultural revolution and for spreading the ideals of Sivayogi. Now under the management of the Siddharsamam five schools, a B.Ed training college, a womens college and a working Women's Hostel (Yoginimatha Working Women Hostel) are functioning in and around Alathur in memory of Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi and his ideal.\textsuperscript{117}

The teachings and ideologies of Sivayogi infused new blood into Kerala Society and caused the awakening of the people. His works were an eye opener to a lot of people who read it. The people began to think about casteism, untouchability, animal sacrifices, superstitions and religious malpractices. The authorities of Thottavarathu Idayavanathu Bhagavathi Temple and Kodungallur Bhadrakali Temple had stopped the practise of killing of animals and hens as part of the temple festivals and ceremonies. This awareness is attributed to Sivayogi’s teachings and ideologies that he

\textsuperscript{116} A.K. Nair, \textit{n}.10, pp.168-169.

\textsuperscript{117} Interview with Nirmalananda Yogi, President, Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi’s Siddhasramam, Alathur, 29.05.2007.
impacted in his work *Mokshapradeepam*.\(^ {118} \) The reading of *Mokshapradeepam* by the well-known poet, K.C. Kesavapillai at the Atukal Temple in Thiruvananthapuram influenced the temple authorities to stop the animal sacrifices. The disciple of Sivayogi, Kavitilakam Pandit K.N. Karuppan submitted *Jatibhedakanadanam* (A critique of caste division) a portion of Sivayogi's *Mokshapradeepam* as a memorandum to the Cochin Raja requesting to permit low caste people to use public roads in Ernakulam town. Later Cochin Raja issued an order which permitted low caste people to use public roads in Ernakulam town.

The known Malayalam poetess, Lalithambika Anthajanam has recorded that it was the books of Sivayogi especially *Sthree Vidya Poshini* inspired her to write a poem against the social slavery suffered by the women of higher castes. The works of Sivayogi also gave inspiration and inducement to the social works of V.T. Bhattathiripadu and others. The great persons like Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Panampalli Govindanmenon, E.M.S. Nambudiripadu, C. Achuthamenon, K.P. Kesavamenon and many others had admired Sivayogi's casteless and creedless social reniassance activities and his ideal of Anandamatha.

Conclusion:

Sivayogi’s movement was a symbol of progress and progressive ideas, so that he is considered as one of the makers of modern Kerala. He thought for a change based on the consciousness of men, and social reconstruction based on that thought as the substance of his social philosophy. He gave importance to reason, rational thinking and practical realities. The result of his enquiry into the miseries of human life was the foundation of Anandamatha. He propagated all-round reformation and enlightenment of society based on human love and liberty beyond religion and caste.

Sivayogi believed that poverty and low status of some people in the society were created by the lack of proper education. He tried to enlighten the poor people in nearby villages. He wrote many small poems in the vernacular and distributed them among the villagers who sung them in their familiar style of singing. They enjoyed them and understood the facts revealed in them leading to the struggles for social equality. Sivayogi advised the people to choose the right way and to beware of being misled by various external pleasures. He worked for cultural progress and asked the people to give more importance to culture than science. According to him culture is not

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119 K.K.N. Kurup, n.37, p.22.
120 M.S. Nair, n.3, p.87.
modernisation. Modernisation is external and culture in internal to man. Cultural progress is related to the purity of the mind.\textsuperscript{121}

Sivayogi and his teachings did not get much support and popularity among the present generation of Kerala society. His concept of no caste and no god did not get much acceptability among the people of the present time who were organizing in the name of caste.\textsuperscript{122} Though he had a number of followers in different parts of Malabar, majority of the low caste and upper caste people were not fully ready to accept his denial of god and idol worship.\textsuperscript{123} His followers' attempt to create a transition in the mind of the people by spreading his ideals did not make any deep impact in the caste based Kerala society.\textsuperscript{124} The Anandasamajists could not vigorously pursue their activities for long. They miserably failed to organize such programmes like inter-dinings and inter marriages which would have considerably contributed to obliterate caste barriers.

Sivayogi's philosophy got less importance among the traditional religious believers. His condition was like the condition of the Charvakas of Ancient India. Sivayogi, like the Charvakas, was rejected by the traditionalists.\textsuperscript{125} The common people who were under the influence of traditional religious groups were not ready to accept his theories. Lack of

\textsuperscript{121} Interview with Nirmalanda Yogi, President, Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi's Siddhasramam, Alathur, 29.5.2007.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} M.S. Nair, \textit{n.3}, p.84.
\textsuperscript{124} Dharmaraj Adat, \textit{n.4}, p.81.
\textsuperscript{125} Thonnakkal Narayanan, \textit{n.62}, p.138.
proper education also obstructed the commoners to understand Sivayogi's rational ideals. The educated people were not courageous enough to break the age-old practices of the society. The upper caste people opposed him because of his criticism of God worship, Varnasramadharma and Brahmin domination.

Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi and his movement had played an important role in the social reform movements of Kerala. Though he never organised a movement in the open filed, his rational ideas gave light and awakening to the people who were in the midst of darkness created by religious abuses. His criticism of the caste system, untouchability, Brahmin domination, exploitation and the arguments for women education as part of human rights and independence had its significance in the present social background. He cleared the cobwebs in men's mind by holding before them a new vision of life founded on self-confidence, courage, rational thinking and most importantly on control of the mind. In his philosophical thought he analysed individual liberty, social justice, human rights, evils of religion and casteism in the light of contemporary happenings in the society and suggested solutions.

Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi's concept of an all-round reformation of human society through the purification of men's mind had its significance in all periods. He figures prominently in the intellectual revolution that shaped modern Kerala. He was the first spiritual leader to emphasis the need of morality and ethics in every aspect of life. His ideas were deep rooted in Indian tradition and free from abuses and superstitious forces. His belief, thought and concepts of man is different from that of his contemporary
reformers. His concepts of liberty, equality, free thinking, rationalism, gender equality and secularism have a common place in Kerala Society. Sivayogi’s revolutionary and ideological struggle has proved useful in the purification process in all fields of human life in Kerala. He was an inspiring force to the socio-religious reform movements in Malabar. The thought and activities of Brahmanda Swami Sivayogi heralded a new era of social equality.
CHAPTER V

VAGBHATANANDA: A SOCIAL REFORMER WITH SPIRITUAL MIND FROM BELOW

Vagbhatananda was a notable social reformer who fought uncompromisingly against the evil customs, rituals and superstitions so as to bring new light into the caste-ridden society of Malabar. He tried his best to liberate people from the fetters of caste, burdensome customs, and traditions through his speech and pen. He was a spiritual leader, a consummate scholar, a fiery orator, a poet of rare excellence, a zealous patriot and an intrepid fighter against social evils.\(^1\) He stands among other stalwarts of his time as the harbinger of secular and egalitarian ideals. He used philosophy and literature as a weapon for social renaissance.\(^2\) Like Sree Narayana Guru he was also an eminent philosopher who followed the path of Advaita of Sankaracharya.\(^3\) He aimed to eliminate all kinds of evil customs and superstitions in the Hindu religion and to spread a way of life based on the Advaita Philosophy \(^4\).

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Birth and Early days:

Vagbhatananda was born Pattiam, a small village near Kuthuparamba in the erstwhile Kottayam taluk (Now in Tellichery Taluk of Kannur district) on 27 April 1885 (1060 Medam 14). He was born in a Tiyya family as the eldest son of Thenankandiyil Vazhavalappil Koran Gurukkal and Vayaleri Cheeruvamma. The child was named Kunhikannan. His father Koran Gurukkal was a well known scholar in Sanskrit and traditional medicine. Koran Gurukkal was a progressive thinker who opposed the evil customs of that time.\(^5\) He wrote Kolkali songs\(^6\) criticising the irrational beliefs and superstitions existed in the society.\(^7\) Koran Gurukkal had also run Sanskrit schools at places like Katheri, Chookkad, Pattiam and Panoor for creating interest in Sanskrit language among his natives.\(^8\)

Kunhikannan earned formal Sanskrit learning and spiritual ideas from his father. He also studied dramas, poetics, puranas and Ithihasas from his father. Soon he began assisting his father in teaching Sanskrit and at the age of 13 he came to be known as Vayaleri Kunhikannan Gurukkal or V.K. Gurukkal. Kunhikannan did not get English education since his father was not able to send him to an English school at Tellichery, the nearest city far

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\(^6\) A kind of dance in which the dancers rhythmically beat sticks against each other by singing songs.


\(^8\) K.K. Pavithran, *n.5*, p.23.
away from his village. But he continued his studies in Sanskrit Grammar and logic from two renowned scholars, M. Korappan Gurukkal (M.K. Gurukkal) and Parambath Ryru Nair. Under the guidance of these two efficient teachers he got knowledge in all the important Sanskrit texts. His meeting with Ganapathi Sastrikal, a well-known scholar in Sanskrit literature, was a turning point in his life who cleared his doubts on important Sanskrit texts. V.K. Gurukkal had good memory and spent much time reading important texts on various subjects. It helped him to widen his sphere of thought. His deep knowledge in the six systems of philosophy, logic and sastras had reflected in his writings and speeches.

The anti-caste songs and philosophical thoughts of Vayatha Swamikal or Vishakananda Swamikal had deeply influenced the career and thoughts of V.K. Gurukkal. He began to oppose the social evils of that time through speeches and writings. For example, the offering of Ilaneerattam performed in connection with the Kottiyoor Festival had increased the financial problems of ordinary families at that time. He wrote a song titled 'Koottiyoor Ulsavapattu' to criticise the exploitative customs like Ilaneerattam,
He also established a musical troupe and performed these songs at the important streets of Malabar. The songs in a way helped to create consciousness among the people against an exploitative custom.

He treated Sanskrit education not merely as an education in language but as a way to learn the precious thoughts. He viewed Sanskrit language as the tongue of Hindu philosophy and morality. He was interested in religious and spiritual discussions and considered Advaita philosophy as a doctrine which was suitable to his reason.

In the beginning years of the 20th century V.K. Gurukkal started Sanskrit schools for teaching primary lessons of Sanskrit at Pathayakunnu, Mokeri, Makkoolpeedika and Panoor. Like his father V.K. Gurukkal also earned fame among his natives as a scholar and an excellent orator. Gurukkal with M.K. Keluvaidyar visited Sri Narayana Guru when he came to Tellicherry in March, 1906. Gurukkal expressed his interests in Sri Narayana Guru's thoughts and deeds except idol worship and temple construction.

V.K. Gurukkal's scholarship and versatility of speech spread outside his native place. Persons like Teyyam Vaidyar and others who heard and attracted towards his speech reached Pattiam and invited Gurukkal to deliver

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14 Pattiam Ramakrishnan, *n.7*, p.29.
15 Vagbhatanandan, *Vagbhatanandante Sampoorna Krithikal* (Mal.), Calicut, 1988, pp. VI-VII.
16 M.S. Nair, *n.9*, p.22.
17 Pattiam Ramakrishnan, *n. 7*, p. 31.
a speech at Calicut. He arrived at Karaparamba near Calicut in 1906 and delivered a speech beginning with ‘Parthaya prathibhodhitham’, one of the verses from the Bhagavat Gita.\textsuperscript{19} The loving persuasion of his well-wishers compelled him to spend rest of his life at Calicut. Manikkam Amma and her known Kaloor family gave all help to his stay at Calicut. He started a Sanskrit school, Tatvaprakashika Sanskrit school, at Karaparamba in 1906. Later it grew into an important centre of Sanskrit education. People not only from Malabar but also from Travancore studied Sanskrit at this school. Subjects like Sanskrit \textit{Kavyas}, \textit{Vyakarana}, logic, poetics, \textit{Ayurveda}, Astrology, architecture and sculpture were taught at the school.\textsuperscript{20}

The school was open to all without the discrimination of caste and age. The students belonging to socially and economically backward castes got free education, food, and accommodation in the school. So the economically backward people belonging to Vannan, Velan and other low castes got an opportunity to receive Sanskrit education.\textsuperscript{21} The school also worked as a centre of serious discussion and ideological disputes.

The eminent Sanskrit scholars of that time, Dr. Ayyathan Gopalan, M.R. Nair (Sanjayan) and others conducted hours of discussion with V.K.Gurukkal.\textsuperscript{22} Pattiam V.K.K. Gurukkal, M.T. Kumaranmaster, P.K. Madhavan Vaidyar, P.Kunhikannan Master, I.P. Vasu, Kuriakkose of

\textsuperscript{19} Vagbhatanandan, \textit{n.15}, p. VII.
\textsuperscript{21} Swami Brahmavrathan, \textit{n.11}, p.56.
\textsuperscript{22} Pattiam Ramakrishnan, \textit{n.7}, p.36.
Pavaratty and C.K. Kochukesavanasan were the important scholars grown in the light of Tatvaprakashika Sanskrit school.\(^{23}\) Among them, P.T. Kuriakkose later started a 'Sanskrit Vidhyapeedam' at Pavaratty on the model of Tatvaprakashika.\(^{24}\)

The socio-religious reform activities of Brahmasamaj at Calicut and its leader, Dr. Ayyathan Gopalan had inspired the social reform activities of V.K. Gurukkal.\(^{25}\) The monotheistic belief of the Brahmasamajists and the opposition of idol worship had considerable impact on Gurukkal. V.K. Gurukkal began to cooperate with Brahmasamaj activities. He made speech against idol worship and other evil customs in the meetings of Brahmasamajam.

The social reforms activities of Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi also inspired V.K. Gurukkal, especially his idea of Yogavidya, Rajayoga, position against idol worship and caste exploitation and discrimination.\(^{26}\) He once visited Sivayogi’s Sidhasramam at Alathur and had long discussions with him. It led to the beginning of a teacher-student relationship between them.\(^{27}\) In 1911 Gurukkal started Rajayogananda Kaumudi Yogasala at Kallai and later at Calicut Nadakkavu.\(^{28}\) He delivered speeches explaining Sivayogi’s doctrine of Rajayoga in different parts of Malabar. He also conducted a three

\(^{23}\) Ibid., p.36.

\(^{24}\) Vagbhatanandan, n.15, pp. VII-VIII.


\(^{26}\) K.K. Pavithran, n. 5, p.43.

\(^{27}\) Vagbhatanandan, n.15, p.VIII.

\(^{28}\) K.K. Pavithran, n.5, pp. 51-52.
month long ‘\textit{Bhagavat Gita Jnanayajna}’ at the Yogasala at Nadakkavu and a series of speeches on Epics like \textit{Ramayana} and \textit{Mahabharatha} at West Hill and Cheruvannur. When he was speaking on Sivayogi’s doctrines at Nadakkavu Yogasala, the opponents of Sivayogi raised criticisms against his doctrines and Sivayogi’s work, ‘\textit{Mokshapradeepam}’, but V.K. Gurukkal very intelligently defended the criticism of the opponents. Sivayogi was fond of his disciple, his scholarship and versatility of speech. He wrote an auspicious verse by giving the name, ‘Vagbhatanandan’ to V.K. Gurukkal to express his gratitude in defending him against criticism.\textsuperscript{29}

Vagbhatananda established a magazine named ‘\textit{Sivayogivilasm}’ from Calicut in 1914 to propagate Rajayoga and other doctrines of Sivayogi. He wrote articles in the magazine opposing temple constructions, superstitions and idol worship. Slowly the fame of Vagbhatananda spread to all parts of Kerala.\textsuperscript{30} He reached Harippad for making a speech to oppose the caste system and idol worship. Sree Narayana Guru was the president of that meeting and he listened to the speech of Vagbhatananda and got attract to it.

V.K. Gurukkal met Sree Narayana Guru at Aluva Advaita Asram on May 15, 1914 and engaged in a discussion.\textsuperscript{31} He opposed Sree Narayana Guru for him giving support to the construction of temples and promoting idol worship as it was against the Advaita philosophy. Sree Narayana Guru refuted Gurukkal’s ideas by stressing the cleanliness associated with temple worship.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{29} Swami Brahmv\textit{rathan}, \textit{n.11}, p. 56.
\item \textsuperscript{30} M.S. Nair, \textit{n.9}, p.27.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Swami Brahmv\textit{rathan}, \textit{n.11}, p.69.
\end{itemize}
Vagbhatananda's criticism provoked him and later he discouraged the construction of temples.\footnote{M.S. Nair, \textit{n.9}, p.28.} The conversation between Sree Narayana Guru and Vagbhatananda was published in the July-September 1914 edition of ‘\textit{Sivayogivilasam}’ monthly. During the time of his travel through Travancore he spoke at different parts of Travancore criticizing casteism and evil customs.

The difference of opinion cropped up between Vagbhatananda and Brahmamanda-\textit{Swami Sivayogi}.\footnote{Pattiam Ramakrishnan, \textit{n.7}, pp. 47-48.} Vagbhatananda wrote a book, \textit{Adhyatmayuddham} or \textit{Anandadarshapradhwamsanam} in 1928 in which he criticised the doctrines of Anandadarsham and Anandamatha of Sivayogi.\footnote{M.S. Nair, \textit{n.9}, p.28.} He is of the opinion that Sivayogi’s Anandamatha was a misleading religion. It is immersed in the darkness of ignorance. He conceives that though everyone wishes for Ananda, one cannot experience it without knowledge. Even before the experience of Ananda, the awareness is immanent in all beings. Hence the nature of everyone is consciousness itself. Thus the existence of knowledge is the natural religion of whole people. The knowledge will help man to distinguish what is false and true.

Vagbhatananda strongly disproved the views of Sivayogi on God. He expressed firm belief in God, who is the preserver and destroyer of the universe and contended that the worship done to him is very much necessary for success in life. The description of Rajayoga by Sivayogi is examined by Vagbhatananda. He says, mere meditation on the middle of the eye brows
irritation alone to the mind and it is never Rajayoga. Without realising the self, if one meditates, one will become more evil than before. Vagbhatananda criticised Sivayogi for giving pre-eminence to mind. Sivayogi’s description of mind as changeless God is the root cause of all miseries. He also opposed Sivayogi’s description of the dissolution of mind as liberation and said that it was similar to the state of deep sleep. Though Vagbhatananda had criticised some of the ideals of Sivayogi, he maintained cordial relations with him till his death. He also delivered a condolence speech on the demise of Sivayogi in the meeting conducted at Calicut on 26th October 1929 and his newspaper, ‘Atmavidyakahalam’ carried an editorial on Sivayogi.

Vagbhatananda differed from other ascetics of his time. He was a revolutionary sage and not a defender of orthodoxy. He used his knowledge in Advaita Vedanta as a weapon for opposing casteism, idol worship, untouchability, superstitions and other social evils. Vagbhatananda travelled throughout Kerala and awakened the people through his speeches.

On April 23, 1922 he married Vagdevi, the daughter of Thattarakkal Dharu of Calicut. They had four sons and three daughters. Vagdevi Amma

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35 Asokan Mundon, Renaissance and Social Change in Malabar- A Study with Special Reference to Anandasamajam, Sidhasamajam and Atmavidyasangham, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Calicut, 2003, p.34.
36 Vagbhatanandan, n.15, p.XI.
37 Ibid., p.42.
38 Pattiam Ramakrishnan, n.7, p.49.
39 M.S. Nair, n.9, p.31.
was a staunch supporter of all the works of Vagbhatananda. At his absence it was Vagdevi Amma who welcomed the visitors of Tatwaprakasika Asram and led the prayer sessions. Vagdevi Amma died on March 30, 1937.

**Writings of Vagbhatananda:**

Vagbhatananda wrote several books on the spiritual and material life of human being. The first important literary composition of Vagbhatananda was ‘Brahmasanamskeerthanam’, songs written for singing in Brahmasamaj meetings. The workers of Atmavidyasangham continuously requested Vagbhatananda to write an authoritative book for spreading Atamvidya movement.\(^{40}\) So his important philosophical work in prose titled *Atmavidya* (The wisdom of soul) was published in the year 1925. The salient features of Advaita philosophy are set down in Atmavidya.\(^{41}\) This work also turned to be the manifesto of his organization, Atmavidyasangham.\(^{42}\)

In the preface to *Atmavidya* Vagbhatananda explained the intention of writing this book. He argues that the treatment of our religion as good and others as bad is dangerous. The cardinal doctrine of all religious leaders is one and their statement of ethics and ideals have a universal form or identical vision.\(^{43}\) In the preface he also paid great tribute to Rajaram Mohan Roy and propagation of his Brahma Dharma. The book contains a description of

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\(^{40}\) K.K. Pavithran, *n.5*, p.158.


\(^{42}\) Swami Brahmavrathan, *n.11*, p.149.

spiritual social and moral principles to be practiced by human being throughout his/her life. The influence of Brahmanical texts like Bhagavat Gita, Kadopanishad and other books on Vedanta are evident in this book. He visualized a society which combines love, self respect, liberty and equality. He says that 'Advaitatmavidya' is the way to oppose social evils. It is a thought for the excellence of individual and society. The book, Atmavidya was an open declaration of the policies and functions of the socio-religious reform movement.

‘Adhyatmayuddham’ or ‘Anandadarshapradhvamsanam’ was another important work of Vagbhatananda published in 1928. There was a controversy on the authorship of the book. The followers of Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi do not recognize Vagbhatananda as the author of the book. Its first edition was published without the name of the author. It was republished in 1981 with the name of the author, Vagbhatananda. In it Vagbhatananda criticized the doctrines of Sivayogi discussed in the book ‘Anandadarsham’. Vagbhatananda rejected Sivayogi’s preaching of non existence of God, consideration of mind as God, and the denial of soul. He is of the view that Sivayogi’s Anandamatha is immersed in the darkness of ignorance and which mislead the men only to atheism.

45 Vagbhatanandan, n.43, p.VIII.
46 Vagbhatanandan, n.35, p.19.
'Atmavidhyalekhamala' published in the year 1934 was another work of Vagbhatananda. It is a collection of his 122 essays published early in his *Atmavidyakahalam* journal and *Mathrubhumi* Daily. It contains an analysis of Advaita doctrine explained in the book ‘Atmavidya’. So it could be considered as a continuation of ‘Atmavidya’. The book also contains his description of liberty, a man's duties and criticism of casteism. Vagbhatananda’s another book ‘Prarthananjali’ is a collection of 27 prayer songs. He by writing these prayer songs aimed to spread the monotheistic belief, real worship of God and universal brotherhood. The prayer songs consists of *Prabha prarthana* (Morning prayer), *Sandhyavandanam* (twilight prayers), *Nidrarambhaprarthana* (Prayers before sleep), prayer songs for children, public meetings, marriages and funeral. The first edition of the work was published in 1937. The followers of Atmavidyasangham still sing these prayer songs during special occasions and in their regular meetings.

Vagbhatananda was also a great journalist and literary critic. He edited and published journals like ‘Sivayogivilasam’, ‘Abhinavakeralam’, ‘Atmavidyakahalam’ and ‘Yajamanan’ to propagate his rational and philosophical thought and to oppose caste system, idol worship, superstitions and evil customs. Perhaps, he began these ventures since the journals and newspapers of that time were not courageous enough to publish articles opposing such social evils. Vagbhatananda’s articles in these journals contributed much to the growth of social renaissance and national consciousness in Kerala. He started ‘Sivayogivilasam’ monthly in 1914 from

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Calicut to propagate the doctrines of his teacher, Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi. The name of the monthly was a commemoration of the name of Sivayogi. The monthly published the doctrine of ‘Rajayoga’, teachings of Sivayogi and propagated his ideas and mission. The differences of opinion between Sivayogi and Vagbhatananda later led to renaming ‘Sivayogivilasam’ monthly as Sivayogavilasam monthly. The publication of the monthly came to an end in 1916.

‘Abhinavakeralam’ was another important journal edited and published by Vagbhatananda from Calicut in 1921. It was started to give instructions to the followers of Atmavidhyasangham on its works and to propagate the aim and message of the Sangham. The journal started with the slogan of Atmavidyasangham, ‘Awake, remember the Lord Almighty, get up immediately and fight against injustice.’ Through the columns of the journal Vagbhatananda criticized social evils and supported the rights of agriculturists and freedom struggle. Though the journal had to be stopped because of financial problems in 1923, it could give stimulation to the social renaissance movement in Kerala.

Vagbhatananda started a weekly called, Atmavidyakahalam in 1929. The weekly propagated the message and works of Atmavidyasangham and criticised the landlords for exploiting the poor peasants in Malabar and the

48 Swami Brahmvratn, n.11, p.74.
49 M.S. Nair, n.9, p.101.
50 K.K.N. Kurup, n.3, p.95.
51 Swami Brahmvratn, n.11, p.105.
52 Ibid., p.191.
British colonialism. *Atmavidyakahalam* stood for the nationalist cause and gave full support to Gandhi’s leadership in the national movement. The Kahalam supported Civil-Disobedience movement introduced by Gandhiji.\(^{53}\) In an article entitled, “Who are the lawbreakers” Vagbhatananda declared that the British are the law breakers and that their government should be tried and impeached by a world court. *Atmavidyakahalam* supported low caste people's entry in temples and inspired the people during the Guruvayur Satyagraha. The editorials published in the weekly on Harijan upliftment, Khadi propaganda, eradication of untouchability etc gave boundless encouragement to the social reform movement and freedom struggle in Kerala.\(^{54}\)

In 1932, Gandhiji came to Kerala and asked the priests to throw open the doors of the temple for the untouchables. The conservative priests were infuriated and put many fallacious questions to Gandhiji in the name of Hindu scriptures. Vagbhatananda supported Gandhiji and wrote a series of articles in *Atmavidyakahalam* weekly. The articles answered all their questions in the light of Vedas, Vedanta, and other scriptures and upheld the rights of the downtrodden people. These articles were published in 1956 by M.T. Kumaran, a disciple of Vagbhatananda, under the title, “*Gandhijiyum Sastravyakhyanavum*” (Gandhiji and the Scientific commentary). This book is a clear evidence for his indomitable will for social reform.


\(^{54}\) M.S. Nair, *n.*9, p.105.
In 1938 Vagbhatananda wrote a series of essays in Mathrubhumi weekly criticizing P. Krishnan Nair’s work, “Kavyajeevithavirthi.” He had the conviction that the content was more important than form. P. Krishnan Nair’s reply to this criticism was also published in the weekly. It was during this time Vagbhatananda thought about starting a new monthly. Eventually, in 1939 he started the ‘Yajamanan’ monthly from Calicut. The name Yajamanan was given in memory of Malabar Atmavidyasangham Patron, Kalliat Chathukutty Nambiar or Kalliat Yajamanan.

**Philosophical Thoughts and Social Vision of Vagbhatananda:**

The philosophical thought of Vagbhatananda had a strong base of rationalism and moral values. He gave stress to the reconstruction of society. He was an enthusiastic preacher and propagandist of Advaita philosophy. He conceived Vedanta as the heart of Hinduism. It can satisfy the human beings who try to find out truth. Vedanta considers that the real fact is *Atma* itself, everything else is unimportant. He said that Advaita which teaches the union of individual soul and supreme soul is the only shelter for people immersed in ignorance and the only cure for the miseries of the world. Advaita helps to the people to understand the importance performing one’s duties even in the midst of all miseries. Though he accepted Advaita philosophy it was not a negation of the material life for him. He opines that the primary duty of an Advaita follower is to fight against caste system, evil.

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55 Pattiam Ramakrishnan, *n.7*, p.80.
56 M.S. Nair, *n.9*, p.103.
57 Pattiam Ramakrishnan, *n.7*, p.73.
customs, rituals and superstitions and to work for the regeneration of the society.

Vagbhatananda expressed firm belief in God who is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe and contents that the respect and worship done to Him is very much necessary for success in life. The ideal of God, the belief and worship dedicated to God can be counted as the important factors that help man to reach the state of Brahman.\(^{58}\) God is the patron of this world and the scriptures are his directives. He taught that an intelligent man must think that there is some purpose behind the creation of the universe. If a man without a reflective thought looks at the universe, he can find many faults in its creator.\(^{59}\) He was of the opinion that truth, independence, peace, happiness and compassion were the basic principles for establishing a better world. God is the root of these virtues. A person, who is not fit to create even a blade of grass has no right to condemn the creation of God. He can never understand the greatness even of his hair.

However, he criticized idol worship saying that God is formless. The path to God is ‘Atmavidya’ or knowledge of Brahman through the worship of God. The powerful and suitable way to know God, according to Vagbhatananda, is the worship of God through prayers.\(^{60}\) There is no other

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\(^{58}\) Vagbhatanandan, \textit{n.15}, p. 538.

\(^{59}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 543.

\(^{60}\) Interview with Manjerikandi Sukumaran, Secretary, Atmavidyasangham, Kappilpeedika, Azhikode, 6.11.2004.
way than offering prayers to God for purifying others and oneself. It helps man to develop power to the discriminate and the ability to recognize those virtues in his life. Right knowledge and courage are the main weapons for attaining success in life.

Vagbhatananda had a deep knowledge in all religions. He is of the opinion that religion should be a private affair of an individual but caste should be abolished. He argued that all religions provide spiritual light and they all strive to attain supreme reality or ultimate truth. Religion and science are intended to help the people to differentiate between morality and immorality. To him religion is a programme for making man a righteous person. He criticized irrational customs and authority of the Vedas in religious practises. He said that, there is no need of conflict between religions as they all have the same aim. The conflicts are created by communal minded persons or those who had not understood the religion in its true spirit. He was against religious conversion. He viewed that there is no necessity to accept another religion as all religions teach universal love and brotherhood. He criticised the role of Arya Samaj for the policy of practising conversion to Hinduism. He considered the religious teachers as the great teachers of humanity. The basic principle of all religious teachers is love. The religious preceptors strive to abolish evil customs and to bring independence. They are

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61 Vagbhatanandan, n.15, p.544.
62 Ibid., p.545.
63 K. Muthulakshmi, n.2, p.212.
preaching to make people become aware of truth, peace, socialism, independence and self satisfaction.

Vagbhatananda aimed at the welfare of the individual and society. He advocated that faith in truth, equality, freedom, peace, unity and compassion is essential for a successful life. His thought has a strong ethical base. He asked the people to follow a virtuous life which is essential to the development of an individual. He was the preceptor of Sanadhana Dharma, the perpetual or everlasting ethics. All people are included in one community, that is, an unchanging perpetual ethics. It is acceptable for all every where irrespective of time, locality and communal differences. Vagbhatananda gave a commentary on the great Indian philosopher Bharathruhari’s twelve doctrines of morality.

In his opinion, the soul which is manifestation of our wisdom is the true happiness or Ananda. 65 He said that self-realization is the real knowledge and salvation is achieved through self-knowledge which is the maximum freedom achieved by a man in his life-time. Vagbhatananda believed that the mind is formless. Ignorance, wickedness and frailty are the three things which corrupt the mind. The mind has the power to grasp all things and only a pure mind can know the formless supreme being or supreme soul. According to Vagbhatananda ‘Rajayoga’ consists in the restraint of all mental modifications. It is the merging of the mind with the effulgent supreme soul.

65 Vagbhatanandan, n.43, p.18.
The practise of ‘Rajayoga’ will remove all evil things from mind.\textsuperscript{66} He says that the world of human beings will be a heaven on the day when we will be able to remove all evil tendencies from our mind. A way to remove evils is to develop positive thinking.

He tells that if we truly wish that our country, and our society should move along the path of civilization we should wish the same for other countries and other societies too. Therefore we should not be inimical to any other individual or movement.\textsuperscript{67} A man becomes a real man when he does not indulge in deeds that are awful. When a man does not desist from doing the beautiful deed in the face of obstacles, even if he confronts death, he becomes a real man. The good advice of parents and teachers will help to do holy deeds in life.\textsuperscript{68} According to him prudence is the important quality of an individual. The belief in superstitions and dis-belief in truth, equality, peace, liberty, fraternity and kindness are the most formidable enemies of man. He considers laziness as the main reason for the poverty in the world and desire as the reason for sufferings. He advocated the principle of doing \textit{Karma} without expectation of rewards, perhaps learned from Bhagavat Gita.

\underline{Forming a Secular organization for Social Reform:}

Vagbhatananda aimed at organizing the people secularly under the wide circle of Adhyatmavidya.\textsuperscript{69} His contact with the activities of the

\textsuperscript{66} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 84.
\textsuperscript{67} C.P. Sivadasan, \textit{n.41}, p.69.
\textsuperscript{68} Vagbhatanandan, \textit{n.43}, p.181.
\textsuperscript{69} Swami Brahmavrathan, \textit{n.11}, p.87.
Brahmasmāj and Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi intensified his works for the social reform. He believed that the existing organisations and movements are insufficient to transform Malabar society. So he decided to form a new organization for the social and cultural renaissance of the people through the popularisation of his own ideas. Vagbhatananda founded the ‘Atmavidyasangham’ (League for self or divine knowledge) in 1917, but later it was registered as a charitable society. It was a secular, intellectual and reformative organization based on epistemology, logic and rationalism of Advaita philosophy. All people irrespective of religion, caste and creed could be the members of the Sangham. It had been a major force of social change in Malabar.

Atmavidya Sangham intended to manifest friendly co-existence and universal solidarity among the people without the barriers of religion, caste and creed. Vagbhatananda and Atmavidyasangham visualized a society of love, self respect, liberty and equality and propagated the principle, 'may all the world live in peace.' Atmavidyasangham had a powerful and inspiring slogan:

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70 K.K. Pavithran, *n.5*, p.90.
72 M.S. Nair, *n.9*, p.69.
“Awake, remember the Lord Almighty,
Get up at once and fight injustice.”

It is clear from this slogan that Vagbhatananda and his Sangham were against all injustices. The slogan was an inducing power in sprouting moral consciousness and virtuous principles in the minds of the people.

The system and programme of the Atmavidyasangham was humanistic and liberal in its outlook. The Sangham enforced a set of rules of personal ethics to its members which were more related to the impersonal philosophy of Advaita. The important objective of the Sangham is to reform the individual and society as a whole. To conduct protest against caste system, untouchability, idol worship, rituals and ceremonies and all sectarian tendencies of religion which created social degeneration were the important agenda of the Atmavidyasangham. The Sangham attempted to liberate people’s mind from superstitions and other evil beliefs and gave importance to an ideal life based on morality. The Sangham workers gave leadership to training in prayer, meditation and deep meditation at the Sangham monasteries and Atmavidyamandirams or Sangham offices.

The first meeting of the Atmavidysangham was held at Karakkad in Badagara taluk. The social activities of the Atmavidyasangham were first started at Karakkad and Cheruvannur villages and under the progressive

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73 This clarion call has a close resemblance to the famous hymn of ‘Kethopanishad’, “Uthishathajagratha, Prapyavarannibodhitha”. (Vagbhatanandan, n. 45, p.XXVI)
74 K.K.N. Kurup, n.3, p.95.
75 Pattiam Ramakrishnan, n.7, p.54.
leaders like Karuppayil Kanaran Master, Dharmaveeran, P. Raghavan, Kannadathu Choyikutty, Angadiveetil Kunhikoru. Soon the branches of Atmavidyasangham were started at Kuttiadi, Kuthuparamba, Pattiam, Azhikode, Kunnothparamba, Nadapuram, Mukkali and other parts of Malabar. The Atmavidyasangham had a good number of followers even in the distant villages of Malabar. Though a good number of its followers were from Tiyya community, it also got followers from other low castes, upper castes and even from other religions. Kalliat Chathukutty Nambiar or Kalliat Yajamanan gave active support to the works of the Atmavidyasangham and served as the patron of Malabar Atmavidyasangham. Tachanattu Vishnu Namboodiri was the president of Malabar Atmavidyasangham.

The social and renaissance activities of the Atmavidyasangham spread to Travancore and Cochin as well. With the support of T.K. Madhavan, Sreedharan Swamikal, Ramasastrikal, Kainikkara Kumarapillai and others Vaghbhatananda formed Travancore Atmavidyasangham in 1920. Later the branches of Atmavidyasangham were formed at Thrikkunnapuzha, Pallana, Thottappalli, Kumarakpuram, Pathanamthitta, Punnapra and Ranni. Kalavara Narayananpillai, an important disciple of Vaghbhatananda, was the patron of Travancore Atmavidyasangham. Swami Brahmvrathan, Swami Aryabhtan, Swami Samanthabhadran, Andi Arayan and Thoppil Sankarapillai were the important preceptors of Atmavidyasangham in Travancore and Cochin. In 1926 about 50 branches of Sangham were functioning under the Travancore

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76 M.S. Nar, n. 9, p.73.
77 K.K. Pavithran, n.5, p. 94.
Atmavidyasangham.\textsuperscript{78} Later Malabar Atmavidyasangham and Travancore Atmavidyasangham joined together and came to be known as Kerala Atmavidyasangham.\textsuperscript{79}

The Atmavidyasangham worked for the freedom and equality of women. Vagbhatananda believed that women upliftment is essential to the progress of society. He said, women should have equality and freedom, but in our society their condition is worse than of animals. Their male counterparts have pushed them in darkness and servitude\textsuperscript{80}. Vagbhatananda formed a women's division of Atmavidyasangham to bring women to the forefront of the social renaissance in Kerala. P. Bhargavi Amma, M. Lakshmi Kutty Amma and K. Devayani, wife of A.V. Kunhambu (veteran communist leader), were the important leaders of the women association of Atmavidyasangham. The association worked for creating awareness among women on education, freedom and equality. As part of this they organised speeches and distributed pamphlets regards them. As a result a number of women actively participated in the social reform activities of Atmavidyasangham.

Atmavidyasangham played a significant role in the literary and cultural field of that period. Well known Malayalam poets like Kumaranasan, Vallathol, Edasseri and the literary critics, like Kutty Krishna Marar and

\textsuperscript{78} Pattiam Ramakrishnan, \textit{n.7}, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Atmavidyakahalam Weekly}, Cheruvannur, 30 October, 1929.

The Atmavidyasangham upheld a rule of conduct for individuals, and timely changes in the customs and ceremonies on the basis of reason. The important works of Atmavidyasangham were mainly conducted in villages. Its followers mingled with the village people, spread progressive ideas resulting major changes in the village societies. The conservatives tried to exclude the Atmavidyasangham workers from marriage and other festive occasions. Admission to schools was denied to their children. The high caste persons denied jobs to the Sangham workers. But these obstacles and crises only added strength to the social renaissance activities of the Atmavidyasangham.81

For example, when conservative Hindus denied admission to schools to the Atmavidyasangham workers' children, Vagbhatananda started Atmavidyasangham L.P. School at Karakkad. The Vagbhatananda Vilasam High School at Chokli, Atmavidyasangham U.P. School at Kolathur, Atmavidyasangham L.P. School at Harippad and Atmaprakasika Girls L.P.

81 Interview with Manjerikandi Sukumaran, Secretary, Atmavidyasangham, Kappilpeedika, Azhikode, 21.11.2004.
School at Karaparamba founded by Admavidyasangham played a decisive role in giving education to the low caste people. The Atmavidyasangham workers also gave leadership to found village libraries. The Sangham conducted 'Atmavidyamahotsavam' at the important places like Harippad, Azhikode, Karakkad, Panoor, Kunnathuparamba, etc. The literary meeting, Inter-dining, whole community meeting and meeting of women were also held as part of this festival.

Vagbhatananda had taken steps to redress the economic distresses of the common people. When the conservative high caste persons ostracised and denied jobs to the Atmavidyasangham workers, he organised them into a co-operative unit. In 1924, he started Uralunkal Service Co-operative Society for achieving labour contract to the Sangham members. It was the first labour contract society in Kerala. In 1925 the society got registration in the name 'Uralunkal Labour Contract Cooperative Society (ULCCS)' 82. The Society conducted the construction works of schools, colleges, bridges and government offices. Besides this Vaghbhatananda started agricultural bank that is 'Uralunkal Aikyananaya Sangham' and 'Uralunkal Cooperative House Construction and Credit Society. These institutions gave social and economics self-sufficiency to the members of Atmavidyasangham.

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82 Today 'Uralunkal Labour Contract Co-operative Society (ULCCS) has grown as a model to co-operative movements world over. It is the biggest labour contract co-operative society in India. In Kerala a number of big and small construction works are functioning under the leadership of the ULCCS. The society gives job to about 2000 labourers and is also active in social service activities in Malabar. (For details see, *Mathrubhumi Sunday Suppliment, 15 February, 2009.*
Against ‘Traditional’ Customs:

Vagbhatananda and his followers criticised those who were continuing a bunch of customs that not only make Malabar a non-progressive state but also impoverishing them. Among them include their fighter against ettu-mattu, black magic, blood sacrifice, puberty ceremonies, and tali-marriage.

‘Ettu-mattu’ was an important custom among the Tiyya community in North Malabar. The customs performed to purify a person who has ‘pula’ and ‘valayma’ was known as ‘Ettu’. ‘Mattu’ is a custom performed to purify menstruated women. These two bad customs were performed under the supervision of one of the members of Kavuthiyya and Vannan community. Those who did not observe ‘Ettu-mattu’ were ostracised from the community. Vagbhatananda and the members of Atmavidyasangham conducted wide propaganda against ‘Ettu-mattu’. Vagbhatananda's speeches and the works of Atmavidyasangham against this age old customs awakened the people and many families in Kunnothuparamba, Karakkad, Badagara, Payyoli, Chombal, Iringal, Puthuppanam and other Villages in North Malabar stopped it.

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83 Pollution or defilement caused by a death in the family. (Death pollution).
84 Pollution or defilement caused by birth in the family. (Birth pollution).
85 K.K. Pavithran, n. 5, p. 74.
86 Swami Brahmavrathan, n.11, p. 140.
Vagbhanananda criticised the observance of 'bali' and expensive funeral ceremonies as well. He considered these customs as superstitious, unworthy and luxurious. He suggested prayer for continues three days after death rather than engaging in age old expensive death rites. The aim was to emancipate poor families from observing expensive and unworthy funeral rites out of social compulsion. Instead of observing such rites he and his followers encouraged people to conduct a three days prayer, singing verses from Vagbhanananda's book 'Prarthananjali'. Such prayers meetings are active even today at Kunnothuparamba, Azhikode and a few other places in North Malabar.

Vagbhanananda opposed the celebration of puberty rituals. He considered this rite as an unnecessary and economically impoverishing activity. Vagbhanananda argued that attainment of puberty was a mere biological process. Atmavidyasangham workers awakened the people against the practice through speeches and pamphlets. The Sangham's propaganda against puberty ritual influenced hundreds of families in Kunnothuparambu, Azhikode, Tellicherry, Panur and other villages in North Malabar which also led them to discontinue the practice.

Vagbhanananda opposed 'Talikettukallyanam' (tali-tying marriage), another unnecessarily expensive custom, prevailed in Kerala. He worked

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87 Performance of obsequies for the souls of the departed. (-Blood sacrifice).
88 M.S. Nair, n.9, p. 77.
89 Mathrubhumi, 13 June, 2003.
hard to create awareness among the people that Talikettukallyanan has no relation with real marriage. Moreover, it was an insult to women. He also criticized those who were conducting marriage of cohabitation as an expensive and luxurious event and urged them to conduct it as a simple function.

He believed in the philosophy of Ahimsa or non-violence. He opposed animal sacrifices which was an ardent practice of ritual worship in Malabar. He considered animal sacrifices in shrines as a shameful observance in a nation which believes in the doctrine of non-violence. He criticized the killing of cocks and the use of liquor in Kodungallur temple in connection with the worship of God. He also opposed the killing of cocks and other animals and the use of toddy as part of the performance of Teyyams in North Malabar. He said to the people, atleast by remembering and thinking about your children, kindly do not let this atrocity happen any more. It is foolish to believe that the offerings of blood and liquor will satisfy the God and give well being to the people. He said that the people who believed in animal sacrifices and liquor offerings to God were despicable fellows. The Sangham workers propagated the doctrine of non-violence and created consciousness among the people against animal sacrifices and other wicked customs. Vagbhatananda's visit and speech against animal sacrifices at Feroke Pallithara temple and Puthuppanam Kalariyullathil temple influenced

91 Atmavidyakahalam Weekly, Cheruvannur, 18 March, 1931.
92 Vagbhatananda, n.15, p. 513.
the temple authorities to stop the ceremony of animal sacrifices in the temple ceremonies.\textsuperscript{93}

Vagbhatananda was an important advocate and propagandist of teetotalism. He believed that drinking of intoxicating liquor was a major obstacle to the welfare and prosperity of both individuals and society. The drinking of liquor is a great sin and calamity in the life of an individual.\textsuperscript{94} He regarded liquor as dirty water that destroys individuals, family and society. He says that no one loves a drunkard, his parents, wife, children and even his body hates the drinking of liquor.\textsuperscript{95} The liquor consumption destroyes senses, intelligence and wealth of a person. The liquor is not suitable to virtuous wisdom. Teetotalism is the only way to clean our mind. He asked the Tiyya people to abandon their traditional occupation of toddy tapping and to shift to other employments. It was pity to see the Tiyyas making toddies and treating themselves as sinners before the world. The Atmavidyasangham workers took effort to propagate Vagbhatananda's idea of teetotalism among the common people. C.S. Kannan Vaidyar, Pacha Kannan Master, M.T. Kumaran Master, Ramunni Vaidyar and many other of the Atmavidyasangham gave leadership to the propagation of the programme of teetotalism among the fisherman, Harijans and other low caste peoples in Azhikode, Alavil, Poothapara and other important places in North-Malabar. The sangham through their campaign were almost successful in saving the

\textsuperscript{93} K.K. Pavithran, \textit{n.5}, pp. 214-215.
\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 225.
\textsuperscript{95} M.S. Nair, \textit{n.9}, p. 56.
life of many youths from the drinking of intoxicating liquor and other bad habits.\footnote{Interview with Shameer Babu, Member, Atmavidyasangham, Kappilpeedika, Azhikode, 29.11.2004.}

Vagbhatananda strongly criticized the construction of temples, installation of idols, and the authority of priests. He said that the temples were the centres of all kinds of evil customs and superstitious ritual. He considered idol worship as a mere superstition and stated that the Bhagavat Gita, a sacred book of Hindu religion, did not accept idol worship. He propagated Nirgunopasana or worship without an idol.\footnote{P.Chandramohan,”Growth of Social Reform movements in Kerala” in P.J.Cherian(Ed), Perspectives on Kerala History- The Second Millenium, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p.461.} Vagbhatananda wrote many articles and conducted speeches explaining the meaninglessness of idol worship. However, he believed in prayer and meditation but not in meaningless rituals. He requested the devotees to stop observing unnecessary practices in the name of God. The Atmavidyasangham workers conducted propaganda against idol worship and meaningless rituals by giving importance to prayer and meditation.

Against untouchability:

Vagbhatananda was against polytheism. He recognised monotheism as the substance of the belief in God.\footnote{M.S. Nair, n.9, p. 62.} He believed in one “Supreme God”. He did not have faith in Vishnu, Siva and Brahma. He thought that all men are equal irrespective caste, colour and creed. Vagbhatananda stated that caste
system, untouchability, unapproachability and other bad customs were unsuitable to the ethics of Hindu religion and nature. The great authorities of Hinduism, ie., Sage Viswamitra and Veda Vyasa were from the lower castes like the Pulaya and the Mukkuva. He considered casteism and untouchability as inexcusable offences and insult to humanity. He said that the spark of God is equally present in every human beings. Vagbhatananda firmly believed that caste, untouchability and other wicked customs were man-made and against the will of God. It is criminal to succumb to caste distinctions in our dealings with others. The firm belief in the meaninglessness of caste is perhaps due to his own experiences as a low born individual who had to suffer much at the hands of high caste people.

He tried to reform the ruined state of the untouchables. He was against the hegemony of upper caste people. He considered the persons who treated high caste people and low caste people alike as greatmen. Even before Gandhiji calling the untouchables 'children of Hari' or 'the children of God’, Vagbhatananda not only called them so but also treated so. Vagbhatananda and his Atmavidyasangham conducted propaganda against the untouchability and visited the houses of low caste people. He instigated the Pulayas to remove the chain of beads worn by women telling that they stand as a mark or symbol of their inferior caste position.99

Vagbhatananda propagated 'inter-marriage' and inter-dining as a powerful challenge to caste system and untouchability. He says that the inter-

99 K.K.N. Kurup, n.3, p 96.
marriage and inter-dining were a suitable step to the integration of the people of different castes and religions in the society. Vagbhutananda created awareness among the people about intermarriage and inter-dining through his speeches and writings. He called inter-dining as ‘Preethibhojanam’ or the happy dining of all people together without the barricade of caste and religion. To him intermarriage is ‘Preethivivaham’ or the happy marriage of the people of different castes and religions.

He quoted examples from ancient scriptures to prove the validity of his actions. He said that Lord Krishna, the patron deity of Sanatanists, himself practised inter-marriage and inter-dining. He argued that if Lord Krishna did not observe caste rules why they should insist caste rules and regulations.100 Vagbhutananda exhorted the people that the marriage between the people of different castes was the recognition of individual liberty.101 He participated in the inter-marriage held at Varkala in 1921 at the annual conference of Brahmamasaj.102 It was considered as the first intermarriage in Kerala. Vagbhutananda and his Atmavidyasangham conducted inter-marriages in different parts of Malabar. The inter-marriage held at Tellicherry between the two teachers of Chalad UP School viz., Madhavan Nair and the Tiyya woman, Madhavi was one among the important inter-marriages conducted under the auspices of Atmavidyasangham. The marriage was conducted

100 Vagbhatanandan, n.15, pp. 839-840.
101 M.S. Nair, n.9, p. 83.
102 Swami Brahmavrathan, n.11, p. 108.
under the supervision of Vagbhatananda and the Brahmasamaj leader, Dr. Ayyathan Gopalan.

The inter-dining or *Preethibhojanam* organised by Vagbhatananda and Atmavidyasangham was a great blow to the practice of untouchability in the caste-ridden society of British Malabar. The inter-dining conducted under the auspices of Atmavidyasangham at Azhikode South in 1927 was the most notable inter-dining which got much attention and participation of the people irrespective of caste and religion.\(^{103}\) Atmavidyasangham conducted a meeting at Azhikode South in Connection with the inter-dining function. It was for explaining the necessity of inter-dining and for inviting the people to the function. The labour officer Rao Saheb Gopalan presided over the meeting.\(^{104}\) Vagbhatananda and Sahodaran Ayyappan explained the importance of the function and requested the people to participate in the inter-dining. Sahodaran Ayyappan in his speech exhorted the untouchables to, "Destroy the old boundaries of caste and come into the forefront of all activities". The inter-dining was held at Vattakandi Pulaya colony of Azhikode South. Ravunni Vaidyar, P. Damodaran master, Mathan Karuvan and many other Atmavidyasangham workers gave leadership to the inter-dining. The people of different castes from Kannur, Tellichery, Panur, Azhikode and other places participated in the Azhikode inter-dining. It made a powerful stirring in the social sphere of North Malabar.

\(^{103}\) K.K. Pavithran, *n.*5, p. 137.

The inter-dining conducted at Azhikode South and the worries of the conservatives with regard to the endeavour was an important incident in the struggle against caste and untouchability.\textsuperscript{105} The conservative upper caste people strongly opposed the inter-dining endeavour. Some of the conservatives attacked Atmavidyasangham workers and other participants of inter-dining. The people who participated in the inter-dining faced opposition from their respective family and they were asked to purify themselves to avoid expulsion from their community.

The head of the Tiyya community in Azhikode excommunicated T.V. Anandan, M.T. Kumaran and other tiyya-caste men and members of Atmavidyasangham for denying undergoing purificatory rites. The community denied Tiyya girls for marriage to the Atmavidyasangham workers and other Tiyya participants in the inter-dining conducted under the leadership of Atmavidyasangham\textsuperscript{106}. They were not permitted to participate in other important ceremonies of the community. The occupation in agricultural field, tile factories and other centres of occupation were also denied to them. But these oppositions and restrictions gave more strength to the social renaissance activities of Atmavidyasangham. The inter-marriage and inter-dining and such brilliant expositions of Vaghbatananda had revolutionary impacts on the society. It contributed to the decay of the caste system and untouchability in Malabar.


\textsuperscript{106} K.K. Pavithran, \textit{n.5}, p. 139.
Vagbhananda opposed the practice of forbidding the low caste people from walking through public roads. He along with the workers of Atmavidyasangham and low caste people led a procession through the public roads in Kannur. Similar procession were soon organised in different parts of Malabar. The Azhikode Atmavidyasangham workers along with a number of Harijan people travelled from Poothapara to Neerkadavu braking the age old custom. Azhikakath Arachan or Andi Arayan, the leader of Araya community at Harippad and the important disciple of Vagbhananda, questioned the denial of permission to low caste people to travel through the adjacent roads of Ambalapuzha Sree Krishna Temple.\textsuperscript{107} He with a number of low caste people led a march through the adjacent roads of Ambalapuzha Sree Krishna temple challenging the fortress of untouchability.\textsuperscript{108}

Vagbhananda gave support to the Vaikom Satyagraha of 1924, another important struggle against untouchability in Kerala. It was conducted demanding permission to all people irrespective of their caste to travel through the roads adjacent to Vaikom temple. Finally the government passed an order giving permission to the low caste people to travel through the roads of Vaikom temple. Vagbhananda prepared an ‘auspicious paper’ to congratulate the victory of Vaikom Satyagraha and it was awarded to T.K. Madhavan, the leader of Vaikom Satyagraha in the Atmavidyasangham meeting held at Harippad in 1926.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{107} Pattiam Ramakrishnan, \textit{n.7}, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{108} Swami Brahmavrathan, \textit{n.11}, p. 136.
\textsuperscript{109} M.S. Nair, \textit{n.9}, p. 107.
Despite being against idol worship and temple centred religious activities, Vagbhatananda and his Atmavidyasangham supported the temple entry movements as a social act for establishing equality. He argued that the denial of entry to temples in the name of caste is injustice and it should be done away with. Vagbhatananda's social renaissance activities had its effects on generating the historic Guruvayur Satyagraha. Guruvayur Satyagraha was started under the leadership of K. Kelappan on November 1, 1931. The Satyagraha demanded that the temple must be open to all people irrespective of caste. Vagbhatananda inspired the people during the time of Guruvayur Satyagraha through his articles in Atmavidyakahalam. He also made a powerful speech supporting Guruvayur Satyagraha in the meeting held at Guruvayur. When one of his disciples questioned his support to Guruvayur Satyagraha which was contrary to his principles against temple and idol worship, he replied that the denial of entry of some people in temples in the name of caste was a problem of denial of human right. The entry to temples either for worship or for some other purpose was related to individual liberty.¹¹⁰

Gandhiji, who was visiting Kerala at that time, made speeches supporting the Guruvayur Satyagraha. He urged the Nambudiri priests to throw open the doors of the temples for the low caste people. But, the arguments of Gandhiji infuriated the conservative priests. Therefore, the conservative Hindus, through a weekly newspaper, 'Sanathana Hindu', which was published to oppose Guruvayur Satyagraha, wrote against Gandhiji and

others who were supporting the Satyagraha. For example, conservatives like Pulppakkara Damodaran Nambudiripadu defended caste system and social discrimination citing examples from Hindu scriptures.

But, Vagbhatananda wrote a series of articles in *Atmavidyakahalam* weekly to answer the *Sanatanists*, where he also quoted the Vedas, Vedanta and other scriptures to defend the Satyagrahis. He said that if there is anyone in the world who truly lived on the ethics of Sanatana Dharma, it was Gandhiji. The Sanatana Dharma manifested not for creating bloodshed by using weapons but for restoring peace and tranquility for the graceful future of the universe. The Sanatana Dharma had to be lived not in the forests but within the nation.\(^{111}\) Vagbhatananda upheld the rights of the downtrodden people. He asked the priests to throw open Guruvayur temple for all public immediately and without any hesitation.

Vagbhatananda asked followers to make permanence in himself by controlling your senses. He believed that freedom was a thing to be achieved through physical and mental progress without disturbing others.\(^{112}\) He said that freedom was emancipation, a great hymn and spiritual in essence. All beings in the world had the right to freedom. All were in a hurry to free from all kinds of bondages and to earn freedom.\(^{113}\)


\(^{112}\) Vagbhatananda, *n.15*, p. 295.

\(^{113}\) M.S. Nair, *n.9*, pp. 92-93.
Against colonial exploitation:

Vagbhatananda was not only a social reformer but a person who worked for economic reforms also. He responded to the economic problems of the contemporary society. He raised his voice against the economic inequalities that existed in society. He argued that any rich person directly or indirectly is responsible for the poverty. He had an overwhelming interest in the welfare of poor peasants as well as proletariats. He criticised the many-sided exploitation of poor peasants in Malabar by the landlords with the help of the British authorities. He believed that caste system and the related social evils were in part responsible for the slavery of peasants. He advocated the unity of peasants against exploitation of the upper classes. He asked the peasants and labourers to wake up and be conscious about their rights.¹¹⁴ Vagbhatananda wrote several articles in 'Abhinavakeralam' and 'Atmavidyakahalam' against the cruel exploitation of feudal lords as well as capitalists and supporting the rights of the poor peasants. In 1932, when the owner of the Calicut Commonwealth inflicted a blow on the labourers, he wrote an article, "Thozhilalikalude Dhuravastha" (Misfortune of the labourers) in Atmavidyakahalam. The article criticised the authoritative and exploitative policy of capitalists towards the labourers.¹¹⁵

I recount here an incident in which Vagbhatananda actively involved championing the cause of proletariats. The incident was happened in a tile

factory at Feroke. Due to reasons unknown a Harijan labourer of the tile factory was beaten to death. A meeting was held to protest against the criminal deed. K.P. Gopalan, a communist leader, demanded an enquiry into the incident and began a hunger strike. Vagbhathananda supported the satyagraha and made a powerful speech explaining the cruelty and injustice done to the Harijan worker. It explained how the new industries exploits the Harijan and criticised the economic policies of the capitalists who are in alliance with the British colonial rulers. Vagbhathananda asserted that:

"A man who keeps four annas (a quarter rupee) puts another man to starvation. One who heaps up more money puts more people to starvation. Thus no men has any right to amass the money meant for common use, nobody has any authority to heap the money up. The Goddess of nature has given air and water to everyone with equal right. It is the message of the great sages of India".  

Vagbhathananda criticised and wrote about the colonial policy of the British government. In *Atmavidyakahalam* he pointed out that the door to India's economic salvation through industries, commerce or anything else had been completely blocked and the people have been reduced to poverty. Those who tried to remedy this gross injustice were shut up in prisons or are kicked and beaten, sometimes even to death.  

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117 *Atmavidyakahalam Weekly*, Cheruvannur, 7 June, 1932.
Vagbhatananda serviced to foster nationalism and for creating political awakening among the people of Malabar. He played a key role in giving inspiration to the freedom struggle. He supported Gandhiji's programmes of liberating India from the British and his constructive programmes like propagation of Khadi, destruction of untouchability and the picketing of liquor shops. He continuously gave instigation to the Atmavidyasangham workers to wear khadi cloths and to respect Gandhi.118

Vagbhatananda travelled through the length and breadth of Kerala like a hurricane, urging the people to fight the British rule in India, irrespective of their religion and caste. The patriotic youths of Kerala were inspired by his spirited writings and speeches. In an article entitled, "Who are the law breakers", he supported the Civil-Disobedience movement launched by Gandhiji. He declared that the British were the law breakers and that their government should be tried and impeached by a world court. The British authorities were much displeased with his article and gave him a strict warning. He supported the sincerity and patriotism of freedom fighters to liberate mother India. Thousands of his followers with enthusiasm and self confidence joined the freedom struggle. M.T. Kumaran master, A. Chathu Master, T.P. Kutty, T.V. Anandan, Pandavath Sankaran Pillai, K. Kumaran, P. Achuthanandan, and a number of Atmavidyasangham workers participated in the Civil-Dis-obedience movement and the Quit India movement.

118 S.Guptan Nair, Adhyathmika Navothanathinte Silpikal, (Mal.), Kozhikode, 2008, p.68.
Vagbhatananda, being an ardent supporter of Ganhiji and his political strategies, took lead in critiquing some of the local leaders and their writing that came up dispensing Gandhiji and his strategies. For example, the periodicals like the 'Mitavadi', 'Gajakesari' and 'Sahodaran' criticised Gandhiji. In fact they were acting as the protagonists of the British rule. In 1931 they published articles attacking the constructive programmes of Gandhiji and the congress. 'Gajakesari' wrote, 'How foolish is Gandhi in thinking that freedom can be attained by spinning charka and prohibition!.'119 'Mitavadi' points out that, "The Congress is the exclusive representative of the vested interests of the caste-Hindus. There is none who has not done more harm to the depressed classes than Gandhi." The 'Sahodaran' said, "The so-called Congressmen are the born enemies of the depressed classes".

Vagbhatananda opposed tooth and nail these anti-national views and supported Gandhiji. He wrote in Atmavidyakahalam, "Is Gandhi a caste Hindu who has made possible inter-dining of the Hindus, Christians and Muslims? He is a great humanist of the world. The spinning wheel even blinded the far distant Lancashire. If we continue spinning by our own hands and stick to prohibition, we will get freedom one day, not in one year. Gandhi is the true socialist who had adopted a Harijan girl and exorcised the ghost of casteism".120 Vagbhatananda reminded the workers of Atmavidyasangham, freedom fighters, and others that they should be vigilant against all kinds of exploitation and should not to fear any thing in the world and should not to

119 K.K. Pavithran, n.5, p. 221.
120 Ibid.
surrender, but to fight against all injustices. His inspiring words, "Don't be inactive when injustice, ignorance and slavery and you are alive", created revolutionary thinking in the minds of the youth. These ideas gained momentum and attracted the youths irrespective of caste, creed and religious beliefs.

Vagbhatananda was influential in inspiring young revolutionaries to freedom movement. For example, the 'Abhinava Bharath Yuvak Sangham' founded by the freedom fighter A.V. Kunhambu of Karivellur in 1934 took inspiration and enthusiasm from Vagbhatananda's movement. The Yuvak Sangham was organised to promote nationalism and developmental activities in the villages. The name of this movement is partly derived from Vagbhatananda's magazines 'Abhinavakeralam' and the organisation, 'Atmavidyasangham'. In 1936, Vagbhatananda presided over the first annual meeting of the Abhinava Bharath Yuvak Sangham convened at Karivellur. The peasant activists like Vishnu Bharateeyan, K.A. Keraleeyan, V.R. Nayanar, Krishna Prakasan and the Atmavidyasangham leader, M.T. Kumaran Master, attended the meeting. The Abhinava Bharath Yuvak Sangham was later absorbed in to the Karshaka Sangham, the organisation of peasants. They helped each other to promote humanitarian endeavours.

**Death and After**

In 1939 Vagbhatananda started a series of speeches on Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiripadu's *Narayaneeyam* every Monday at the

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Sreekandeswara temple at Calicut. It happened to be the last public function of Vagbhatananda. In the middle of the programme he collapsed and entered *Samadhi* at Tatwaprakasika Asram, Calicut on 29th October 1939. Thus ended the sacred and sanctified voice against all injustices.

After his demise, his disciples, like Swami Brahmavrathan, Swami Aryabhatan, Swami Samanthabhadran, M.T. Kumaran Master, Kaloor Sankaran, Samudayathil Madhavanunnithan and others continued his reform activities and propagated his ideas and mission.

The various units of Atmavidyasangham continued their works against drinking liquor, observance of ceremonies after death and other wicked customs. Vagbhatananda's prayers for the tranquillity of the soul of the dead person are active even today under the auspices of the Atmavidyasangham at Kunnothuparambu, Azhikode and other places in North Malabar. The Atmavidyasangham workers and their families are still leading a life according to the ideas instructed by Vagbhatananda. In their families there was no idol worship, no oil lamps as the symbol of hindu religious worship, ceremonies after death and other religious customs. They gave importance to prayer and meditation. The Atmavidyasangham celebrated the birth centenary of Vagbhatananda in different parts of Kerala in 1985. In 1990 Azhikode

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Atmavidyasangham formed an association named 'Atmavidya Prasidheekarana Samiti' to publish all the works of Vagbhatananda.
Conclusion:

Vagbhanatanda wanted to purify the Hindu religion by removing the social evils like caste system, idol worship, superstitions, evil customs and such practices. Sanskritisation was not the path of Vagbhatananda. Instead his social reform movement based on the principles of truth, liberty, equality, fraternity, social justice and human rights tried to wipe out many unjust practices from the Malabar society. His reform activities caused the annihilation of a number of evil customs like *Talikettu Kalyanam, Tirandukuli, Vanathimattu*, untouchability, unapproachability, etc. Vagbhatananda’s efforts contributed to the upward mobility of untouchables. He was successful in inducting a number of common people to the fight against social evils. He played a major role in bringing the people of Malabar to the mainstream of the national movement. Unlike many other social reformers and political activists, he fought against the exploitation of the untouchables by the landlords with the support of the British government. His activities were also influential in the emergence of working class movements in Malabar. His progressive, secular, nationalist and socialist ideologies were later accepted by the organisations like *Abhinava Bharatha Yuvak Sangham, Karshaka Sangham*, etc.

However, Vagbhabatananda's social reform activities did not get much popularity in Kerala. The cultural Kerala failed to give proper recognition to the thoughts and social reform movements of Vagbhabatananda. After his demise, the Atmavidyasangham almost came to extinction on account of the existence of a number of social, political and economic movements in the
region.\textsuperscript{124} The entry of the political organisations like Abhinava Bharatha Yuvak Sangham, Karshaka Sangham and Congress Socialist Party as the organisations of labourers reduced the working field of Atmavidyasangham. The followers of Vagbhatananda were scholars, intellectuals and teachers and therefore, it remained more as an intellectual movement or it became a body of intelligent middle class. It lacked the concept of collective mobilisation of masses which was a significant factor for a successful movement.\textsuperscript{125} Atmavidyasangham was not a body based on a strong economic perception. The absence of an economic group behind Atmavidyasangham had also affected its activities. Atmavidyasangham slowly disappeared from the socio-cultural scene of Kerala by leaving a handful of disciples in some places like Azhikode, Panoor, Karaparamba, Cheruvannur, Thrikkunnappuzha and Thottapalli.\textsuperscript{126}

Vagbhatananda played a decisive role in bringing change in the social life of Malabar. He gave a new vigour and sense of purpose to Kerala society. He combined social reform movement, spiritual and religious reformation efforts and freedom struggle. He could reorient the spiritual thought as a thought to the prosperity of the individual and society. His resolute fight against divisive forces like caste, communalism and regionalism contributed to the growth of secular and political movements throughout the length and breadth of erstwhile Malabar. Vagbhatananda through his

\textsuperscript{124} K.K.N. Kurup, \textit{n.3}, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{126} S.Guptan Nair, \textit{n.118}, p.74.
speeches, writings and other social renaissance activities is able to instigate a re-thinking among the persons who considered their caste as noble than others, who believed untouchability as virtual justice and who argued idol worship as scientific. Although Vagbhatananda did not get universal fame like Sree Narayana Guru, he was a person who had greatly contributed to the well being and all round development of the society.\footnote{E.M.S.Nambudiripad, \textit{Keralam Malayalikalude Mathrubumi}, (Mal.), Thiruvananthapuram, 1964, p.281.} The name of Vagbhatananda will be remembered in the history of social reform movement of Kerala. His movement has been described as one which heralded a modern era in Kerala. The teachings and exhortations of Vagbhatananda still have relevance in the present day Kerala societies.
The name of Swami Ananda Theerthan deserves special mention in the course of discussions regarding the social reform activities in Malabar. He was a militant social worker with a spiritual yet political fearlessness. He was a devoted disciple of Sree Narayana Guru, a veteran freedom fighter, and a true follower of Mahatma Gandhi. He was the saviour and persuading spirit of Harijans in North Malabar. His activities gave a new light and strength to them. He acquainted himself with them, gave education and raised them as persons of self-respect and morale. He conducted struggles against untouchability, exploitation and oppression of Harijans, slavery, injustice and inequality by giving importance to the ideals of non-violence, virtue, truth, love, unity, integrity, purity and fraternity. He had engaged in social reform activities without desiring any fame, reward and honour. His work had spread beyond the borders of Kerala to Tamilnadu and Karnataka.

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Ananda Theerthan, originally named Ananda Shenoy, was born on 2 January 1905 in an affluent Gowda Saraswatha Brahmin family of Tellicherry. His father Ramachandra Shenoy was a port conservator at Tellicherry. Ramachandra Shenoy was a prominent figure of the Gowda Saraswatha community. He was president of the managing committee of the Narasimha temple in Tellicherry. His renowned and sincere service as a port officer got respect and honour of the government at many times. Ananda Shenoy's mother, Devu Ammal was a great devotee. Her habit of taking food only after her prayers greatly impressed Ananda shenoy as a child. Besides Ananda Shenoy they had four sons and two daughters. Ramachandra Shenoy provided good education to his children. The four sons Ganesh Shenoy, Viswanatha Shenoy, Manjunatha Shenoy and Damodara Shenoy shined in the ranks like engineer, teacher, auditor and advocate. He gave his daughters in marriage to persons of well-to-do families. But Ananda Shenoy with a universal approach of brotherhood remained as a social revolutionary.

2 The early name of Swami Ananda Theerthan.

3 Gowda Saraswatha Brahmmins were a minority in Hindu religion. They were popularly known as 'Konginis'. The 'Shenoys' and 'Kammaths' are the subcastes within this community. They first settled in Kashmir valley and due to the invasion of Timur and Chengizkhan, they were forced to leave their native place and migrated to different parts of South India. They reached and settled in places like Goa, Uduppi, Mangalore, Kanhangad, Payyannur, Kannur, Tellicherry, Kozhikode and Cochin. Majority of them became traders as well as merchants.


5 A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, *n.1*, p.16.

6 V.K. Kunhiraman, *Swami Ananda Theerthan*, (Mal.), Tellichery, 1971, p.15
Ananda Shenoy was a man of few words, a symbol of humanism and self respect. He realized the pathetic condition of the untouchables. He did not have more friends in his Sarawatha Brahmin community. His friendship was mainly with the children of the Harijan community. In the initial days, his friendship with Harijan children created distress in his high caste family. The unusual character of Ananda Shenoy often gave embarrassment to his mother. His mother once said about his association with Pulaya children, “How is it that a Pulayan was conceived in my womb.”

Ananda Shenoy began his revolution against casteism and untouchability within his home. During that period the members of the lower castes had no right to visit the houses of upper caste people. One day Ananda Shenoy brought two Harijan children into his house and demanded his mother to give them food. Initially she refused but under mounting pressure she had to serve food to them. Ananda Shenoy said to his mother, ' My request you to serve food to them is intended to destroy the elements of casteism from your mind. Later she understood the mission of her son and supported his activities. This was the first struggle conducted and won by Ananda Shenoy against untouchability and caste discrimination.

Ananda Shenoy's father had contacts with the activities of the Aryasamaj. The Swamis of Aryasamaj used to visit his house and to talk with his father. As a silent listener, the boy Ananda Shenoy attentively heard these conversations. He was attracted towards their saintly life. He considered the

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8 Ibid., p.23.
saints who had no ego as the most sincere human beings in society. It was from this stand that he came to know more about Aurobindo Ghosh, Ramana Maharshi, Sivananda Paramahamsar and Ramdas.

Ananda Shenoy was a brilliant student with excellent academic record. He did his schooling at Tellicherry Brennen High School. While studying for the SSLC he became a friend of Chidambaranath, son of a district judge from Travancore who was in charge of the Congress office in Tellicherry. Under his influence he started wearing khadi and became a regular reader of 'Young India'. The reading of 'Young India' and other books helped him to acquire knowledge about the contemporary society. It helped him to know more about the national movement and Gandhian thought. The continuous reading of 'Young India' improved his knowledge in English. He passed the SSLC examination at the age of 16 with a high first class. For scoring the highest marks in the SSLC examination he was awarded the 'Grig Memorial Scholarship'.

The incidents reported from his school days reveal the courage with which Ananda Shenoy held on to his convictions as well as his uncompromising temperament, which were characteristic of him throughout his life. During his school days he was attracted to the freedom struggle.

While his classmates were dressed in European fashion, which was current in

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9 A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, n.1, p.17.
10 Vanidas Elayavoor, n.4, p.27.
those days, he used *Khadi* clothes. One day in the history class, the teacher was lecturing on Robert Clive's conquests. He felt that the lecture contained a little bit of praise of Clive's deeds. Suddenly, he stood up and shouted, "Clive was a robber". Later he expressed regret to his teacher for disturbing the class. Ananda Shenoy got knowledge in Sanskrit from his house. It helped him to get acquainted with the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads and such books and to learn hundreds of verses from them\(^\text{12}\).

Ananda Shenoy did his intermediate education in Tellicherry Brennen College. In 1923 after passing the intermediate examination in first class he went to the Madras Presidency College for higher education. In 1926, he passed the BA Honours (MA) in Physics with second rank in the Madras Presidency. His study in Madras caused the multifaceted development of his personality. He made contacts with the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission and Theosophical society\(^\text{13}\). Political activism was very much alive in his college days. When some of the students wanted to put the photo of the hostel warden, S. E. Ranganathan (Later High Commissioner of India in Britain) in the Madras Victoria hostel, Ananda Shenoy and his friend, H.V. Kammath opposed it and wanted instead to put up Gandhi's picture. In the end a compromise was arrived at, every one agreeing not to put up any photo at all.

\(^{12}\) Vanidas Elayavoor, *n*. 4, p.216.

\(^{13}\) V.K. Kunhiraman, *n*.6, p.16.
He came to read about the historic Vaikom Satyagraha of 1924 led by K. Kelappan, T.K. Madhavan and others\textsuperscript{14}. He learned that even the right to use public roads was denied to the untouchables and backward classes. The movement had a great impact on him. He also read the press report on the meeting between Mahatma Gandhi and Sree Narayana Guru. In 1925, Ananda Shenoy participated as a volunteer in the congress meeting held at Tellicherry.

Ananda Shenoy read the works of Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Rama Thirth, Ramana Maharshi, Rajaram Mohan Roy and Swami Vivekananda and realised the importance of social work. Swami Vivekananda's description of the caste-ridden Kerala society as a 'lunatic asylum' and his call, 'Go to the untouchables and work for them' had made a deep impact in his mind. He revolted against untouchability. He had the opportunity to associate with the leaders of the Ramakrishna mission and had an idea to join the mission to fight against casteism. But finally he gave up the idea because of their soft attitude towards caste. He found that the Mission had not the guts to fight untouchability. Disgusted with the caste-ridden Hindu society, he wanted to become a Christian and approached a Christian missionary. But he was dissatisfied with the questions of the missionary and abandoned the attempt\textsuperscript{15}.

Ananda Shenoy had directly experienced the harshness of untouchability. The event had happened while he was visiting the temple city of Guruvayur for buying a few articles. When he approached the shop, the owner of the shop, before serving the articles demanded, asked Ananda’s

\textsuperscript{14} A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, \textit{n.1}, p.21.
\textsuperscript{15} Vanidas Elayavoor, \textit{n.4}, p.45.
caste. Ananda Shenoy declined to disclose his caste. Soon he realized that at the temple city the Tiyyas were forbidden entry into the shopping area. He was again asked to reveal his caste when he entered the temple pond for taking bath. He persisted in his refusal and the result was that he was severely beaten up by the caste Hindus and taken to the Devaswam Office. The Devaswam officer recognized Ananda Shenoy and thus he was saved 16.

While he was studying at Madras, he got opportunities to know more about the thought and movement of Sree Narayana Guru. He was attracted by Sree Narayana Guru's great revolutionary slogans, 'One caste, One religion and One god for men' and 'Don't ask, tell or think caste.' Ananda Shenoy identified himself with the Gandhian constructive programme and the social reform movement of Sree Narayana Guru. He realised the fact that the biggest problem and the important challenge facing the existing society was caste. He said, 'my conception of freedom has made me understand that caste was an injustice'. He felt that social reform had priority over national freedom and wanted to work for the cause through social reform works.

Ananda Shenoy decided to participate in the social reform activities of the Sabari Asram. Sabari Asram was started by T.R. Krishnaswamy Iyyar soon after the State Congress convention held at Palghat in May 1923 17. It was started with the aim of propagating Gandhian ideals and training

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16 E.M. Ashraf, n. 7, pp. 33-34.
17 A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, n.1, p.23.
Satyagrahis for the freedom struggle. T.R. Krishnaswamy Iyyar had rendered a great service for the uplift of Harijans focusing at the Sabari Asram. The Asram had boys from high and low castes of the Hindu religion and also from the Muslim community. He reached the Sabari Asram at Olavakode near Palghat on September 10, 1926. Here Ananda Shenoy lived as a social revolutionary who vehemently criticized caste system and played a major role in Harijan uplift programme. In the struggle against untouchability Ananda Shenoy had to face ruthless physical and mental attacks from caste Hindus. In 1926, the Aryasamajists led a struggle for opening the Kalpathi road to the Avarna castes. Ananda Shenoy joined the agitation and fought for establishing the right of the untouchables to walk through the streets. The caste Hindus opposed it and mercilessly attacked Ananda Shenoy and others. Later the road was opened to all, irrespective of caste. The Kalpathi struggle was the beginning of his life long struggle for the eradication of untouchability.

The Sivarathri festival of the Kallekulangara temple at Palghat was famous. On the Sivaratri day in February 1927, the children of the Sabari Asram decided to go to the festival fair near the temple. The place was not open to the untouchable castes. Now Ananda Shenoy led a small group of lower caste people to the Kallekulangara temple Sivaratri festival fair. On

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18 V.K. Kunhiraman, n.6, p.17.
seeing the untouchable children, the caste Hindus prevented them entering the area and ruthlessly beat them including Ananda Shenoy.

While working at the Sabari Asram, Palghat, he came in contact with the Nayadi community, the people who were thought to pollute by sight\textsuperscript{20}. In Kuzhalmandam near Palghat, there was a large colony of Nayadis. Ananda Shenoy took initiative to bring a number of Nayadi children from Kuzhalmandam area to the Asram. But they did not stay in the Asram for long days, they ran away from the Asram\textsuperscript{21}. Ananda Shenoy submitted a petition to the government demanding permission to Nayadis to walk through the public roads. Dr. Carlstone, Sub-collector of Malabar wholeheartedly supported Ananda Shenoy's work and enforced the right of Nayadis to walk through the public roads.

In September 1927 Ananda Shenoy went to Coimbatore in connection with the works of the Sabari Asram. There he got the news that Sree Narayana Guru was taking rest in the house of a Chettiar. Soon he went to the house and met Sree Narayana Guru with the help of C. Achuthan, the president of Kozhikode Sree Sundareswara temple committee. Sree Narayana Guru praised Ananda Shenoy's protection of the children of poor people. This was his first meeting with Sree Narayana Guru\textsuperscript{22}. Mahatma Gandhi visited the Sabari Asram in the first week of October 1927. He called upon the Asram inmates to boycott liquor shops, eradicate untouchability and produce

\textsuperscript{20} Swami Ananda Theertha, \textit{Smaranakal} (Mal.), Tellicherry, 1980, p.10.
\textsuperscript{21} V.K. Kunhiraman, \textit{n.6}, p.18.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Malayala Manorama Sunday Supplement}, 3 July, 1988.
and wear Khadi clothes. Ananda Shenoy complained to Gandhiji about the separate feeding of Brahmin children in the Asram. Gandhiji wanted all of them to be treated in equal manner. Hence T.R. Krishnaswamy Iyyer sent away the Brahman boys and gave the charge of the Asram to Ananda Shenoy. In his speech at Kozhikode, Gandhiji praised the Sabari Asram's works for the production of Khadi clothes, training of Satyagrahis for the freedom struggle, and protection of low caste children.

Sree Narayana Guru came to Palghat in October, 1927. Ananda Shenoy went to the house of Dr. Krishnan, where Sree Narayana Guru was taking rest. He invited Sree Narayana Guru to the Sabari Asram. Sree Narayana Guru visited the Asram and spent much time with the children of the Asram. He advised the children to pay attention to their study and keep cleanliness. In February 1928 Ananda Shenoy led a pilgrimage to Gandhiji's Sabarmati Asram near Ahamedabad in Gujarat. Most of the journey he covered on foot. On the way he visited Babubudangiri, a holy place which promoted Hindu-Muslim brotherhood and met Sidharuda Swami at Hubli. He directly experienced the harshness of casteism in the journey. On his way, through Ratnagiri in Maharashtra he went to the house of an untouchable and asked for water. They refused to give water by saying that it was a sin to offer water to a high caste man. Then he went to the house of a high caste man, but he was driven away on the ground that he had gone to the

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23 Vanidas Elayavoor, n.4, p.49.
24 Swami Ananda Theertha, n.20, p.11.
house of the untouchables. Finally he went to the house of a Muslim and they gave food and water to him. Ananda Shenoy realized the fact that the important abuse in the Hindu religion was caste and untouchability. After four months' long journey he reached the Sabarmathi Asram in May 1928. In June he left the Asram and reached the Palghat Sabari Asram by train.

In July 1928, while he was preparing for a visit to Sivagiri, he received a letter from Sivagiri Asram asking him to visit Sree Narayana Guru as early as possible. Ananda Shenoy readily responded and reached Sivagiri on the night of July 31st, 1928. After his meeting with Sree Narayana Guru, he expressed his desire to become a disciple of Guru. Sree Narayana Guru consulted the members of the Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham. They wanted a period of one year for initiation before joining the Sangham. Sree Narayana Guru rejected their opinion and said, 'No need for so much delay, I know him very well and it would be good if we admit him to the Dharma Sangham.'

Sree Narayana Guru asked Ananda Shenoy to shave off his hair and be prepared to accept the attire of a saint. On August 3, 1928 Ananda Shenoy appeared with a shaven head before Sree Narayana Guru who gave saffron clothes and Theertham (purificatory water) to him. Guru asked his name, he replied, 'Ananda Shenoy.' Then he kept silence and said, You are Ananda Theerthan from today onwards. Thus Ananda Shenoy became Ananda Theerthan, the last direct disciple of Sree Narayana Guru. Ananda Theerthan signed in the register of Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham and became a

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26 A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, n.1, p.28.
27 Swami Ananda Theertha, n.20, p.14
member of the Sangham. Sree Narayana Guru did not give him any guideline to be followed in future rather left Ananda Theerthan free to act up on his consciousness. Guru poured the spirit of morale in the mind of Ananda Theerthan to work for the untouchables. Guru gave him the message, "Do not fear, there is plenty of work to do". He considered these words as a great message of his Guru and decided to start his mission against untouchability. He left the Sivagiri Asram on August 5, 1928.

Swami Ananda Theerthan did not observe the orders of a monk. His only order of life was the service to Harijans. He considered untouchability as a virus prevalent in Hindu religion and fought against its eradication with the consent and blessings of his Guru. In 1929 Ananda Theerthan cooperated with the works of Sradhananda Vidyalaya at Payyoli near Vatakara. Sradhananda Vidyalaya was a residential school for untouchable children started by K. Kelappan in 1924. Now it is known as Gandhi Sadhanam of Pakanarpuram. While staying at Sradhananda Vidyalaya, Ananda Theertham with a Harijan boy walked through the nearby Chaliya street. The Chaliyas prevented and mercilessly beat him up for bringing an untouchable to their street. K. Kelappan condemned the attack and wrote an article on the incident in the Mathrubhumi newspaper.

In 1930 the Congress launched the Civil-Disobedience movement. As part of this, preparations were begun for the Salt Satyagraha all over the

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country. Ananda Theerthan also extended his support and actively participated in the attempt to break the salt law. He worked with C. Kesavan Nair, who was an active participant of Civil-Disobedience movement in North Kerala. Ananda Theerthan with Kesavan Nair travelled in different parts of Malabar to mobilize the people for the salt Satyagraha.

In 1930 a delegation under the leadership of Ananda Theerthan went to Trichinopoly to join the Salt Satyagraha procession led by C. Rajagopalachari from Trichinopoly to Vedaranyam. Ananda Theerthan had the honour of being 'standard bearer' leading the jatha. As a member of the special group he was assigned to visit the Harijan slums and got an opportunity to know the disability and sufferings of the Harijans. In the course of the Salt Satyagraha, processions and meetings were held in all evenings to propagate the mission of the freedom struggle. In those meetings Ananda Theerthan saw that the untouchables were seated separately far away from the public. He opposed this discrimination and asked about this to the procession leader, C. Rajagopalachari. Rajagopalachari allowed the volunteers, if any one desired, to sit with the untouchables. Ananda Theerthan also tried to take the Harijan children to bath in the public ponds along with the Satyagrahis. In most places they did not have the courage to

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30 A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, n.1, p.29.
31 Swami Ananda Theertha, n. 20, p.19.
32 Vanidas Elayavoor, n.4, p.58.
go with him being afraid of the opposition of caste Hindus. These incidents helped him to realize the pitiable condition of the Harijans in Tamilnadu.

There were grim battles between the Satyagrahis and the police in the salt swamps at Vedaranyam. Ananda Theerthan was arrested along with Santhanam, M.V. Naidu and other members of the Satyagraha camp on June 1, 1930 and sent to Vellore jail. In the jail he established intimate relationship with prominent Congress men like K. Kelappan, A.K. Gopalan, L.S. Prabhu and Kongattil Raman Menon. He discussed with them the problem of the denial of social rights to the depressed classes and their exclusion from temples. In February 1931, Ananda Theerthan and other prisoners were released as per the Gandhi-Irwin pact. After his release from jail he requested K. Kelappan and other leaders to start the temple entry movement.

Ananda Theerthan came to Tellicherry and continued his activities as a Congress volunteer. He along with C.K. Govindan Nair, L.S. Prabhu and other Congress workers took a leading role in organizing a volunteer camp for the Satyagrahis at Tellicherry. It was the first of its kind in North Malabar. The main objective of the camp was to train Satyagrahis for the picketing of liquor shops, boycott of foreign clothes and to propagate Khadi, inter-dining and national education. The Hairijan children from K. Kelappan's

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33 Swami Ananda Theertha, n.20, p.19.
Sradhananda Vidyalaya were also brought to the camp. When the Harijan children with the Satyagrahis of the camp went to the Tellicherry Thiruvangad temple pond to bath, the caste Hindus prevented and did not allow them to take bath. Ananda Theerthan taught Hindi to the Satyagrahis of the camp. He with camp members, freedom fighters and others visited the native houses and distributed the pamphlets about the mission of the freedom struggle. The camp members collected rice, vegetables and money from these houses for the working of the camp\textsuperscript{36}. After the termination of the camp, Ananda Theerthan participated in the picketing of toddy shops and foreign cloth shops along with the Congress workers at Tellicherry.

The historic struggle for temple entry, the Guruvayur Satyagraha, began under the leadership of K. Kelappan on November 1, 1931\textsuperscript{37}. A number of Congress workers under the leadership of K. Kelappan conducted a procession to the Guruvayur Sree Krishna temple and started the Satyagraha by raising slogans, for the eradication of untouchability and demanding temple entry to all people irrespective of caste and social justice to all\textsuperscript{38}. Ananda Theerthan also participated in it. He worked to recruit volunteers to the Satyagraha. He was a member of a procession of sixteen volunteers procession led by T. Subramanian Tirumumb on October 21, 1931 from Kannur to take part in the Guruvayur Satyagraha.

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\textsuperscript{36} V.K. Kunhiraman, \textit{n.6}, p.23.
\textsuperscript{38} Vanidas Elayavoor, \textit{n.4}, p.89.
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The pitiable 'Kandoth incident' had occurred a few months before the Guruvayur Satyagraha. A. K. Gopalan, K.A. Keraleeyan and others with a group of Harijans led a march through the road in front of the Tiyya shrine, Sri Koormba Bhagavathi temple, Kandoth near Payyannur. The local Congressmen boycotted the march. The orthodox Tiyyas mercilessly assaulted A.K. Gopalan, K.A. Keraleeyan, the Harijans and other participants of the march. Later they were admitted to a hospital. Ananda Theerthan heard about this incident and visited A.K. Gopalan, K.A. Keraleeyan and others in the hospital. He felt unhappy about the denial of the right to Harijans to travel even through the public road. He realized that among the 'Avarnas' themselves also untouchability was practised. He said, 'It is very miserable that the people who fought against colonial rule for freedom denied freedom to our own people, the Harijans, in the name of caste.'

Ananda Theerthan realized the pathetic condition of the Harijans. They had been the victims of age-long oppressions and suppressions from the caste Hindus. They were the most neglected people of the society. He believed that the ill-treatment of this down-trodden class was the blackest shame of our society. The real solution to the problem of the Harijans was a religious renaissance. This meant the destruction of caste, untouchability and other evil elements from the religion. Caste had destroyed rationality and humanity. It dishumanised the people. It made them worse than animals. As long as caste consciousness and caste discrimination remained, the nation would never attain freedom, unity and progress. To him religion did not

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39 A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, n.1, p.32.
mean sectarian organizations but the understanding and practice of the universal principle of love, service and sacrifice. He was of the opinion that the teachers of mankind like Ramdas and Sree Narayana Guru were persons, who stood for the destruction of all kinds of inequalities in the society.

He said, 'I will become happy only when I see the poor Harijans have equal treatment when they ask for their primary needs. God is an all pervading force. Service to man is the real service to God. I do not go to temples to seek God. Temple is the biggest institution which protects casteism and untouchability. I go to temples only to enquire whether untouchability is installed at that place and, if so to destroy them. My number one enemy is the person who practises untouchability and number two is the person who helps him. Caste and caste name are meaningless. The heart of a man will become pure and his love for fellow men genuine only when he removes his caste name from his name.' He asked the Harijan youths to be humane, brave and humble.

Ananda Theerthan understood the hostile attitude of the savarnas including some Congressmen towards the untouchables. Though the congressmen were fighting for national freedom, majority of them were not ready to work for granting freedom to the untouchables. Though the programme of the eradication of untouchability and Harijan uplift are

included in the Gandhian and Congress programmes, they were conducted as part of the freedom movement. He thought that the work for the eradication of untouchability and uplift of Harijans as part of political activities had not helped to bring about any immediate change. When this realization dawned on him he lost interest in politics. He was determined to dedicate himself to the fight for the eradication of untouchability and the uplift of Harijans.

Payyanur was one of the important centres of the freedom struggle in Kerala. It was also one of the most conservative centres of orthodox Hinduism. The Harijans were not permitted to use even the public roads of Payyannur and nearby villages. The Harijan children were not admitted to the public schools. They suffered different types of opposition and physical attacks from orthodox Hindus. The 'Kandoth incident' of 1931 was one of the important examples of this kind. These incidents inspired Ananda Theerthan to select Payyannur as the centre of his movement for Harijan uplift and eradication of untouchability.

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42 Vanidas Elayavoor, *n.* 4, p.91.

Ananda Theerthan identified the importance of education in bringing about awakening among the Harijans. He considered education as the most important medium in bringing progressive ideas, self confidence, self respect, permanent change and emancipation to the Harijans. With the intention of imparting education to the Harijan children, he started the Sree Narayana Vidyalayam\(^44\) at Payyannur with five students on November 21, 1931 in a small old building of an engineer, Krishnamenon, situated north to the Sree Subramanya Swami temple, Payyannur and later transferred it to the building of the congress leader C.H. Govindan Nambiar\(^45\). Ananda Theerthan intended to secure a permanent site for the Sree Narayana Vidyalaya. But no one was willing to sell their land for a Harijan hostel. Finally Ananda Theerthan persuaded a Muslim, Abdulkhader, to buy some land in his name\(^46\). The latter bought a piece of land near the Government hospital, Payyannur from a Nambudiri and later transferred it to Ananda Theerthan. There he built a permanent building for the Sree Narayana Vidyalaya by using the money which he received from his father as his share of the ancestral property.

Ananda Theerthan opened Sree Narayana hostels for Harijan children in other places of North Malabar, namely, Pazhayangadi, Kannur, Tellicherry and Kalliassery. These hostels functioned as the branches of the Vidyalaya.

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\(^{44}\) Popularly known as Sree Narayana Asramam
\(^{45}\) V.K. Kunhiraman, *n.6*, p.25.
The inmates of these hostels were admitted to nearby public schools. At the initial stage these branches worked properly. Prominent personalities like A.K. Gopalan, K.A. Keraleeyan, T.C. Narayanan Nambiar, Vishnu Bharatheeyan, K.P.R. Gopalan, Subramanya Shenoy and Narayanan Adiyodi supported Ananda Theerthan for running these hostels. Later, because of financial crisis and technical problems, the branches of the Sree Narayanan Vidyalaya were closed.

Ananda Theerthan visited the houses of Pulayas, Paniyar, Chaklier and Mavilar in order to recruit children to his Sree Narayana Vidyalaya. The lower caste people had little ambition to educate their children since the latter also formed part of the workforce of the family and thereby contributed a share to the subsistence of the family. Moreover educating children was too expensive and they were also afraid of the opposition from caste Hindus. When Ananda Theerthan came to know about it, he conducted a wide propaganda among the parents of the Harijan children about the importance of education. He also gave some financial assistance to the parents to compensate for the loss of income from their children's work.

In the initial days Harijan boys and girls were admitted to the Sree Narayana Vidyalaya. Later the admission was restricted to boys only. Among the inmates of the Vidyalaya were a few children from the hill tribes.

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49 Interview with Swaminath Padinjaremana, Secretary, Swami Ananda Theertha Trust, Payyanur, 8.8.2004.
(Girijans) and the children of the converted Christians. Before the independence of India Harijan children from Ottappalam, Palakkad and even from Travancore were admitted to the Sree Narayana Vidyalaya and had studied in the nearby schools.

In the early years Swami Ananda Theerthan faced financial difficulties to maintain the Sree Narayana Vidyalaya. He managed the day-to-day expenses of the Vidyalaya with the little donations and the small boarding grant. In 1937, when Rajagopalachari became the Chief Minister of Madras, the Vidyalaya began to get grant from the government.

Swami Ananda Theerthan did the duty of a father as well as a guide. He gave much attention to the education, discipline and hygiene of the children of Vidyalaya. On Saturdays and other holidays he taught spiritual, moral and secular lessons to the inmates. The students were also received special instructions in English, Mathematics and Hindi.

Swami Ananda Theerthan introduced a new method of life in the Sree Narayana Vidyalaya. The Vidyalaya followed strict discipline and cleanliness. All inmates had to get up at 4’o clock in the morning. The first task was to clean the rooms, outside areas of the Vidyalaya, bathrooms and utensils and to wash their clothes. Then they had to take bath and go for prayer. The prayer included the readings from the Bhagavat Gita, recitation of the Gayatri Manthram, Christian and Muslim hymns and the songs composed by Sree Narayana Guru. After the prayer it was study time. The boys in batches of four used to take turns to help the cook in the kitchen. At
9am they took their breakfast and left for school. When they returned from the school in the evening they were allowed to play. Then they took bath and went for prayer at 7 pm. After their meals they sat for studies till 10 pm. The children also got training in gardening, spinning the *charka*, making small furnitures and hair cutting. Swami Ananda Theerthan taught the inmates the importance doing what is called 'Sahana Samaram' or non-violent resistance. One group would act as Satyagrahis while others would pose as policemen. The training had some practical use when they participated in the programme of picketing and other non-violent struggles.

**Theerthan and direct struggle against untouchability:**

The next phase of his Harijan uplift programme was the direct struggle against untouchability and other caste discrimination. He conducted struggles for the entry of untouchables in schools, temples, tea-shops, barber shops and other places. In this phase he had to fight with the caste Hindus. Numerous times he fell as a victim to their assault. He filed cases against caste Hindus while they denied admission to Harijans and other low caste people in schools, temples and other public places. He was well aware of the value of the legal solutions to the problems of a religious and social nature like untouchability. What he wanted above all to achieve through these legal battles was to pose a challenge to the age-old practice of untouchability.

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51 A.M. Abraham Ayrokuzhiel, *n.1*, p.42.
The public schools in different parts of North Malabar had refused to admit Harijan children. The Basel Evangelical Mission L.P. School in Payyannur was the scene of Ananda Theerthan's first attempt to breakdown caste prejudices observed in public schools at that time\textsuperscript{52}. One day Ananda Theerthan went to the BEM school and sought admission there for an inmate of his hostel. Then the headmaster of the school was a converted Pulaya. Afraid of the opposition of the caste Hindus he refused to give admission to the Harijan student. Ananda Theerthan submitted a petition to Mr. Carlstone, the sub Collector of Tellicherry. Carlstone ordered the admission of the student to the school. The name of the student was Prabhakara Sharma who later won the national award for teachers for meritorious service\textsuperscript{53}.

The Harijan children of the Sree Narayana Vidyalaya faced many types of oppositions and physical attacks from the orthodox Hindus. I could briefly mention a few of such incidents. In 1932, Prabhakarasharma who was one among the first batch of children in the Sree Narayana Vidyalaya was beaten up by the orthodox Chaliyas while returning to the vidyalaya after distributing the Mathrubhumi newspaper in the chaliya street near Payyanur Sree Subramanya Swami Temple. The caste Hindus created obstacles on the way of the Harijan children's journey to Varanamkode school. Ananda Theerthan reported it to the police and the police ordered the removal of the obstacles. In a school near Payyannur Sree Subramanya Swami temple, human excreta and other dirt were found in class rooms following the admission of Harijan

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid.}, p.37.

\textsuperscript{53} Swami Ananda Theertha, \textit{n.} 20, p.21.
children\textsuperscript{54}. The next day Ananda Theerthan himself led the Harijan children to the school. He was assaulted by the caste Hindus near the temple. Ananda Theerthan submitted a petition to Tellicherry subcollector, Mr. Carlstone. He ordered the police to give protection to the Harijan children.

The Aided Higher Elementary school at Othayamadam in Cherukunnu was situated near a prominent caste Hindu temple. The Harijans of this region were afraid to seek admission for their children. Swami Ananda Theerthan boldly took two Harijan boys from his Payyannur Sree Naryana Vidyalaya to this school and got them admitted. The footpaths to this school were not so far open to Harijans. Swami Ananda Theerthan submitted a petition to the government and secured entry for Harijans in all the footpaths and lanes in the village. The admission of Harijan children in a school situated in the citadel of orthodoxy created a new awakening among the Harijans and thereafter they took courage to admit their children to the schools and to use several footpaths which were not so far open to them.

Ananda Theerthan cooperated with the organizations which aimed at the destruction of caste. The Jatinasinisabha, an association for the abolition of caste, was formed in 1933 at Kannur with K. Kelappan as president and Ananda Theerthan as secretary\textsuperscript{55}. Its members had to abjure their caste names before joining the association. They prepared a pamphlet, 'Jathinasanam Navayugadhamam', which proclaimed the destruction of caste as the dharma of the modern age and the emancipation from caste attitude as essential to

\textsuperscript{54} A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, \textit{n. 1}, p.38

\textsuperscript{55} Vanidas Elayavoor, \textit{n. 4}, p.86.
build a modern India. They propagated this through public meetings and distributing the pamphlet among all classes of the society. Jati Nasini Sabha conducted a number of inter-dining and inter-marriages in different parts of Kerala as an effective way to destroy casteism. They argued that the age old religious beliefs should be modified according to the demands of modern times. A social revolution was imperative to liberate the people from caste mentality and to build up a country based on national ethos. Jati Nasini Sabha appealed to the people not to marry within their own caste, to refuse to declare caste in schools and offices and to abjure all caste practices at home and public places\textsuperscript{56}. The part played by Jati Nasini Sabha to break caste through their activities is praiseworthy.

Mahatma Gandhi visited Kerala in the month of January 1934. Though Payyannur was included in his itinerary there was no programme to visit the Sree Narayana Vidyalaya. Swami Ananda Theerthan went and met him at Kannur and invited him to the Vidyalaya. Gandhiji agreed and visited Vidyalaya on 12 January 1934. He exhorted the children of the Vidyalaya to keep their mind, body and soul pure\textsuperscript{57}. During this visit he planted a mango tree in the compound of the Vidyalaya. It still survives and, is now known by the name of Gandhi Mango tree (Gandhi mavu). It still bears the dignity of that great man. Gandhiji wished all success to the Harijan uplift programme of Swami Ananda Theerthan\textsuperscript{58}.

\textsuperscript{56} A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, \textit{n.1}, p.45.
\textsuperscript{57} Swami Ananda Theertha, \textit{n. 20}, p.27.
\textsuperscript{58} A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, \textit{n.1}, p.39.
Swami Ananda Theerthan had great respect for Annie Bessant's views on the Hindu religion and Indian culture. He joined as an official member of the Theosophical Society on 26 June 1934 and supported its activities for the reformation in the Hindu religion.

In 1937, Swami Ananda Theerthan with a few Harijan children went to the Fisheries school at Kavvayi near Payyanur to admit them in the school. The conservative Hindus of the surrounding area prevented and cruelly assaulted him by using deadly weapons. He also faced the physical attack of conservative Hindus when he went with two Harijan children to the Malabar District Board School at Maniyoor in 1939.59

In 1947, K. Kelappan, the president of the District Board of Education in Malabar appointed Swami Ananda Theerthan as an honorary inspector to conduct inspection of the labour schools60 in Malabar. In the inspection Swami Ananda Theerthan found that the condition of labour schools was really pitiable. Many of the labour schools were only in name without benefiting the Harijan children. As per the government order the number of non-Harijan students in labour schools should not have exceeded 30% of the total strength. But in practice majority of the students were non-Harijans.61 The money spent by the Harijan welfare department in labour schools for the education of Harijan students was actually benefiting non-Harijans. He also

60 Labour schools were established by the British government to cater specifically to the educational needs of the Harijan children.
61 A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, n.1, P.46.
found that untouchability and other caste discriminations were practised in the labour schools. The Harijan children were seated separately from other students. They were provided with coconut shells while others were given cups.

In the Kannampadi labour school in Kasargod taluk, the Marathi caste Hindu students were seated separately from the Harijan students. The headmaster of the school belonged to the Marathi caste. Swami Ananda Theerthan submitted a petition against the Headmaster to the Mangalore collector. As per the order of the collector, the Kasargod magistrate court took up the case. The court found the headmaster guilty, charged a fine of twenty rupees and demoted him. Swami Ananda Theerthan submitted a petition to the government against this discrimination. Finally the court imposed a fine on the headmaster and ordered to stop all types of discrimination. Swami Ananda Theerthan opposed the seating of the Paraya and Kanakkar students separately in Nanmanda labour school near Kozhikode. After his visit the school authorities stopped the separate seating of Paraya and Kanakkan students. He also opposed the discrimination towards the Harijan students of the labour schools in Mattoo1, Kannapuram, Feroke and other places in Malabar.

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In a detailed report to the District Board of Education in Malabar, Ananda Theerthan suggested that the government should open residential schools for Harijans and that, in the appointment of teachers in labour schools statutory preference should be given to scheduled caste teachers and the government should withdraw the grant and recognition of the schools which refused to admit Harijan children. He gave much publicity to these representations to the government with brief reports in newspapers. The government accepted the report of Swami Ananda Theerthan and shifted the charge of labour schools from the labour department to the education department and also decided to give scholarship to the students of labour schools.

Ananda Theerthan's challenge to caste rules by giving Savarna names to the untouchables sowed the seeds of social revolution in Malabar. He gave the Savarna name 'Thampuran' to Malingan, a Harijan child of the Chakliya colony near Payyannur. When he went to school to get admission to Thampuran the school authorities refused to enter the name 'Thampuran' in the school register. He boldly argued against the school authorities till they admit the Chakliya boy to the school with the name N.P. Thampuran. Similar experiments continued by renaming Harijan children of the Sree Narayana Asram names with names like Embramdiri, Sharma, Marar, Nambiar, Shenoy, George and Muhammed. The Savarnas who found nobility and pride in caste names assaulted Ananda Theerthan at many places. But he

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was not ready to retreat from his new method of struggle for the eradication of untouchability. He countered the Savarna students' contempt of Harijan students names like Pokkan, Chavuniyan, Chami, etc., by giving Savarna names to Harijan students.

He brought the Arya Samaj leader Hanumentha Rai to the Asram, and ritualistically tied the sacred thread, the symbol of dwijas, to the students. Rai also taught the Gayathri and other hymns to them. These Harijan students of the Asram, with savarna names and wearing the sacred thread went to the school by challenging caste discrimination. These practices were later given up as they created technical difficulties in the way of boys getting the benefit of scholarships and reservations in jobs from the government.

**Struggles at sacred spaces:**

Swami Ananda Theerthan worked for the freedom of worship of the Harijans. The illiterate Harijans were accustomed to make offerings to the temples though they had to stand outside the temple premises. During the time of temple festivals the Harijans were in the habit of offering pepper, paddy, cock, and money to the Savarnas and receiving toddy and Kuri as Theertham and Prasadam from these temples. This custom was so intolerable to Swami Ananda Theerthan. He opposed it and said that, it was a paradox that there was no untouchability to untouchable people's offerings and presents. He was determined to wean the Harijans from the shameful

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65 Yellow powder made by mixing turmeric powder and rice.

practice. He visited the temples during festivals with a band of Harijan youth volunteers and appealed to the Harijans not to make any offerings whatsoever to the temple since they had no entry. Swami Ananda Theerthan and his associates published a pamphlet criticizing it and exhorted the Harijans to provide food to their children first rather than submitting presents to the temples which acted as the centre of social discrimination and economic exploitation.

Swami Ananda Theerthan was assaulted at some temples by caste Hindus for conducting such propaganda among the Harijans. But he continued his efforts in spite of the opposition. Though the enlightened section among the caste Hindus supported Swami Ananda Theerthan's thought they did not come in to the arena. In due course, the Harijans accepted his propaganda and responded to his appeal. In October 1933, the Harijans of Ezhome village stopped the usual presents and offerings to the temple as part of the 'Thulam Sankramam Festival'. They did not go to the temples but remained in their huts. This provoked the conservative Hindus, they attacked their huts and beat them up. Swami Ananda Theerthan with K.P.R Gopalan and other Congress workers visited the place and submitted a petition to the district collector, Mr. Throne about these atrocities. The collector visited the huts of Harijans in Ezhome village and enquired about the incident. He ordered the police to register a case against the assailants. Thus Swami Ananda Theerthan succeeded in stopping the Harijans from making offerings to temples where they were denied entry. His aim was to

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67 Swami Ananda Theertha, n.20, p.23.
impart a sense of self-respect in the poor and illiterate Harijans and free them from their mental slavery.


In 1935 Swami Ananda Theerthan led a small group of Harijan children of his Vidyalaya to the Aneekkara Kavu of Kunhimangalam, an important centre of worship of the Tiyyas. The conservative Tiyyas prevented and mercilessly assaulted him. This incident stirred the minds of the Harijans and they jointly boycotted the offerings given to the important temples. Similarly Swami Ananda Theerthan led the Harijans to other Kavus situated in North Malabar like Malliyot Palot Kavu of Kunhimangalam, Parassinikadavu Sree Muthappan Madappura, Eramam Muthukattu Kavu, Madayi Kavu and the temples in Pattuvam, Payyannur, Morazha and Edappara.

In some places the conservative hindus murdered Harijans by charging theft and other faults. The bodies of Harijans were found in suspicious circumstances at the river banks at Pattuvam and Koyilandy. Swami Ananda


Theerthan reached the place, organized the natives and conducted a protest meeting. In the meeting he vehemently criticised the violence of the conservative Hindus towards the Harijans and other backward classes. He submitted a petition to the police demanding an enquiry into the murder. But the police maintained a detached attitude. Swami Ananda Theerthan then submitted a petition to the collector. As per the order of the collector, the police filed a case against the persons accused in the case.

In 1939, the Congress organized a demonstration in Payyannur as part of the District Board election propaganda. The demonstration had to go through the residing places of caste Hindus. The conservative caste Hindus in the Congress did not like to take the demonstration including the Harijans to their region. They decided to stop the election propaganda procession. Swami Ananda Theerthan sent a petition about this incident to Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji criticized the decision of the Congress leaders and published an article, "Shameful if True" in the 'Harijan' newspaper. This incident reveals that even in 1939, the Harijans had no freedom to travel through the public streets and roads.\(^{70}\)

Swami Ananda Theerthan travelled the length and breadth of North Malabar and opposed the discrimination towards Harijans in temples like the giving of remnants of the offerings to God in sand, discrimination in the tea shops like giving of tea in coconut shell, denial of the cutting of hair of Harijans in barbershops etc. Swami Ananda Theerthan with the Harijans

\(^{70}\) Swami Ananda Theerthan, *n*. 20, p.28.
conducted temple entry Satyagraha in the Paliyam temple of Cochin state in 1941. Swami Ananda Theerthan and the Harijans were cruelly attacked by the caste Hindus. They even faced the physical attack of the backward caste people like the Kudumbis who had entry into the temple. The hatred among the low caste people pained the mind of Swami Ananda Theerthan.

In 1942, the Harijans had brought under cultivation the hand of the Kunhimangalam Varanamkode Illam. In an unauthorised way, a Muslim possession of the land and reaped the crops grown by the Harijans. Swami Ananda Theerthan submitted a petition to the police and the police filed a case against the Muslim. But during the trial Varanamkode Nambudiri’s evidence was favourable to the Muslim and the court rejected the case. After this incident, many Harijans in Kunhimangalam and nearby regions who were disgusted in casteism and untouchability embraced the Christian religion.  

Though the famous Madras Temple Entry Authorisation Act Passed on 2 June 1947 allowed all Hindus to enter the temples in Madras Presdiency, certain temples continued their age-old practice of denying entry to Harijans. The authorities of Ramavillyam Kazhakam in Trikaripur near Payyannur denied the entry of Harijans into the temple. In 1948 Swami Ananda Theerthan with a few Harijan youths went to the temple and conducted a fast for three days. The progressive-minded youths declared their fullhearted support to Swami Ananda Theerthan’s movement. The ‘Harijan’ newspaper published a report on this incident and thus it got wide attention. Later in

72 V.K. Kunhiraman, n.6, p.36.
1950, the Madras government made some amendments in the temple entry act according to which all the temples, both public and private by owned, Brahmanical and non-Brahmanical were thrown open to all Hindus irrespective of their caste.\textsuperscript{73}

Swami Ananda Theerthan was particularly determined to get the temples of Gowda Saraswatha Brahmins, his own community, opened to all people irrespective of caste. The admission of Tiyyas, Harijans and other backward caste people was denied in the Gowda Saraswatha temples like, Sri Varaha temple, Cherai. A signboard, "No admission to untouchable communities" had been put up in the entrance of the temple. Swami Ananda Theerthan with a group of Tiyyas and Harijans led a march to the temple on 1 January 1958.\textsuperscript{74} The caste Hindus led by Gowda Saraswatha Brahmins prevented and stopped them at the outer gate of the temple. Though Swami Ananda Theerthan filed a complaint with the police, they refused to register a case against the caste Hindus. The temple gate remained closed for 50 days. Swami Ananda Theerthan decided to start a fast in front of the temple and represented the matter to the government. Finally the police registered a caste against the temple authorities. The board installed at the entrance of temple was removed as per the order of the government. Swami Ananda Theerthan and his supporters with a group of backward caste people went to the Parur Gowda Saraswatha Brahmin temple on October 2, 1958. The temple authorities denied the entry of non-Gowda Saraswatha Brahmins to the

\textsuperscript{73} Vanidas Elayavoor, \textit{n.4}, p.96.

\textsuperscript{74} A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, \textit{n.1}, p.98.
Nalambalam\textsuperscript{75}. Though Swami Ananda Theerthan filed a case against the temple authorities the court verdict was in their favour.

In 1959, Swami Ananda Theerthan with two Harijan children went to a barber shop in Sasthamangalam near Thiruvananthapuram. The barber refused to cut the hair of the Harijans. He with the support of caste hindus attacked Swami Ananda Theerthan. He complained to the police. But the police did not take any action against the barber. He then submitted a petition to the then law minister, V.R. Krishna Iyyer. The minister ordered an enquiry on the incident. In the enquiry barber was found guilty and a case was filed against him. On March 4, 1962 Swami Ananda Theerthan conducted a visit to the Siva temple in Kuzhithura. In the temple there was a raised platform called Namaskaramandapam in front of the sanctum sanctorum. Only Brahmins had the right to worship from there. Swami Ananda Theerthan challenged the discrimination and entered the Namaskaramandapam. As he wore no sacred thread, the watchman pulled him down and beat him up. He represented the matter to the Devaswam secretary but he upheld the Watchman’s action. Then he filed a case in the Kuzhithura first class magistrate court. The court passed the verdict that the practice existing in the temple was caste discrimination and instructed the Devaswam board to stop all forms of discrimination in the temple\textsuperscript{76}. In response to this the Devaswam board closed the Namaskaramandapam.

\textsuperscript{75} The building surrounding the place of the deity.

\textsuperscript{76} Vanidas Elayavoor, \textit{n.4}, p.132.
Swami Ananda Theerthan worked hard to alleviate the painful condition of the tribal people in Wynad. The tribal communities like Kurichiyas, Kurumbas, Paniyar and Irular had to suffer from the hands of the upper caste people. They were the victims of social and economic exploitation. They were forced to do labour and their resources and habitat were disturbed by the dominant classes of the society. In 1945 Swami Ananda Theerthan started a movement for the emancipation of the tribals with the help of Syamiji Sunderlal Seth which continued till the end of 1947\textsuperscript{77}. In Wynad he worked mainly for the social equality of the tribal inhabitants. He travelled through Wynad and served the tribal people by carrying out relief works when they were under the clutches of untouchability and unapproachability. He called upon the aborigines of the land to stop their forced labour to the landlords. He worked hard to put an end of the slave trade in the Valliyoor Kavu during the Andukettu festival\textsuperscript{78}. He also opposed the performance of untouchability as part of the festival. Swami Ananda Theerthan’s social reform programmes among the tribal people in Wynad had a premature end. The poor response from the tribal society compelled him to stop his activities. But his struggle against untouchability deeply touched the consciousness of the tribal people in Wynad.

Swami Ananda Theerthan worked among the tribal people, Mavilar, Koragar and Marathis settled in the rural areas of Kasaragod. There he

\textsuperscript{77} V.P. Appukuttan, \textit{n.34}, p.8.

\textsuperscript{78} Swaminath Padinjaremmana, \textit{n. 41}, p.6.
worked hard for the eradication of untouchability and conducted wide propaganda against superstitious beliefs. He used to visit the huts of Koragar and Mavilar in order to experience their life which was necessary for formulating action plans. He took them to temples, barber shops, hotels and other places where the entry of these people was denied. He also utilised the judiciary to challenge the hegemony of the upper castes. He filed suits against caste Hindus showing that their actions were direct violation of constitutional provisions. Swami Ananda Theerthan with three Harijan children went to a barber shop in Naya Bazar near Mangalpadi on October 2, 1969. He was brutally assaulted by caste Hindus under the leadership of the Village Adhikari. Though he complained to the police, the sub inspector, who was a caste Hindu, was not ready to take action against the accused. Finally he gave petitioned to the DIG P.N. Rajan who enquired about the incident and filed a case against the Village Adhikari and others. Later the court found them guilty.

**Theerthan at Tamil Nadu:**

Swami Ananda Theerthan cooperated with the activities of the Harijan Sevak Sangh (HSS). The central board of the HSS had decided to have an intensive programme in the South. Swami Ananda Theerthan was appointed as its regional officer in charge of the southern range. He undertook the programme of Harijan uplift and the eradication of untouchability in Tamilnadu from 1952 to 1958. He visited the villages in Madurai, Ramnad,

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79 Interview with Swaminath Padinjaremama, Secretary, Swami Ananda Theertha Trust, Payyanur, 5.3.2007.
Thiruchirappilli and Tanjore districts and came to know much about the practice of untouchability in these villages. He could see that even in Vedaranyam, the important centre of Salt Satyagraha, untouchability existed\(^{80}\). In the villages, the Harijans were denied entry into temples, tea shops, hair cutting saloons and other places. Even in Harijan welfare schools there existed discrimination towards the Harijans. The Harijan students were seated and served separately from others. In the villages they had no right to draw water from public wells. They were also compelled to forced labour and had no right to opt for gentle jobs.

Swami Ananda Theerthan began his crusade against the caste system and untouchability by bringing together thirty adjacent villages in Melur of Tamilnadu. He prepared a plan of work to be executed in these villages. He published small pamphlets in order to open the eyes of caste Hindus. But he realized that it is not possible to create awareness in the caste-minded and superstitious caste Hindu people. He challenged untouchability by leading Harijans to the places where their entry was denied. He filed about 100 cases per year against the practice of untouchability and other discrimination towards the Harijans\(^{81}\). He firstly led the Harijans in Mangulam village to draw water from a public well which was denied to them. This caused great resentment among caste Hindus and they took the decision of social and economic ostracism of the Harijans. It caused unemployment among the Harijan youths and later led to poverty in Harijan colonies. Meanwhile with

\(^{80}\) A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, \textit{n.1}, p.53.

\(^{81}\) V.P. Appukuttan, \textit{n.34}, p.37.
the strong intervention of Swami Ananda Theerthan and other leaders of the HSS, the ostracism was withdrawn by the caste Hindus.

In January 1952 Swami Ananda Theerthan faced severe physical attacks from caste Hindus. He led a group of Harijans to Brahmanal hotel in Mangulam. The caste Hindus led by the village Munsif himself mercilessly attacked him by using wooden sticks. He was admitted to hospital and the X-ray revealed a fracture on foot which had to be put in plaster for three months. On Swami Ananda Theerthan's complaint the police filed a criminal case against the assailants. He also faced physical attacks from caste Hindus when he went to a tea shop in Melavalvoo village with Harijan children. When Swami Ananda Theerthan with Harijans went to take water from a public well in Attukulam village, the caste Hindus deposited dirts in the well. He submitted a petition to the police and the police filed a case against them.

In a village near Vellore, Swami Ananda Theerthan was severely attacked by the caste Hindus of the region when he went to a tea shop with a Harijan boy. The Harijan boy ran away and informed the village officer. Later the police filed a case against caste Hindus as per the order of the village officer. In Kottayudi village when a barber refused to cut the hair of the Harijans, Swami Ananda Theerthan complained against the barber to the police. The police enquired and took action against the barber. In March 1954, in Soorakkadi village Swami Ananda Theerthan with Harijan Pallars

82 V.K. Kunhiraman, n.6, p.37.

went to take water from a public pond. The result was the total economic boycott of Harijan Pallars by the villagers. The janmies denied land on lease and job in their paddy fields to Harijan Pallars. To rescue the thrown out workers the HSS undertook a work of constructing a bund for irrigation purpose. Swami Ananda Theerthan himself secured 18 acres of government land on lease and handed it over to the Harijans for cultivation. But as soon as the crop was raised the caste Hindus destroyed it. Swami Ananda Theerthan made representation to the police. Though the police filed a case against caste hindus, later it was withdrawn yielding to the pressure and influence of caste Hindus.

Swami Ananda Theerthan opposed the discrimination towards Harijan students in the Board elementary schools in Melur. He submitted petitions to the police against the obstruction of Harijans from riding cycle through village streets. He also conducted struggles against the cruel injustice meted out to the Harijans in the Chavadi courts. He published a leaflet and made wide propaganda to end the enforcing of customary laws. He also appealed to the government and filed cases against the discrimination towards Harijans and other lower castes in chavadi courts.

However, HSS failed to appreciate the hard work of Swami Ananda Theerthan towards the uplift of Harijans. They believed that the eradication

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84 In the villages of Tamil Nadu there existed the atrocious custom of Chavadi courts. The Chavadi courts of Savarna Hindus gave cruel punishments like public whipping, confiscation of property, imposition of heavy fines, framing of false cases, economic boycott, social ostracism etc. to the Harijans and other low caste people who participated in the ongoing struggles. The poor Harijans were tried like slaves in Chavadi.
of untouchability was possible only by making a change in the mind of Caste Hindus. They raised doubts in Swami Ananda Theerthan's method of struggle. They were against filing of cases against caste Hindus and instead gave importance to their political existence. Swami Ananda Theerthan faced restrictions from the HSS. In 1955 his centre of work was transferred from Melur to Madurai. He had lost faith in the leadership and work of the HSS. He realized that the HSS aimed not in the complete emancipation of Harijans but in the union of different communities of the Hindu religion. The leadership and work of the HSS were influenced by the ideologies of political parties.

Swami Ananda Theerthan aimed at the complete emancipation of Harijans and all other things were second to it. He wrote a letter to the HSS General secretary that the need of the Harijans was land, food and emancipation from untouchability but the HSS was engaged in changing the nature of caste Hindus by giving false hopes to the Harijans. In the meantime the central committee of the HSS asked him to work under Gopalaswamy, his strong opponent. He refused to accept the order and wrote a letter to permit him to continue his work in Kerala. He returned to Kerala in 1958. Later the people of Tamilnadu understood him properly and honoured his services by presenting a shawl woven with golden thread at Madurai in 1985.

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85 Vanidas Elayavoor, n.4, p.121.
Swami Ananda Theerthan continued to maintain contacts with the Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham which was a small congregation of Sanayyasins, whose members belonged to different castes. Some of the monks feared that the control of educational institutions and properties by the SNDP yogam would convert the Sree Narayana Guru’s movement into a communal and caste organization against the Guru’s vision of a casteless society. The Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham president, Swami Achuthananda, decided to appoint Swami Ananda Theerthan as the next president of the Sangham. But some of the monks led by Sree Narayana Thirth and the SNDP yogam opposed the decision to appoint him as the next president. They demanded the approval of the SNDP Yogam as a condition in the selection of the president of the Sangham. They asked Swami Achuthanandan not to appoint a Brahmin as the president of Sangham and the Sivagiri Mutt. Swami Achuthanandan rejected their demand and appointed Swami Ananda Theerthan. But soon he was compelled to cancel the nomination of Swami Ananda Theerthan and nominated Swami Sugunanda as his successor. This appointment was also not recognized by Sri Narayana Thirth - led rival group. Soon after the death of Swami Achuthananda, Sri Narayana Thirth and his group removed Swami Sugunananda from the post and elected Swami Sankarananda as the new president.

88 A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, *n*.1, p.50.
Swami Ananda Theerthan filed a case against the consideration of the properties of the Sivagiri Mutt and Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham as private property. After years of litigation, the court made the important verdict that all properties of the Sivagiri Mutt and Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham were public property. As per the court verdict Swami Ananda Theerthan became the president of the Sivagiri Mutt and Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham in April, 1959. He was also the first president of the Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham Trust. In December, 1959 Swami Ananda Theerthan resigned because of the loss of belief in the activities of the members of the Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham and the SNDP yogam. He felt that some of the monks and the SNDP yogam did not have confidence in him. They did not also share his zeal in the programme of the eradication of untouchability. He understood the fact that the Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham and the SNDP yogam were developing as organisations which protected the interests of a particular caste. He gradually alienated himself from the activities of the Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham and the SNDP Yogam. The gradual estrangement from them led him to resign his membership of the Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham Trust on 26 June 1974.

Swami Ananda Theerthan with three Harijan youths went to the Durga Parameswari temple in Agalpady in January 30, 1971. The temple authorities allowed them to go inside the temple. A few days later when he was

89 V.K. Kunhiraman, n.6, p.44.
returning from the temple alone after participating in the temple festival some Brahmin youths mercilessly attacked him by using deadly weapons. They had a grudge against him that he had taken Harijans to the temple a few days ago. When he fell down unconscious they returned to the temple to fetch petrol to burn him and destroy all evidences against them. Fortunately a passing car saw him and picked him up and drove to the police station. The police took him to the hospital. Swami Ananda Theerthan then submitted a petition to the police. Many of the Brahmin youths who attacked Swami Ananda Theerthan were college students. The police failed to arrest them, instead they arrested and filed a case against some innocent people. By knowing this Swami Ananda Theerthan withdrew the case.

Swami Ananda Theerthan conducted campaigns against the practice of untouchability in South Karnataka. He went to Mangalore, Sulliya, Kappu, Mulki, Kadpadi, etc. and organised Harijans and other low caste people. He created awareness among the people through meetings and classes. In the canteens of the tile and coffee factories in Mangalore town, Harijan workers were served in separate glasses and utensils. Swami Ananda Theerthan submitted a petition against this to the police and the discrimination towards Harijan workers was stopped. He also conducted struggles against the discrimination towards Harijans in tea shops, barber shops and other places in South Karnataka.\footnote{E.M. Ashraf, \textit{n.7}, p.59.}
The Harijans were not permitted to conduct marriage ceremonies in the Vishwakarma temple near Kanhangad. Swami Ananda Theerthan opposed the discrimination towards Harijans and filed a case against the temple authorities. The court passed the verdict that the accused, president and secretary of the temple, had to remit rupees five hundred each as fine and to stop all kinds of discrimination in the temple. In 1972, Swami Ananda Theerthan submitted a petition to the police against the separate seating of Harijan students in the government school, Badeyaduka near Kasargod. The police conducted an enquiry on the incident and filed a case against the headmaster of the school forcing him to stop the discrimination towards Harijan students. In the same year on independence day, Swami Ananda Theerthan was awarded the 'Thamrapathra' as freedom fighter and the central government's freedom fighters’ pension.

As a challenge to the caste system and untouchability Swami Ananda Theerthan conducted inter-dining in the Gowda Saraswatha Brahmin temple in Kasaragod and Manjeswaram and in the Sree Narayana Vidyalaya, Payyannur. The savarna Hindus in Payyanur who participated in the inter-dining and made contacts with the Harijan students of Payyannur Sree Narayana Vidyalaya were excommunicated from their caste. They were forbidden to enter the temples and to participate in the important functions of the people of their caste. The freedom fighters, T. Hareswaran Tirumumb and

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92 Swami Ananda Theertha, n.20, p.39.
93 Interview with Swaminath Padinjaremana, Secretary, Swami Ananda Theertha Trust, Payyanur, 5.3.2007.
T. Subramanyan Tirumumb with a few Harijan children of Payyannur Sree Narayana Vidyalaya entered Payyannur Subramanya Swami temple, rang the bell and worshiped the deity. This incident created great resentment and opposition among caste Hindus. Swami Ananda Theerthan was the person behind these adventurous activities.  

When a Tiyya man went to worship in the Sri Rama Swami temple, Thiruvangad near Tellicherry, the employees of the temple, E. Sivaramakrishna Moosad and others prevented him from entering the Namaskaramandapam of the temple saying that, only Brahmins were allowed. Ananda Theerthan lodged a complaint with the police and the employees were charge sheeted in the judicial magistrate court, Tellicherry. The court found the employees guilty of the offence and were punished. Swami Ananda Theerthan also filed cases against the authorities of the Maniyatt temple near Kozhikode Medical College, the Ganapathi temple in West Hill, the temples in Mankara, Palappuram, Ottapalam, the Chaliya temple in Mokeri near Tellicherry and the Siva temple in Pallikkara near Kanhangad who denied the entry of Tiyyas. Finally, the court passed the verdict in favour of the Tiyyas and they got permission to enter these temples.  

In a village near Attingal when a tea shop owner had drawn double charge from Harijans for tea, Swami Ananda Theerthan filed case against the tea shop owner. The court convicted the teashop owner and imposed rupees

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94 A.K. Krishnan master, n.46, pp.34-35.
95 A.M.Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, n.1, p.113.
96 E.M. Ashraf, n.7, p.65
forty as fine. In Sreenivasapuram near Varkala, a barber had cut the hair of a Harijan in an ugly manner like the biting of a rat. Swami Ananda Theerthan represented to the police. But the police was not ready to file a case against the barber. Then he submitted a complaint to the IG of police. The police enquired about incident and filed a case against the barber. The IG also took disciplinary action against the sub inspector who had refused to file the case against the barber.  

The 'Thalappoli Festival' of Pappinisseri Nadacherikkavu near Kannur was famous. A number of girls participated in the festival wearing beautiful dresses and ornaments. Smt. Lakshmi, a teacher in the Pappinisseri L.—P. School was one of the organisers of Thalappoli procession to Nadacherikkavu on 2 March 1974. Among the girls chosen by her were two Pulaya girls, Ajitha and Vanaja studying in the Vth standard. The teacher asked the girls to get new white dresses and also to bring 20 praise for the flowers to be bought to decorate their hair. But two days before the Thalappoli procession, the teacher told them that Pulaya pupils could not be taken in the Thalappoli procession to the Kavu. The Pulaya girls felt insulted, but their poor and ignorant parents kept quiet. Swami Ananda Theerthan conducted an investigation on this incident and came to know that the teacher was forced to drop them due to opposition of some caste Hindu members of the festival committee. He visited the houses of the Harijan girls consoled

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97 Swami Ananda Theertha, n.20, p.37.
98 Welcoming of the images of gods and goddesses by girls with decorated plattess having lambs.
them. He submitted a complaint to the government and wrote articles criticizing the discrimination towards Harijans. The government warned the temple authorities and ordered them to stop all kinds of discrimination towards Harijans.

Swami Ananda Theerthan took a fast from 23 to 26 February, 1978 in front of the Jagannatha temple, Tellicherry in protest against the signboard, 'Entrance to Hindus only' at the gate of the temple. He saw in this a great affront and challenge to his beloved Guru's teaching. He felt that it was against Sree Narayana Guru's ideology on religion and caste. He declared that the temple should be open to all who would come to pray and worship. He wrote and published a pamphlet criticizing the work of Gnanodaya Yogam temple protection committee who put up the signboard at the gate of the temple. The youth organization called, Sree Narayana Yuva Sakti also condemned the action of the Ganodaya Yogam. The local newspaper, 'Pradeepam' wrote an editorial criticizing the action of the temple committee. Sri Brahmananda Swami, who had jurisdiction over the priestly functions in the temple came to Tellicherry and discussed the matter with the temple committee. Finally they removed the sign board.

In September, 1982, Soman, the police sub inspector of Panoor near Tellicherry, was killed. Soman was a Harijan. The incident got wide news

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100 Interview with T.V. Vasumithran, Vice President, Swami Ananda Theertha Trust, Payyanur, Tellicherry, 14-3-2008.
101 A.M. Abraham Aybrookuzhiel, *n.*1, pp.105-106.
coverage. The police failed to conduct a detailed investigation. The investigation became a ridicule. The police prepared a report that the sub inspector’s death was a suicide\textsuperscript{102}. Swami Ananda Theerthan who had been fighting for justice reached Panoor and enquired about the incident. He asked the government to conduct a proper investigation on the murder of S.I. Soman. He started a fast in ‘Gurusannidhi’, Panoor, on 24 September 1982 requesting the government to transfer the investigation charge of S.I. Soman murder case to the crime branch. The Satyagraha lasted for five days. Finally the government ordered as he suggested\textsuperscript{103}.

The Harijan Sevak Sangham had decided to celebrate the golden jubilee of the historic Guruvayur Satyagraha on November 1, 1982. Swami Ananda Theerthan went to Guruvayur to take part in the celebration. On the following day after the worship in the temple Swami Ananda Theerthan under the compulsion of his Brahmin friend went to the temple dining hall for having meals. In the dining hall only Brahmins were allowed. The person who was distributing the plantain leaves asked Swami Ananda Theerthan to remove his shawl for seeing the sacred thread. He refused and with a smile said that it was cut and thrown away years ago. He was not given the leaf and the matter was reported to the temple manager.

\textsuperscript{102} E.M. Ashraf, \textit{n.7}, p.83.

\textsuperscript{103} Swaminath Padinjaremana, \textit{n.41}, p.8.
After a short while, Balakrishna Pisharadi\(^{104}\), the sub inspector who was in charge of temple security came and ordered Swami Ananda Theerthan to remove his shawl. He did so the S.I. finding that Swami Ananda Theerthan had no sacred thread informed him that only Brahmins were allowed to sit there. He ordered him to go of the dining hall and to accompany him to the office of the temple manager\(^{105}\). But Swami Ananda Theerthan was not ready to leave the place. As he refused, the sub inspector mercilessly attacked him\(^{106}\). He then took him to the office of the temple manager. There was also a complaint against Swami Ananda Theerthan from a devotee that he took ten rupees from him promising to heal him of some illness. Swami Ananda Theerthan then took a fast for five days in front of the temple for opening the dining hall to all devotees irrespective of their caste.

Swami Ananda Theerthan was admitted in the government hospital, Chavakkad. When the news spread, there were unanimous condemnations from all sides. The important newspapers in the state wrote articles criticising the incident. Swami Ananda Theerthan represented to the police. The police

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\(^{104}\) Balakrishna Pisharadi had an old rivalry with Swami Ananda Theerthan. When Swami Ananda Theerthan was conducting anti-untouchability work in Kasaragod, he was the sub inspector of the Special Mobile Squad in charge of Kasaragod region. When Swami Ananda Theerthan submitted complaint about the practice of untouchability, he was not ready to file case against caste Hindus. Swami Ananda Theerthan complained about him to the higher officers of police. The officer enquired about the complaint, found him guilty and he was transferred as a punishment.

\(^{105}\) A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, *n.*1, p.106.

enquired about the incident and prepared a report. The report protected the interests of the temple authorities. It said that no one had attacked him but only expelled him out of the dining hall. No organisation strongly protested the merciless attack on Swami Ananda Theerthan at the Guruvayur temple dining hall\textsuperscript{107}. The Kerala Harijan Federation under the leadership of Kallara Sukumaran organized a Pathayathra\textsuperscript{108} from Sri Padmanabha temple, Thiruvananthapuram to Guruvayur temple. They vowed that they would enter the dining hall of the temple, if necessary, by force. Swami Ananda Theerthan inaugurated the Pathayatra in Thiruvananthapuram. The Hindu associations realizing the political danger of alienating the Harijans proclaimed their support to the Pathayatra. It reached the Guruvayur temple, received by the important organizations and were fed in a specially created hall at the temple\textsuperscript{109}. The Harijan Samajam of Malabar area and a Harijan organization in Alapuzha organized a meeting to protest the attack on Swami Ananda Theerthan. Finally the Guruvayur Devaswam Board opened the dining hall to all Hindus irrespective of caste. But even today, according to the custom, 'Namaskara Sadya' is a feast in the temple exclusive to Brahmins.

Many of the students who had studied by residing in the Sree Narayana Vidyalaya, Payyannur came to occupy high positions in society, like teachers, engineers, joint labour commissioners, Southern Railway Assistant personal officers, senior postal superintendents, Head post masters, Bank managers,

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., p.25
\textsuperscript{108} Procession on foot
Thahasildars, Municipal commissioners, Customs inspectors, Police sub inspectors, etc. A number of eminent persons, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India. A.V. Thaker Bhappa the right hand supporter of Gandhiji's Harijan uplift programme, former Indian President, V.V. Giri, Rajagopalachari, Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, Jayaprakash Narayan, G. Ramachandran, veteran Gandhian Natarajaguru, V.T. Bhattachiripadu and many others had visited Payyannur Sree Narayana Vidyalaya. They recorded their appreciation of the cleanliness and discipline of the inmates of the Vidyalaya and commended Swami Ananda Theerthan's dedicated work for the eradication of untouchability and Harijan uplift.

The physical attack related to the Guruvayur temple dining hall incident later caused various health problems to Swami Ananda Theerthan. After 1984 he did not go anywhere. He took rest at the Sree Narayana Vidyalaya. In 1984 he founded the Swami Ananda Theertha Trust and worked as its first president. The trust was registered under the societies registration act. The ownership and administration of the Sree Narayana Vidyalaya came under the control of the trust. The important aims of the trust were to create a casteless, egalitarian and non-violent social setup, to continue the social work initiated by Swami Ananda Theerthan and to cultivate in each man the spirit of humanism. The trust gives importance to social service through propagating the ideology of Sree Narayana Guru and Gandhiji. In November, 1987 Swami Ananda Theerthan became very ill and was

hospitalised. On November 21, 1987 at about 3.30 a.m Swami Ananda Theerthan breathed his last. Swami Saswathikananda and other Sanyasins of Sivagiri, all religious heads of Payyannur, Swami Ananda Theerthan’s disciples and the people belonging to different fields of life paid homage to him and attended the funeral ceremony.

In spite of the esteemable contribution made to the eradication of untouchability and uplift of the lower caste people, our history has forgotten Swami Ananda Theerthan. He has not received proper recognition in Kerala society. His own generation and the succeeding generations failed to understand fully about him and his struggle against casteism and untouchability\textsuperscript{111}. The high class-dominated society opposed the reform works of Swami Ananda Theerthan. They did not like the downtrodden people to reach the forefront of the social, political, economic and cultural fields. They feared that the entry will curtail their age old privileges and social, economic and political domination. A number of people even from the backward communities worked to defeat, expel and weaken Swami Ananda Theerthan. On the one side Swami Ananda Theerthan faced the opposition and physical attack of caste Hindus and on the other side he experienced the mental persecution of the elite group of the backward communities\textsuperscript{112}. The persons who called themselves social workers and protectors of Harijans did not support Swami Ananda Theerthan because they feared that they would lose their social and political existence if they work with Swami Ananda

\textsuperscript{111} M. Swaminathan, \textit{n}.106, p.23.  
\textsuperscript{112} E.M. Ashraf, \textit{n}.7, p.66.
Theerthan. Though Swami Ananda Theerthan and his Sree Narayana Vidyalaya could kindle the flame of social reformation and the emancipation of the downtrodden it is doubtful how many of his disciples imbibed his spirit of social reform and continued the struggle against social evils after his demise. They even failed to respond the discrimination towards Harijans and other low castes in the contemporary society.
Conclusion:

Swami Ananda Theerthan devoted his entire life to comply with the socio religious philosophy of Gandhiji and Sree Narayana Guru. Being a disciple of Gandhiji he never led Harijans to an armed struggle. He felt that Gandhiji and Harijan Sevak Sangh had disapproved of organised struggle against caste Hindus. Though Gandhiji opposed the practice of untouchability he entertained the hope that untouchability can be eradicated through a 'change of mind' on the part of caste Hindus. Swami Ananda Theerthan thought that no meaningful change had taken place in the society through the change of mind on the part of caste hindus. He had come to realise that the struggle led by the untouchables themselves only would bring about their social, political, economic and cultural liberation. He felt that the Gandhian struggle against untouchability was predominantly political. He expressed his disappointment at the low priority given to the Harijan uplift in the Gandhian movement. He as an advocate of the destruction of caste system felt that the Gandhian struggle against untouchability had not worked in the direction of the destruction of caste system.

Swami Ananda Theerthan had realised the fact that the Brahmin domination in the caste structure was not natural like soil and air, but had originated in association with the economic relations of a Historical period. He through his struggle has shown that it is essential to give strength through struggles to the natural decay of the Brahmin domination in the changed

\[113\] A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, n.1, p.128.
social and economic circumstances. He spent his life for the transformation of the religion and caste-based social structure. In this respect he inherited the anti-caste ideology of Sree Narayana Guru as perceived by him. Like the problem of caste and untouchability Swami Ananda Theerthan had his own vision and opinion on the other important social and political problems of the state. He was a Gandhian who opposed the agitation of congress for dismissing the Communist ministry of 1957.

Swami Ananda Theerthan's life was a saga of trials and sufferings for the people at the bottom of the society. He was the main persuading spirit of Harijans in North Malabar. He had looked up on Harijans as his own blood brothers and sisters. He was an ascetic who conducted a lonely crusade against untouchability and various social disabilities experienced by Harijans. He had not only served the Harijans but completely identified with them in their poverty and sufferings. Throughout his life he was on tour from village to village listening to the victims of oppression, meeting police officials, filing cases and arguing for his dear people. He worked hard for the entry of Harijans to temples, teashops, barbershops and other places which denied entry to them. Like the campaign against untouchability he was equally concerned about the economic independence and education to uplift the Harijans. He opposed the inadequate wages given to the Harijan workers by the jama mis. He led the Harijan children and secured admission in the schools which had denied admission to them. Hundreds of Harijan children got educated by staying in his hostel at the Sree Narayana vidyalaya. The

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114 E.P. Rajagopalan, n. 90, p. 19.
Vidyalaya produced several self respected Harijan individuals who later attained high positions in the society.

Swami Ananda Theerthan had a lasting place among the social reformers of our time. His reform works contributed much to the eradication of untouchability and uplift of the Harijans. The fondness of a father, the commanding power of an administrator, self-courage of a fighter, the teaching skill of a master, sincerity of a friend, and the purity of a child combined in the dazzling individuality of Swami Ananda Theerthan. Being a humanitarian he never showed hesitation to do whatever services he could to uplift the Harijans. He conducted struggles against untouchability without desiring any fame and honour. He was the hope and perpetual succor of the Harijans when they faced oppression, land alienation, physical assault, rape and murder. He was not a mere man of vision and ambition but a sincere as well as a practical-minded and dedicated servant of the Harijans in their struggle for existence. Swami Ananda Theerthan's reform activities have contributed a great deal towards the reformation of the Malabar society.
CHAPTER VII
NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND
SOCIAL REFORM

Malabar was the nerve centre of national movement in Kerala. People in Malabar were very much watchful of and influenced by the political developments outside. The growth of Indian National Congress and its political activities were represented in Malabar by the educated middle classes.¹ The activities of these educated middle classes under the banner of the Indian National Congress united the people of Malabar against the British rule. The freedom struggle in Malabar was more intense than in Travancore and Cochin because colonialism was deeply rooted in Malabar. The people fell victim to both feudal oppression and colonial exploitation.² The people who were suffering from the hands of British authorities and landlords participated in the national movement. Those who had gone out from Malabar brought home the message of nationalism and political awareness among the people.³ The national movement gave strength to the social reform activities in Malabar.

The National Movement in Malabar: Early phase

In Malabar, the organised political activities began only in the second decade of the 20th century. The important step taken by the Congress committee during that period was the formation of the Malabar District Congress Committee in 1910. Mr. Kunhirama Menon was its first secretary. The main purpose of the meetings of the District Congress Committee was mostly to elect a few delegates to attend the sessions of the Indian National Congress. The political conference held at Calicut in 1913 under the presidency of C. Vijayaraghavacharier was successful to some extent in creating political awareness among the people. The Home Rule Movement that began in 1916 under the leadership of Dr. Annie Besant and Lokamanya Tilak evoked positive responses in Malabar. The organised political activity motivated by nationalist sentiments started in Malabar only with the Home Rule movement. A branch of the Home Rule League was formed in Calicut with Mr. Manjeri Rama Iyyer as president and K.P. Kesava Menon as secretary. The district Home Rule League and the district Congress committee worked jointly under the leadership of K.P. Kesavamenon. The movement attracted a large number of students and youth. Under the auspices of the Home Rule League and district Congress committee several meetings and processions were organised in various parts of Malabar.

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5 A. Sreedhara Menon, Kerala and Freedom struggle, Kottayam, 1997, p.44.
The first Malabar district political conference held in 1916 at Palakkad under the presidency of Dr. Annie Besant was an important landmark in the history of the national movement in Malabar. In an important resolution of the conference it exhorted the people to organise committees in the district for the attainment of self-government. The success of the Palakkad conference was a source of inspiration and encouragement to the leaders and the people. The second district political conference was held at Calicut in 1917 under the presidency of Sri. C.P. Ramaswami Iyyer. The conference was attended by several delegates from the different parts of Malabar, Travancore and Cochin. The conference touched on a number of problems like self-government for India, the Arms Act, Elementary education, Tenancy question etc. The arrest of Dr. Besant by the middle of 1917 greatly excited the national consciousness of the people of Malabar. The third Malabar district political conference held in 1918 at Tellicherry under the presidency of Mr. Azad Alikhan Bahadur passed important resolutions like Indianisation of the army, introduction of primary education, the repeal of repressive acts etc. The fourth Malabar district political conference held at Badagara in 1919 under the presidency of K.P. Raman dealt with the important political developments with a special reference to the needs of Malabar.

The leaders of the national movement in Malabar realised the evil effects of the caste system and untouchability. They found that it was a major

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7 P.K.K. Menon, *n.* 1, p.72.
obstacle to political activity. The nationalists adopted concrete programmes to fight these social evils. They firstly passed resolutions in the meetings urging the public opinion and religious organisations to eradicate the evil of untouchability. They also occasionally involved in direct action as well. For example, when the authorities of the Zamorin's college at Calicut denied admission to low caste students the nationalists organised struggles demanding admission for them. Another important step taken by the early nationalist to challenge caste discrimination was the organising of inter-dining. Scores of such events were organized throughout Malabar in which the caste Hindus shared seats along with the lower castes while dining.

The nationalists also fought against the denial of accessibility to public spaces for untouchables. For example, the roads near to the Calicut Tali temple was closed to the polluting castes stating that there entry will turn the place polluting. Rejecting such beliefs as superstition and ungrounded the nationalists appealed to the elites to open all public roads to the lower castes. To break the existing elite conventions the nationalists leaders like K.P. Kesava Menon, K. Madhavan Nair and Manjeri Rama Iyyer walked through the road near to the Tali temple, along with C. Krishnan (a Tiyya lawyer) and a group of men belonging to various lower castes. It encouraged common people to be dare enough to walk through the road near Tali temple and even

9 Ibid., p.32.
remove the board on the road prohibiting the lower castes’ entry. An important consequence of the the Tali road agitation was that it inspired untouchables from other parts of Malabar to initiated similar movements.

The year 1919 witnessed the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi as the leader of the Indian National movement. Soon Malabar also plunged in to the vortex of an active movement inspired and led by Mahatma Gandhi. The nationalist agitation against untouchability and other social evils acquired a sense of direction during the Gandhian era. Gandhiji correctly perceived the political importance of the struggle against untouchability. According to him Swaraj was not attainable without the removal of untouchability as it was without Hindu-Muslim unity. He was against the prevalent social evils like untouchability and others not merely because they were antisocial but because they were in conflict with the basic values of the Hindu religion. Gandhiji believed that untouchability was essentially and exclusively a problem of caste Hindus and the untouchables were merely their helpless victims. Untouchability was a 'sin' against God and man and a poison slowly eating into the very vitals of Hinduism. Untouchability is a gross violation of human spirit. Though Gandhiji vehemently attacked untouchability, he defended the caste system. He entertained the belief that untouchability can be eradicated through a 'change of mind' on the part of caste Hindus. He entrusted the task of Harijan uplift to Caste Hindus.

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13 K.G. Saiyidain, Significance of Gandhi as a Man and Thinker,(Patel Memorial Lecture Series), New Delhi, 1994, p.41.
In April, 1920 the fifth Malabar district political conference was held at Manjeri under the presidency of Mr. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. This was the last in a series of early district political conferences held in Malabar. The fifth conference was significant. It marked the decline of the great influence that had been exerted by Dr. Annie Besant on the political developments in Malabar. The Manjeri conference marked a change in the composition of delegates as well as in the nature of the Congress deliberations. The conference was attended by about 1300 delegates among whom were a large number of Muslim peasants. The conference represented a trial of strength between the two wings the moderates led by Dr. Annie Besant and the extremists led by K.P. Kesavamenon. The representatives of the landlords who attended the conference identified themselves with the moderates while the tenants and workers present in the conference sided with the extremists. An important resolution passed in the conference declared that India was ready for self government and that the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were unsatisfactory. Dr. Besant and her wing vehemently opposed the resolution. The resolution was passed by a huge majority. Mrs. Besant and her followers staged a walkout.

The Manjeri conference also passed resolutions demanding the introduction of tenancy reforms, the regulation of working hours in factories, prohibition of child labour, etc. The Manjeri conference revealed the rising

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17 A. Sreedhara Menon, *n.5*, p.46.
tide of nationalism in Malabar. It broadened the mass base of the nationalist movement in Malabar. The conference clearly indicated that Malabar cared more for a national organisation and the policy it enunciated than for an individual and his or her personal opinions.\textsuperscript{18} So it had an important place in the history of the political struggle of Malabar.

The nationalist movement in Malabar during the pre-Gandhian era was an upper caste organisation.\textsuperscript{19} The early district political conferences were held under the control of elite classes. The Mappilas and the lower castes in Hindu religion were not so active in the national movement in the early days. The English education and job opportunities contributed to the emergence of a professional group among the Tiyyas of coastal Malabar. They had been substantially benefited by the service under the British government. So there was no development of nationalism among the members of the Tiyya community in Malabar.\textsuperscript{20} They kept themselves aloof from the nationalists movement in its early years. The Tiyya elites believed that they owed to the British for their economic development and social position. They found the British government as an agent supporting their interests against the dominance by the traditional elite in society. The prominent Tiyya leaders of that time like Murkoth Kumaran, C. Krishnan, the editor of \textit{Mitavadi} weekly and others considered Congress as an organisation of the men of upper caste, and the British as the only well wishers of lower classes. They feared that the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[A.K. Pillai, \textit{n. 4}, p.268.]
\item[Ibid., p. 292.]
\item[K.K.N. Kurup, \textit{Modern Kerala – Studies in Social and Agrarian Relations}, Delhi, 1988, pp. 89-90.]
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
nationalist movement would bring the traditional elite to political power and destroy their privileges.\textsuperscript{21}

Malabar played an important role in the Khilafat and Non-cooperation movement of the early 1920's. Malabar witnessed the large scale boycott of foreign goods, courts of law, educational institutions, etc. Many people resigned their jobs, advocates stopped their practices and students boycotted schools and colleges. The Kerala Provincial Congress Committee was formed in the same year, 1920. The first conference of Kerala Provincial Congress Committee was held at Ottapalam on April 23, 1921 under the presidency of T. Prakasan. It was the first representative gathering of Congressmen from Malabar, Travancore and Cochin.\textsuperscript{22} The tenants' conference, Khilafat conference students' conference and farmers' conference were also held at the same spot. The conference gave its full support to the decision on non-cooperation adopted by the Indian National Congress in Kerala. The common masses became politically conscious and there existed perfect communal amity among them. The period marked the expansion of the Khilafat and Congress activities in Malabar.\textsuperscript{23} This alarmed the Collector and he determined to crush the movement with large scale arrests. The police

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p.90.
\textsuperscript{22} K. Damodaran & C. Narayana Pillai, \textit{Keralathile Swathanthriya Samaram\textsubscript{2}}, (Mal.), Thiruvananthpuram, 1997, p.16.
arrested the prominent leaders of the Khilafat movement at a remote jungle hamlet called Pookkottur.\textsuperscript{24}

The arrest of Khilafat leaders, triggered off the Malabar rebellion of 1921. The tenancy movement, the Khilafat and Non-cooperation movements partially caused for the outbreak of the rebellion.\textsuperscript{25} The brutal suppression of the Malabar rebellion and the withdrawal of Non-cooperation movement in February 1922 weakened the political struggle in Malabar for a while.\textsuperscript{26}

**Nationalist leaders towards social constructive activities:**

After the suppression of the Malabar rebellion the nationalist movement in Malabar received another dimension as well. They now began to involve more and more into social constructive activities. The Congress workers now turned towards the propagation of *Khadi* and into anti-untouchability campaigns. Perhaps, the second conference of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee held at Palakkad in 1923 under the presidency of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, was crucial in this development. In her presidential speech she praised Kerala for its age-old tradition of religious harmony and emphasised the need for sending the message of peace to the country as a whole, especially after the unfortunate happenings of 1921.\textsuperscript{27} The conference passed a resolution urging its members not to practise

\textsuperscript{24} K. Madhavan Nair, *Malabar Kalapam*\textsubscript{2} (Mal.), Calicut, 1971, p.66.


\textsuperscript{26} A.K. Pillai, *n. 4*, p.451.

\textsuperscript{27} A. Sreedhara Menon, *n.5*, pp.71-72.
untouchability. Further, it organised an inter-dining (*misrabhojanam*) under the leadership of T.R. Krishnaswami Iyyer and K. Kelappan in which the Brahmins, Nairs, Ezhavas, Cherumans, Panans and others dined together. Leaders like Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, C. Rajagopalachari and Devadas Gandhi also participated in the inter-dining. The inter-dining constituted a landmark in the movement for the abolition of untouchability in Malabar.\(^\text{28}\) It pulled lower caste people more near to the Congress Party and their activities. The Congress meetings held after the conference gave importance to organise movements for the eradication of untouchability.

The inter-dining organised at the Palakkad Conference provoked the orthodox Brahmins of Kalpathi village. For example, T.R. Krishnaswamy Iyyer, one of the important leaders who had organized the inter-dining, along with his wife, were excommunicated from their community.\(^\text{29}\) Interestingly, it did not resulted in him withdrawing from engaging in social reform activities, rather further strengthened his conviction to work for the eradication of untouchability and uplifting the depressed castes. Also, with this intention in mind he established the Sabari Asram in Akathethara near Olavakkode. He built this *asram* in the land donated by Sri Appu Yajamanane\(^\text{30}\) and using the materials earlier used to construct the temporary shed for conducting the Palakkad conference. Though the Asram admitted children from all


communities including Muslims, stress was given to the admission of children from the untouchable castes. The community life of the Asram weakened the notions of caste hierarchy, untouchability, and pollution among its inmates.\textsuperscript{31} The other activities of the Asram included the promotion of Khadi clothes, propagation of Hindi, dissemination of Gandhian ideas and training Satyagrahis who want to participate in the freedom struggle.

Persons like Swami Ananda Theerthan, Krishna Menon, R.V. Sharma and U. Kelumenon, assisted T.R. Krishnaswami Iyyer in the day-to-day activities of the Asram. The Asram organised struggles to win entry for the untouchables into the important temples of the region, for the admission of untouchables to schools and for opening public roads for the use of polluting castes as well.\textsuperscript{32} Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Madan Mohan Malavya Sen Gupta and others visited the Asram and praised the programmes of Harijan upliftment, spinning of Khadi clothes, propagation of Hindi, training of Satyagrahis and other activities of the Asram.

In December 1923 the All India Congress Committee was held at Kakinada under the presidency of Moulana Muhammed Ali. The Kerala Provincial Congress Committee decided to utilise the venue of Kakinada session of the Congress to secure the support of the national leaders in their struggle against untouchability and other social evils. In the meeting, T.K. Madhavan, a delegate from Kerala, in a memorandum explained the

\textsuperscript{31} Swami Ananda Theerthan, \textit{Smaranakal-\textsuperscript{e} (Mal.)}, Tellicherry, 1980, p.10.

grievances of the untouchables to the national leaders and the press.\textsuperscript{33} The Kakinada session of the Congress passed a resolution on the initiative of T.K. Madhavan to take proper steps for the eradication of untouchability in the country.\textsuperscript{34} The meeting decided to work vigorously for the eradication of untouchability and gave direction to all provincial committees.

After the Kakinada session of the Congress, the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee decided to take concrete steps for the eradication of untouchability. It met at Eranakulam on January 20, 1924 and took the decision to launch a crusade against untouchability. The meeting recognised the eradication of untouchability as the programme of the Congress of the year. The meeting constituted a special committee to lead the activities.\textsuperscript{35} K. Kelappan, T.K. Madhavan, Vimbur Sankaran Nambudirippadu, T.R. Krishnaswami Iyyer and Kannanthodathu Velayudhamenon were the members of the committee. The committee for the eradication of untouchability met at Swarajya Asram in Quilon on February 16, 1924. In this meeting they formed a four-member committee to organize propaganda for the eradication of untouchability. K.P. Kesavamenon, A.K. Pillai, Kelappan and Kurur Neelamantan Nambudiripadu were the members of the committee.\textsuperscript{36} Kelappan was the convenor of both these committees. They carried out massive propaganda campaign against untouchability by preparing

\textsuperscript{33} K.P. Kesava Menon, \textit{n.11}, p.158.
\textsuperscript{34} P.K.K. Menon, \textit{n.1}, p.141.
\textsuperscript{35} M.P. Manmathan, \textit{Kelappan – Biography} (Mal.), Thiruvananthapuram, 1984, p.103.
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Ibid.}, p.103.
a memorandum and getting it signed by persons who believed untouchability as an evil custom. On all Sundays the committee conducted public meetings incorporating all Hindus irrespective of their caste and discussed the issues like untouchability and temple entry. The committee decided to launch an immediate movement demanding opening all public roads and public spaces (including temples) for lower caste people.

As part of it, the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee decided to start a Satyagraha at Vaikom in order to get the approach roads to the famous Siva temple opened to Avarnas. The historic Vaikom Satyagraha began on March 30, 1924. The Congress leaders from Malabar like K. Kelappan, K.P. Kesavamenon, K. Madhavan Nair, Kurur Neelakantan Nambudiripadu, T.R.Krishna Swami Iyyer and others actively participated in the Satyagraha.

One of the high lights of the satyagraha was the supportive Savarna Jatha (the caste hindus) organised under the leadership of Mannath Padmanabhan. The members of the jatha came to Trivandrum and submitted their demand before the Regent Sethu Lakshmi Bai. The Satyagrahis were subjected to severe hardships because of the oppressive policies of the government. The leaders like T.K. Madhavan, K.Kelappan, K.P. Kesavamenon, A.K. Pillai and K. Velayudhamenon were arrested and sent to prison. The Vaikom Satyagraha was withdrawn on November 23, 1925 because of the intervention of

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39 A.K. Pillai, n.4, p.366.
Mahatma Gandhi. The roads around the temple except the roads leading to the Sanketham of the temple were opened to all Hindus irrespective of caste. The success of Vaikom Satyagraha gave strength to the social reform activities in Kerala.

**Nationalists establishing schools:***

The nationalists had in mind that the freedom struggle would not get a mass base unless they do something concrete for the uplift of the down trodden classes. Therefore, Kelappan argued that there is a need to establish some permanent institutions to help the ‘untouchables’ to acquire new esteem and confidence by themselves and thereby cultivating their personality. He felt that the existing institutions are not enough do so. With this intention in mind he established a school at Pavoorkunnu adjacent to his residence at Moodadi. It was not a school of the conventional type, instead it was conceived as a school suited to the locality which could also promote national interests. This exclusive school for untouchables was first known as Adidravida school. The formal inauguration of the school was done by the famous Malayalam poet Vallathol Narayana Menon. The initial difficulty was in getting sufficient number of students admitted. Kelappan along with his half-brother Cheriyomana Nair visited Harijan huts and undertook an intensive campaign to attract the students to the school. Gradually the number of students increased. The school served free midday meals to the students. On account of this the children from other communities also began

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to attend the school. Later on the school was handed over to the Devadhar Malabar Reconstruction Trust. They named the school Gopalapuram Gokhale School in memory of Gopalakrishna Gokhale⁴¹.

Kelappan wanted to give a concrete shape to his ideals and aspirations. He purchased a plot of 8 acres at Nallambrakunnu near Payyoli and started a school in 1927. The place was named as Pakanarpuram and the school as Sradhananda⁴² Vidyalaya. Kelappan's works became more fruitful with the establishment of Pakanarpuram Sradhananda Vidyalaya⁴³. A.K. Gopalan worked as the teacher of the school. C. Narayanan Moosath, P. Kesavan Nair, V.K. Kannan Nair and Kelappan gave instructions to the students. Swami Ananda Theerthan served in the school during 1929-30. Apart from imparting instruction according to the usual curriculum emphasis was given to manual labour and moral education. In the free atmosphere of the school, students mingled each other irrespective of their caste or status. Kelappan lived along with the Parayas and other depressed classes at Pakanarpuram⁴⁴. The students of Pakanarpuram Sradhananda Vidyalaya staged dramas at the venue of Congress meetings in order to collect funds for managing the institution⁴⁵. During his visit to Kerala, Gandhiji expressed pride over

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⁴¹ P. Narayanan, n.37, P.30.
⁴² Swami Sradhananda was a freedom fighter. He contributed Rs. 1000 for the uplift of Harijans. He visited the camp of Vaikom Satyagraha. He was also the worker of Arya Samaj.
⁴³ M.P. Manmathan, n. 35, p.46.
⁴⁵ Mathrubhumi, 19 April, 1927.
Kelappan for contributing much for the uplift of untouchables. The school was later entrusted to the Harijan Sevak Sangh.

Mobilising the untouchables:

As part of the programme of the eradication of untouchability, the nationalists in Malabar went to the Harijan colonies in different parts of Malabar and began to organize them. They taught the Harijans of the necessity of education, cleanliness, abstention from drinking, etc. The nationalists formed Adidravida committees in many of the villages of Malabar to organize Harijans and studied their problems. Gradually the Harijans under the initiative of nationalists began to challenge the authority of the upper castes. The upper castes reacted to these developments by denying them work and wages. In order to overcome this situation, the Adidravida committees under the leadership of the nationalists began organizing co-operative societies.

The nationalist activities among the Adidravidas became more active with the third conference of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee held at Calicut on 16 and 17 April 1927. The president of the conference Mr. G. Horniman, editor of the Bombay Chronicle, declared that the attainment of Swaraj was the only panacea for ending all the social evils. In the conference Kurur Neelakantan Nambudiripadu presented a resolution for the eradication of untouchability from Kerala. The resolution pleaded to the high

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46 Mathrubhumi, 5 April, 1927.
caste Hindus not to place any obstacles before any Hindus for entering into
the temples, or to use tanks, or roads; in short all public places. It was
passed with an amendment by Kelappan requesting the Hindus to help the
depressed classes to establish schools and cooperative societies and to
popularize such ideas.

The visit of Mahatma Gandhi in Malabar gave a new spirit to social
reform movements among the untouchable there, and that also led to the
formation of new organization for their upliftment. Mahatma Gandhi’s visit to
Malabar in the last week of October 1927 was for promoting the production
and use of Khadi clothes. But the Congress leaders in Malabar also utilized
this opportunity to strengthen their struggles to eradicate untouchability in
Malabar. It was on Ganhiji’s request that the 'Kerala Andhiyajodharana
Sangham' was formed. C. Krishnan worked as the president and K. Kelappan
as the secretary of the organization. The organisations of the depressed
classes that sprouted in various parts of Malabar brought under the control of
Kerala Andhiyajodharana Sangham. Later the Sangham's name was changed
to Kerala Avasasamudayodharana Sangham. The Sangham under the
initiative of the nationalists convened conferences in different parts of
Malabar and mobilized the depressed classes. The important aims of the
Sangham included the opening of Adidravida colonies in various parts of
Malabar, imparting free education, and training in industrial activities, assist

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48 *Mathrubhumi*, 21 April, 1927.
49 A. Sreedhara Menon, *n.5*, p.77.
50 C.K. Moosath, *n.10*, p.91.
Harijan students to continue their education in public schools and establishing of a higher education centre. The sangham propagated their mission through speeches and pamphlets.

**National Movement and Social Reform in Kasaragod taluk:**

In the Kasaragod taluk of North Malabar, the freedom struggle and the movement against social evils were organized by leaders like Vidwan. P. Kelu Nair, A.C. Kannan Nair, K.T. Kunhiraman Nambiar, V.P. Krishnan Nair, poet Kuttamath, K. Madhavan and others. They organized processions and meetings against the British rule and conducted campaigns like spreading the message of Khadi and universal education. Along with these activities they fought for the removal of untouchability and other social evils and for the restoration of the honour of lower castes. Sri. Kuttamath, a renowned poet, educated the people on the social evils of untouchability and superstitions through his literary works.

Vidwan P. Kelu Nair, a revolutionary and an active fighter of the freedom struggle in North Malabar established a national school, Vijnanadayini Sanskrit Padasala at Vellikkoth in Kasaragod taluk\(^{51}\). The students were admitted to the school without any distinction of caste or creed. The students got education in the important subjects and training in weaving and spinning. The students were also directed to undertake cleaning works in Harijan colonies of the area. Kelu Nair himself and the leaders like A.C.

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Kannan Nair, Poet P. Kunhiraman Nair and K.A. Keraleeyan were the important teachers of the school. Kelu Nair's composition of poems and dramas created patriotic feeling and social awareness among the people. His social dramas like 'Pakanarcharitam', 'Kabirdasacharitam' and 'Vivekodayam' stood against casteism, untouchability, superstitions and other evils of the society. The drama 'Pakanar charitam' reflects the thoughts and actions of the down trodden in the society. Through this drama he tried to make people aware of the evils of caste distinction and made them understand that the greed for money was dangerous.

A.C. Kannan Nair, another important nationalist and an ardent follower of Gandhian ideals in North Malabar fought bravely for the eradication of untouchability. In order to eliminate untouchability in his own taravad and to remove such feelings even among the workers in his house, he brought up a Cheruma boy in his residence. V.P. Krishnan Nair, another important freedom fighter and social activist worked hard for the eradication of untouchability. He took Harijan boys to his house, bathed them and gave clean dress made of Khadi. He had taken meals along with the polluting castes. He secured the admission of Harijan boys in the nearby Vellikoth Board School. He suffered serious insult and assault from the Savarnas. Later he was excommunicated from his caste. The Harijan uplift programme of Vidwan P. Kelu Nair, A.C. Kannan Nair, V.P. Krishnan Nair and others gave

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52 Ibid., p. 21.
boost to the anti-untouchability programmes in the Northern most part of Malabar.

**Payyanur Conference and after:**

The fourth Kerala provincial conference was held at Payyannur on 25, 26 and 27 May, 1928 under the presidency of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, then General Secretary of the Indian National Congress. A large number of delegates from all sections participated in the conference. In his presidential address Nehru exhorted the people to get rid of all social evils which were a negation of democratic ideals, to put an end to economic exploitation to develop an objective and critical attitude to life's problems, and to establish a social order guaranteeing freedom and equality for all. One of the important resolutions passed by the conference was that of 'Poorna Swaraj'. The young nationalists welcomed Nehru's emphasis on complete independence instead of dominion status. The conference also passed a resolution requesting the people to resist the social evils like untouchability. It was presented by Kurur Neelakantan Nambudiripadu. Along with the conference a social reform conference also was convened which gave a new dimension to the anti-untouchability campaign in Malabar.

The boycott of Simon Commission, the starting of civil-Disobedience movement and Salt Satyagraha intensified the political struggles in Malabar.

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It brought a large number of people to the nationalist movement. The Salt Satyagraha began with the organization of a jatha from Kozhikode to Payyanur under the leadership of K. Kelappan on 13th April 1930. They reached Uliyadathu Kadavu near Payyanur on 23 April and broke the salt law. The Civil Disobedience movement was extended to other areas of Malabar like the picketing of toddy shops and shops selling foreign goods. The first Civil Disobedience movement was suspended as per the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in March, 1931.

**Chirakkal taluk:**

The stopping of Civil Disobedience movement created a temporary lull in the freedom struggle. One of the important direct result of the Civil Disobedience movement was that the Congress leaders began to give more importance to the anti-untouchability movement. Leaders like K. Kelappan, Manjeri Rama Iyyer, U. Gopalamenon, T.R. Krishna Swami Iyyer, A.K. Gopalan and others took efforts to secure social mobility and enhance the dignity of the lower castes in Malabar. So once again the struggle against social evils received priority in the Congress activities. In Chirakkal taluk, leaders like A.K. Gopalan, T.S. Tirumumbu, Vishnu Bharatheeyan, K.A. Keraleeyan and others led intensive campaign against untouchability. They organized Harijan processions and meetings in various parts of the taluk. The attitude of Savarnas and the polluting castes like the Tiyyas to Harijans was hostile in this region. At this time A.K. Gopalan and K.A. Keraleeyan led a

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57 K. Gopalankutty, *n.32*, pp.48-49.
Jatha of Harijans through the public road in front of the Tiyya shrine at Kandoth near Payyanur. A.K. Gopalan, K.A. Keraleeyan and the Harijans were severely beaten up by the conservative Tiyyas of the region. The incident got wide publicity among the public and it intensified the campaign against untouchability in North Malabar.

**Congress and Temple entry:**

The historically significant Guruvayur Satyagraha for granting the right of temple entry to the lower castes was an important nationalist campaign against untouchability in Malabar. The fifth Kerala provincial political conference was held at Badagara on 4th and 5th May 1931 under the presidency of Mr. J.M. Sengupta. In his presidential address he gave a clear exposition of the Congress programme and exhorted the people of Kerala to work for the removal of all social disabilities and caste restrictions. The conference passed an important resolution on the campaign for the right of temple entry to the untouchables. It was decided to launch anti-untouchability campaign as one of the programmes of the Congress in Kerala for the next year. To work out the above programme, the meeting formed a committee consisting of K. Kelappan, T.R. Krishna Swami Iyyer, Kurur Neelakantan Nambudiripadu and P. Achuthan. The Badagara conference requested the

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temple authorities and caste Hindus to open all the temples to all Hindus irrespective of caste.\(^{60}\)

The Kerala Provincial Congress sub-committee for the eradication of untouchability felt that untouchability could be wiped out only if the depressed classes were permitted to enter the temples. The committee under the leadership of K. Kelappan recommended to conduct the propagation of temple entry movement in Cochin and Malabar and to start the temple entry Satyagraha in cooperation with Travancore temple entry committee, the SNDP yogam and the Nair Service Society.\(^{61}\) Kelappan attended the All India Congress Committee meeting at Bombay on July 9, 1931 and gave representation to Gandhiji and the Congress working committee regarding the need for temple entry movement in Kerala. He also explained the recommendations of the temple entry movement. Gandhiji insisted that Kelappan should launch temple entry movement in Malabar.

The Congress leaders like Kelappan, T.R. Krishna Swami Iyyer, A.K. Gopalan and others strongly criticized the policy of conservative Hindus and the denial of temple entry to the untouchables.\(^{62}\) They contended that untouchability had no sanction in the Hindu scriptures. In their speeches they cited instances from epics to point out that untouchability did not exist in the

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\(^{60}\) A.K. Pillai, *n*.4, p.407.


ancient times. They quoted passages from the Bhagavat Gita and other works to show that Lord Krishna was a friend of the oppressed. They stated that it was created by certain propertied persons to keep themselves in power and to block the development of others. They also stated that the British power wanted such divisions for the perpetuation of their rule. It was further stated that the unity of all was needed for attaining political freedom\(^63\).

Kelappan attributed the low economic position of low castes, the disunity among the Hindus and political servility to untouchability. He contended that the lower castes had a mistrust and fear of the upper castes. It could not be abolished by the Civil Disobedience movement alone. He hoped that untouchability, which centered around the temples, would fade away if all Hindus irrespective of caste were given permission to enter and pray in the temples. The temple entry Satyagraha was the means by which the grievances of oppressed castes could be redressed\(^64\).

The Kerala Provincial Congress Committee meeting held at Calicut on 2 August 1931 passed a formal resolution on the question of temple entry. The meeting decided to start a Satyagraha in front of the Sree Krishna Temple, Guruvayur on 1\(^{st}\) November 1931 for the right of temple entry to the untouchables\(^65\). The meeting also decided to conduct a wide propaganda campaign on temple entry Satyagraha. A committee was formed to


\(^{65}\) K.Damodaran & C. Narayana Pillai, *n.*22, p.43.
implement the decision with K. Kelappan, P. Achuthan, Kurur Neelakantan Nambudiripadu, C. Kuttan Nair, M. Rugmini Amma, Mannath Padmanabhan and V.T. Bhattachiripadu as members.\textsuperscript{66}

The Kerala Provincial Congress Committee made wide publicity and elaborate arrangements for the beginning of the temple entry Satyagraha. Kelappan inaugurated the great temple entry campaign on 5\textsuperscript{th} September 1931. Kelappan with A.K. Gopalan, N.P. Damodaran, Mannath Padmanabhan, M. Karthiyani Amma, T.S. Tirumumb, K.P. Kayyalakkal and many others travelled in different parts of Kerala in connection with the propaganda work of Guruvayur temple entry Satyagraha. They organized the natives and conducted several meetings and processions. In the meetings they explained the programme of Temple entry Satyagraha and the need to eradicate the evil of untouchability.\textsuperscript{67} The Congress Committee also organized meetings of women and student organizations to mobilize support for the cause of untouchables in Kerala.\textsuperscript{68} The KPCC met at Alleppey on 21 September 1931 and passed an important resolution emphasizing the urgent need for the opening of all Hindu temples to the untouchables. The meeting appealed to the temple authorities to open all Hindu temples to the untouchables.

In a meeting held at Guruvayur on 24 September 1931 Kelappan voiced his views strongly against the orthodox Hindus. In his speech he

\textsuperscript{66} C.K. Moosath, \textit{n.10}, p.120.
\textsuperscript{68} S. Ramachandran Nair, \textit{n.2}, p.69.
stated, "Time and birth cannot make perfection. By merely being born and brought up in a Brahmin family one cannot achieve Brahmanya, it is better to live as a well behaved man than as a Brahmin. Untouchability, superstitions and other evils which had crept in to the Hindu society should be abolished. It is our duty to maintain peace and solidarity. This is my appeal to you Brahmins." The majority of the audience supported the views of Kelappan and it was a great shock to the orthodox section.

In September 1931, the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee started a vigorous temple entry campaign in Ponnani taluk, where the Guruvayur temple was situated. The leaders like K. Kelappan, A.K. Gopalan, Madhavanair, Moyyarath Sankaran, P. Krishna Pillai and others toured the villages in Ponnani taluk and addressed several meetings. Later they travelled through out Kasaragod, Chirakkal and Kurumbranad taluks holding meetings. In a special meeting of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee held at Calicut on October 18, 1931 it was formally decided to start the Guruvayur Satyagraha on November 1, 1931.

A procession of sixteen volunteers led by T. Subramanian Tirumumb started its journey from Kannur on 21 October 1931. The procession was inaugurated by Kelappan. A.K. Gopalan was the captain of the procession. The volunteers of the procession ranged from the low caste Harijans to the

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69 Mathrubumi, 25 September, 1931.
70 K. Gopalankutty, n.32, pp.69-70.
71 T.S. Tirumumb, Smaranakal Kavithakal (Memoir and Poems), (Mal.), Trichur, 1989, p.78.
high caste Nambudiris. They marched singing the songs against untouchability written by T.S. Tirumumb. The people gave warm reception to the procession at places like Tellicherry, Vatakara, Quilandy, Calicut and Feroke, that is, on its way to Guruvayur. The procession was warmly received by a huge crowd assembled at Guruvayur temple on November 1, 1931. The procession awakened the people and aroused a strong anti-untouchability feeling among the people.

Guruvayur Satyagraha was started in the eastern entrance (Kizhakke Nada) to the Guruvayur temple on November 1, 1931 with a speech by the leader of Satyagraha, K. Kelappan. In his speech Kelappan said that "Righteousness is our strength. It is the blessings of Gandhiji which give inspiration to our struggle. The evil of untouchability is a great insult to our country and time. Work for the eradication of untouchability, work for the success of the Satyagraha". The committee observed 1st November 1931 as All Kerala Temple Entry Day and organized prayers, processions, meetings, receptions and collection of funds throughout Kerala. Prominent leaders like A.K. Gopalan, Mannath Padmanabhan, N.P. Damodaran, T.S. Tirumumb, Vishnu Bharatheeyan, P. Krishna Pillai, Kurur Neelakantan Nambudiripadu and T.R. Krishna Swami Iyyyer actively participated in the Satyagraha under the leadership of Kelappan. The women Satyagrahis were led by Smt.

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74 C.K. Moosath, *n.10*, p.121.
Rugmini Amma, Karthiyani Amma and P.M. Kamalavathy. The women volunteers stood in the entrance staging Satyagraha and participated in the Bhajans, meetings and processions.

A.K. Gopalan, who was the volunteer captain of the Satyagraha, led the volunteers to the temple premises in a procession and two Satyagrahis belonging to the lower castes were posted on all three entrances to the temple. The Satyagrahis were relieved every three hours. Everyday, the Satyagraha began early in the morning and continued up to 10 pm in the night. In all evenings public meetings were convened to propagate the mission of the Satyagraha. On all days the volunteers read Puranas under the leadership of Vishnu Bharatheeyan.

The popular response to the Satyagraha was tremendous. Day by day the temple entry Satyagraha gained much popularity in the country. National leaders like Sardar Vallabhai Patel, K.M. Munshi, Jawaharlal Nehru, P.C. Ray, Kasturbha Gandhi and many others send messages wishing the temple entry movement all success. Zamorin, the trustee of the temple, received telegraphic messages from different parts of the country demanding the opening of the temple to all Hindus irrespective of caste. The Satyagraha inspired the youth and they worked in the forefront for the success of the struggle.

75 K. Gopalankutty, n. 32, p.70.
All Malayalam newspapers, especially the *Mathrubhumi*, supported and gave publicity to the Guruvayur Satyagraha by publishing editorials and articles explaining the need for the eradication of untouchability from society. For example, on 1 November 1931 the editorial of the *Mathrubhumi* titled, 'Vathil Thurakumo' (Will temple door open?) appeared with a harsh criticism against the policy of the Zamorin, the trustee of the temple, and supportive statement in favour of the leaders who were leading the temple entry Satyagraha. The editorial ended with the question, will the temple door which shut in and packed the 'Lord Guruvayurappan will open? The *Mathrubhumi* asked the people to conduct public meeting and processions to propagate the mission of the Satyagraha. It published the statement of Kelappan prominently which requested the people to work and to contribute money towards Satyagraha fund for its success.

Money poured from different parts of Kerala and outside to support the Guruvayur temple entry Satyagraha. A.K. Gopalan and his co-workers collected an amount of Rs. 300 from Wynad and contributed the same to the Satyagraha fund. Many devotees donated the money-offerings they otherwise would have made to the Guruvayur temple to the Guruvayur Satyagraha camp with the conviction that the Satyagraha camp was more sacred than the temple.

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78 *Mathrubhumi*, 1 November, 1931.
The temple authorities on their part made wide arrangements. They put up barbed wires on all the entrances of the temple and posted gangs of watchmen at the entrances to keep the Satyagrahis out. In spite of the large crowds that gathered, there was perfect peace, therefore, the first few days of the Satyagraha went without any unpleasant incident. The Satyagrahis read the verses from the *Bhagavat Gita*, recited songs criticising the stubborn policy of the temple authorities and shouted slogans, like "Keep aloof untouchability", and ‘Open the temple to all Hindus’.

But soon, the temple authorities and local reactionaries began to use physical force against the peaceful and non-violent Satyagrahis. A week after the starting of the Satyagraha, the watchmen began to push the volunteers around and heckle them. The elephants of the temple were made to walk threateningly close to the Satyagrahis. T. Subramanian Tirumumb, captain of the temple entry campaign was arrested on 8 November 1931 at Guruvayur. It was followed by the arrest of T.R. Krishnaswami Iyyer. P.M. Unnikrishnan, a Harijan boy of twelve and a close disciple of Kelappan, was actively participating in the Satyagraha. He with Appukuttan Adiyodi were singing songs at the Satyagraha Pandal criticising the evil of untouchability and the policy of the temple authorities towards the untouchables.

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82 C.K. Moosath, *n.10*, p.121.
provoked the temple authorities, hence the watchmen of the temple beaten them up mercilessly.

In December 20, 1931 K.F. Nariman, the President of Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, C. Rajagopalachari, and R. Krishna Iyyer visited the place of the Satyagraha. In the meeting they appealed to the authorities to stop discrimination towards the untouchables and to open the temple to all Hindus irrespective of caste. They requested the people to give all types of help to the Guruvayur Satyagraha. They reminded the people that the struggle for the eradication of untouchability was part of our freedom struggle. The visit of the national leaders gave more strength and spirit to the Satyagraha and also wider popularity.

As it progressed, Zamorin, the trustee of the temple became more adamant. He had the support of the district administration and a few orthodox Hindus. On December 22, P. Krishna Pillai entered the temple and rang the sacred bell suspended at the mukha mandapa of the temple, which was a privilege enjoyed exclusively by the Brahmins. He was seriously beaten up by the temple watchmen. On December 26 A. K. Gopalan, the volunteer captain of the Satyagraha, was also severely beaten up and kicked by the watchmen with the support of a group of caste Hindus. These happenings enraged the supporters of the temple entry Satyagraha. They by using axes

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84 S. Ramachandran Nair, n.2, p.69.
86 A.K.Gopalan, n.72, pp.67-68.
and other weapons demolished the barbed wire fencing before the entrance of the temple which was earlier set up to prevent the Satyagrahis entering the temple. Further, the next after these developments a large crowd belonging to various castes approached the western temple tank and took bath there. It indicates that the satyagrahis began to receive more popular support and the temple entry struggle now became a popular political act. The temple authorities now realized that though the Satyagrahis might be peaceful and non-violent the public would not be in a mood to tolerate the violence of the temple authorities.

The changing mood of the struggle forced the temple authorities to change their strategies as well. Hence, as a retaliatory measure and as an attempt to consolidate the orthodox opinion the Zamorin closed the temple on 1 January 1932. The Satyagrahis continued the struggle and the volunteers went around the temple shouting slogans against untouchability and chanting bhajans. The Kerala Provincial Congress Committee dissolved the temple entry Satyagraha committee on 6th January, 1932 as the later body itself had been declared unlawful. But, a special committee was formed to renew the Satyagraha. On January 7th, 1932 A.K. Gopalan, the volunteer captain of the Satyagraha, N.P. Damodaran, the publicity officer and K.N.K. Kunhikrishnan, the secretary of the SNDP Yogam were arrested at the Satyagraha camp for having addressed a public meeting to protest against the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi. They were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of

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six months. The Zamorin ordered the reopening of the temple on 28 January 1932. After the reopening the volunteers renewed the Satyagraha\textsuperscript{88}.

The Zamorin requested the support of the government to put an end to the temple entry agitation. On February 3, 1932, the government passed an ordinance which prohibited Satyagrahis entering within 50 yards of the temple. The Palghat Divisional Magistrate in April 1932 ruled that all the roads except the one around the north pond were public roads. This enabled the volunteers to proceed up to the gate of the temple to offer Satyagraha\textsuperscript{89}. The practice of holding public meeting in every evening was continued and plays were staged as part of the Satyagraha propaganda.

The Guruvayur Satyagraha got great encouragement when the authorities of many private temples in various parts of Malabar opened their doors for the low castes. In April, 1932 Dr. P.S. Varier, the noted Ayurvedic Physician and founder of Kottakkal Arya Vaidyasala opened his private temple, the Viswambara temple in Kottakkal for Harijans\textsuperscript{90}. In August 1932, Madhusoodanan Thangal threw open his private temple in Mattannur to all castes. A temple in Talikkulam and another in Akathethara were opened to all castes in September 1932. In the same month a Tiyya temple in Kannur was also thrown open to the Harijans. The trustees of Sri Ramaswami Temple at Tali in Calicut also decided to allow the Harijans to enter the

\textsuperscript{88} Mathrubhumi, 29 January, 1932.
\textsuperscript{89} K.Gopalankutty, \textit{n. 63}, p.48.
\textsuperscript{90} V.R. Menon, \textit{n. 62}, p.441.
temple. In Eravimangalam, Palloli Nambudiri granted the right of entry to the untouchables in his private temple\textsuperscript{91}.

The Guruvayur Satyagraha took a new turn on 13 September 1932 when Gandhiji announced his decision to start 'fast unto death' on 21 September in protest against the decision of the government to have separate electorate for scheduled castes in India\textsuperscript{92}. Kelappan considered it as the most opportune moment to attract public attention to the temple entry movement. On 18 September 1932 Kelappan announced his decision to fast unto death in front of the Guruvayur temple till the untouchability was abolished. The national leaders and the co-workers like A.K. Gopalan, T.S. Tirumumb and others tried to retract Kelappan's decision to fast\textsuperscript{93}. But he was unyielding and began his historic fast on 21 September at the Kizhakke Nada (Eastern Gate) of the temple\textsuperscript{94}. He refused even the little shade of a thatched shed. He said,

"You have a great responsibility. I may not be with you for long and no longer will be able to talk. I am fully conscious that you will perform the works in proper way. I know that if a dozens of Satyagrahies die in front of the temple, the Zamorin will not open the temple. This fast is to awaken the conscience of the people and make them aware of their obligation. If it is

\textsuperscript{91} K. Gopalankutty, \textit{n.} 32, p.76.
\textsuperscript{92} P.K.K. Menon, \textit{n.}1, p.321.
\textsuperscript{93} T.S. Tirumumb, \textit{n.}71, p.83.
\textsuperscript{94} A. Sreedhara Menon, \textit{n.}5, p.83.
possible we will win. Everything depends on your courage, endurance and enthusiasm. Bless me.\textsuperscript{95}

A number of meetings were held in various parts of Kerala expressing concern over such an action of Kelappan. The meeting demanded the opening up of temple to all Hindus. On 22 September 1932 a deputation of the leading citizens of Calicut led by K.P. Raman Menon visited the Zamorin at the latter’s palace. They requested him to convene a conference of all Hindus for the discussion of the important issue of the temple entry\textsuperscript{96}. But the Zamorin gave a negative reply. On 24 September a procession of twenty five persons led by T. Subramanian Tirumumbu from Guruvayur arrived at Calicut. But the Zamorin was not ready to see them. But when pressure mounted he had to allow two among them to enter his palace and detail their cause. So T. Subramanian Tirumumb and Vadakekkara Balan met the Zamorin and presented a memorandum, but only to see their representation being rejected\textsuperscript{97}. The satyagrahis were a bit disappointed over the act of Zamorin. Hence, on 27 September a hunger strike was started by Krishna Bhatt, a Congress member in front of the Zamorin's palace. Appeals to Zamorin asking him to open the temple for untouchable poured in from inside and outside of Kerala. If Kelappan made a personal appeal to the Zamorin, the national leaders like Madan Mohan Malavya and others appealed through telegrams.

\textsuperscript{95} C.K. Moosath, \textit{n.10}, p.125.
\textsuperscript{96} A.K. Pillai, \textit{n.4}, p.358.
\textsuperscript{97} T.S. Tirumumb, \textit{n.71}, p.82.
In addition to these, organizations like North Malabar Nambudiri Yuvajana Sangham, Erimayur Ezhava Samajam, Yogakshema Sabha in Venneri, etc passed resolutions extending support to the Satyagraha and urged the Zamorin to throw open the temple to all Hindus\(^98\). A few prominent Savarna leaders like P. Ravunnimenon, P.K. Venkatachala Iyyer, P. Sankunni menon, C. Unniraja and others through a memorial requested the Zamorin through a memorial to open the temple to all Hindus. A grand Savarna conference was convened at Guruvayur on 29 September 1932 under the presidentship of Mattannur Madhusoodanan Thangal. The meeting requested Zamorin to open the temple to all Hindus. The meeting decided to conduct fast within the Guruvayur temple. A committee of action was formed with V.T. Bhattathiripadu and K.A. Damodaramenon as secretaries. Thus on October 1, 1932 a batch of 24 Savarna volunteers including women commenced their fast within the temple.\(^99\)

Zamorin in a common reply to the delegations declared that as per Hindu Religious Endowment Act he was bound to administer the affairs in accordance with the prevalent usages and that he was helpless in the matter of throwing open the temple to the untouchables. He contended that the admission to the low caste people into the temple would hurt the sentiments of the caste Hindus\(^100\). Zamorin send telegraphic message to Gandhiji asking him to advise Kelappan to withdraw his fast.

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\(^100\) K. Damodaran & C. Narayana Pillai, *n.* 22, p.44.
Kelappan got physically weaker day by day and his fast paralysed the other activities of the Congress in Malabar for the time being\(^\text{101}\). Kelappan was convinced that the victory of the Satyagraha was at sight. In a meeting on 30 September 1932 Manjeri Rama Iyyer presented a resolution requesting Kelappan to end his fast. When the resolution was put on discussion A.K. Gopalan, N.P. Damodaran, T.S. Tirumumb and many others opposed it. Finally the meeting rejected the resolution.

People from various parts of the country requested Gandhiji to advice Kelappan to withdraw his fast. Gandhiji said, I can not allow Kelappan, one of the noblest of India's silent servants to die. Meanwhile he sent a telegram to Kelappan asking him to suspend the fast on the ground that he had not been consulted in advance and also that the temple authorities were not given sufficient notice in this regard\(^\text{102}\). Kelappan, in reply to Gandhiji, stated that he had consulted Madan Mohan Malavya and A. Rama Swami Iyengar on the action and the Zamorin could not claim the insufficiency of notice. He also stated that the question of wounding the hearts and self-respect of thousands of depressed brethren was more real and important than the alleged wounding of the orthodox conscience\(^\text{103}\). The fast was necessary to shape public opinion in favour of a change of heart leading to social unity.

\(^{101}\) P.K.K. Menon, \textit{n.1}, p.325.
\(^{102}\) A. Srethara Menon, \textit{n. 5}, p.83.
Gandhiji sent another telegram to Kelappan on 1 October 1932 asking him to suspend the fast. He assured Kelappan that even if after propaganda and requests the Guruvayur temple remain closed for long, he would share the responsibility in leading the fast after three months. Thus finally in response to Gandhiji's advice and assurance Kelappan withdrew his fast by taking lemon juice at 8 am on 2nd October 1932, the birthday of Gandhiji\textsuperscript{104}. Krishna Bhatt who was fasting in front of the Zamorins Palace also ended the fast on receipt of a telegram from Kelappan. The temple entry Satyagraha was also suspended.

After the suspension of Kelappan's fast and the calling off of the temple entry Satyagraha it was decided to carry on a vigorous anti-untouchability campaign all over Kerala. A procession of 16 volunteers led by A.K. Gopalan set out on 11 October 1932 to tour the whole of Kerala on foot, carrying on propaganda and addressing massive meetings everywhere\textsuperscript{105}. In the meetings they talked about the necessity of the eradication of untouchability and other social evils from the society. Even after the suspension of the Satyagraha, the national leaders requested the Zamorin to open the temple to all Hindus. But his response was not favourable.

Gandhiji was of the opinion that the temple entry question at Guruvayur should be settled through a referendum. He instructed C. Rajagopalachari and Karnard Sadasiva Rao to take the initiative of the referendum. C. Rajagopalachari, Karnard Sadasiva Rao and Kasturbha

\textsuperscript{104} P.K.K. Menon, \textit{n.1}, pp.327-328.
\textsuperscript{105} A.K. Gopalan, \textit{n. 72}, pp. 49-50.
Gandhi reached Guruvayur and met the leaders of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee. The KPCC formed a committee to conduct a referendum among the caste Hindus of Ponnani taluk where the Guruvayur temple was situated to ascertain their views on the question of temple entry to the untouchables. K. Madhavan Nair was made the director of referendum to be assisted by U. Gopalamenon, the president of Kerala Anti-untouchability committee.

The referendum was organized with village as the unit and all the adult caste Hindus in the Ponnani taluk with right to record their views on the issue of temple entry. The taluk was divided into two sections. K.A. Damodaramenon was put in charge of the northern section and A.C. Raman in charge of the southern section. The work was started on 3 December 1932. The national leaders like C. Rajagopalachari, Kasthurba Gandhi, Smt. Urmila Devi and Mrs. Lakshmi with the provincial leaders like T.S. Tirumumb, Mannath Padmanabhan and M. Karthiayani Amma traveled in various parts of Ponnani taluk and addressed many meetings held as part of the referendum propaganda work. P. Krishna Panikkar, P.C. Kuttikrishnan, Edasseri Govindan Nair, A.C. Narayanan Vaidyer, K.V. Ramanmenon etc like many other Congress workers went on foot and visited the houses to assess the public opinion.

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The result of the referendum was a moral victory for the Congress. About 20,000 persons recorded their opinion of which 77% voted in favour of temple entry, 13% against and 10% remained neutral. A significant feature of the referendum was that more than 8000 women expressed their choice in favour of temple entry. The result of the referendum helped to dispel the wrong impression that the caste Hindus in Malabar were opposed to temple entry. The Zamorin raised technical obstacles and refused to open the temple to the untouchables. The sanatanists gave full support to the Zamorin. They met at Guruvayur on 29 December 1932 and appealed to Zamorin to stick to his guns. They even conferred the title of 'Dharma Dhira Mahavira' on him.

Dr. Subbarayan, a member of the Madras Legislative Council took note of the sentiment in favour of temple entry, and moved a bill for temple entry in the Madras Legislative Council on January 8, 1933. Guruvayur Day was celebrated throughout Kerala on 8th January in support of Dr. Subbarayan's proposed bill. In August 1939, the Madras Hindu Temple Entry Disabilities Removal Act was passed. It may be noted that in Malabar the temple entry rights were established only a decade later, i.e., in 1947, when Omathur Rama Swami Reddiar became the Chief Minister of Madras presidency. His ministry passed the famous Madras Temple Entry Authorisation Act on 2 June 1947 which enabled all classes of Hindus to have the right of entry even in to the temples constructed for the benefit of particular sections of the Hindu community. On the same day hundreds of

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Harijan devotees under the leadership of Kelappan entered Guruvayur temple and their rights in the temple premises were legally approved\textsuperscript{111}. With the dawn of independence untouchability was abolished by legislation and those who practiced it were made liable to punishment.

Though Guruvayur temple entry Satyagraha failed to achieve its immediate objective of the opening of the temple to the untouchables, it helped to focus public attention on the age-long social evil of untouchability. The movement had created an impetus for social change through out the country. The Satyagraha is considered as a milestone in the socio political development of Kerala\textsuperscript{112}. The Guruvayur Satyagraha succeeded in bringing the broadest possible unity, imparting mass education and mobilizing the people. It created a climate favourable to the eventual abolition of untouchability.

The Satyagraha was an event that thrilled thousands of young men and women and gave inspiration to a vast majority of the people to fight for their legitimate rights with self-respect. The important ideological impact of the movement was that for the first time in Malabar the movement focused the plight of the untouchables and it created a social mobility which was conductive for the success of later political movements\textsuperscript{113}. Malabar witnessed organized struggles for the eradication of untouchability and the struggles of

\textsuperscript{111} C.K. Moosath, \textit{n.10}, p.133.
\textsuperscript{113} K. Gopalankutty, \textit{n.63}, p.55.
workers and peasants within five years of the starting of the Satyagraha. In short, the Satyagraha led to transformations in everywhere.

The struggle against caste system and untouchability in Malabar became a mass movement during the post-Guruvayar Satyagraha era. The Satyagraha awakened the people to action. After the Satyagraha, the nationalists like Kelappan and others gave more attention to the upliftment of depressed classes in Malabar. The nationalists in the Vatakara region with the support of Kelappan conducted a vigorous anti-untouchability campaign in the region. They visited huts of Harijans, organised them and led them to the temples, ponds and other places which denied entry to them. The Kurumbranad Taluk Ayithochadana conference held in December 1932 strengthened the anti-untouchability movements of the region. The meeting was presided over by Pallath Arya Antharjanam. She, in her presidential address appealed to the Hindus to work for the eradication of untouchability.

The formation of the Malabar branch of the Harijan Sevak Sangh gave boost to the Harijan welfare activities in Malabar. It was started in April 1933 with K. Kelappan as president and P. Sankunni Nambiar as secretary. The Sangh with the support of nationalists organised struggles against untouchability. They organised inter-dining in various parts of Malabar. The Sangh also established a hostel for Harijans at Guruvayur. The Sangh observed the Anti-Untouchability Day on all India basis on 8th May, 1933. On 29 May 1933, a huge procession and meeting was held at Calicut under

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the leadership of Kelappan in which nearly 450 Harijans participated\textsuperscript{115}. In the meeting Kelappan appealed to the people of all depressed classes to participate and support the anti-untouchability struggle in Malabar.

In South Malabar region the struggle against untouchability and other social evils were led by persons like V.T. Bhattathiripadu, Pallath Arya Antharjanam, E. P. Gopalan and others. They organized widow marriage and the intercaste marriage among the Nambudiris. They collected Harijan boys and took them to the temples, ponds, etc., privately owned by the high castes. V.T. Bhattathiripadu through his works explained the need for social change among the Nambudiris. He viewed temples as centers which perpetuated social evils. He asked the Nambudiris to step down and to campaign for the eradication of untouchability by opening their temples to all Hindus irrespective of caste.

After the Guruvayur Satyagraha the struggle against untouchability was vigorous in Palakkad region. The nationalists of the region organised inter-dining and launched temple entry campaigns at places like Vadakkanchery, Puthukode, Trippalur, Kunisseri, Chittilachery and Kachamkursi. In 1933 a group of Avarna youths near Kalpathi village violating precedents entered the roads near the Siva temple for seeing the famous chariot festival. They were severely assaulted by the conservative caste Hindus of the region. The important result of the 'Kalpathi incident' was that later a number of avarnas especially Tiyya youths accepted the Christian

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., p.533.
or Islam religion and walked bravely through the roads near to the temple. This incident caused shame to the conservative Brahmins and Savarna elites of the region\textsuperscript{116}.

**Social reform and the radicals:**

The pressure-compromise-pressure attitude of the Congress, suspension of Civil Disobedience movement, etc., disillusioned the younger elements in the Congress. They lost faith in the Gandhian forms of struggle. They felt that a new programme was needed which would involve the workers and peasants. It was in this background that the Congress socialist Party was formed in Malabar in May 1934\textsuperscript{117}. It was formed in a meeting of socialists at Calicut town hall with C.K. Govindan Nair as president and P. Krishna pillai as secretary\textsuperscript{118}. The party began to organize peasants, workers, school teachers and other sections of the society. They organised struggles for better working condition, better pay, etc. They also launched struggles against untouchability, superstitions and other evils in the society.

The inter-dining organized under the leadership of the socialist youth organizations like the Abhinava Bharatha Yuvak Sangham and others contributed much to the elimination of caste differences and untouchability in Malabar. The formation of the Karshaka Sangham and trade unions strengthened the struggle against imperialism, landlordism and social evils.


\textsuperscript{117} K. Gopalankutty, *n.16*, p.75.

The communists gave stress on anti-colonial and anti-feudal struggles. They viewed that the campaign against untouchability was an important programme of action in their struggle against imperialism and landlordism. They gave directions to the workers and peasants not to practice untouchability in any form. Though they gave prime concern to anti-imperialist struggle and economic issues than social inequality, their activities gradually weakened the caste barriers and untouchability.

The nationalists launched the movements against untouchability and other social evils as part of the freedom struggle. But they failed to introduce a concrete programme for the social and economic uplift of the depressed classes. They were not ready to shoulder the responsibilities with the depressed classes. They excluded Harijans from the leadership of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. The orthodox section in the Congress opposed the coming of depressed classes in the leadership of such organizations. This policy weakened the interaction between the two sections. Though there were some limitations, the national movement had its own effect on social reform movements in Malabar. The movement against untouchability and other social evils conducted under the leadership of the nationalists as part of the national movement contributed much to the awakening of depressed classes and bringing social change in Malabar.
The present study establishes that the social reform movements had played a significant role in making the Malabar society progressive and modern. The reforms worked as an anti-thesis to the degenerated social structure and complementary to the forces of social transformation. The activities of social reformers were successful to a great extent in the abolition of the then existing social evils, meaningless customs and practices and in promoting the dignity of the individual, equality of sexes and education.

The activities of the Basel Evangelical Mission brought significant changes in the social, economic and cultural fields of Malabar. Though evangelisation was the proclaimed aim of the mission they were the first to work among the lower castes. At the time of the arrival of Basel Missionaries the land and society was within the grip of the upper caste people. The feudalistic landownership, institution of caste system and its sub-divisions like untouchability, slavery and other social evils made the life of the low castes intolerable. The Basel Missionaries knew that social changes were necessary for their object of evangelisation. They believed that they could bring basic changes only through educating the low caste people. With this objective they started a number of educational institutions.
The Basel Missionaries were the pioneers in establishing modern system of education in Malabar. They provided educational facilities to all sections of people irrespective of caste and creed. In the mission schools the students belonging to various castes studied and mingled without any caste consciousness or discrimination. Education led to the creation of a new class of colonial bureaucrats. Modern educated people got employment in colonial administrative services. Along with that the new industries established by the Basel Missionaries incorporated skilled as well as unskilled labours into their industrial concerns. Altogether, all these led to the creation of new colonial subjects in Malabar.

The Basel Mission contributed much to the development of Malayalam language and literature as well. The introduction of printing technology was crucial in this aspect. The missionaries compiled a number of school texts books both in English and Malayalam and published a few journals like 'Rajyasamacharam' and 'Paschimodayam'. Social welfare initiatives of the Missionaries too were praiseworthy. They introduced the western medical system in Malabar, set up orphanages, widows homes, old-age homes etc.

The BEM through their works awakened the low caste people to a sense of self-respect, self-confidence and better living. They raised them into literate, progressive and organised people. The mission introduced them to know the concepts of freedom, justice and social equality. The educated youths realised the inequalities that prevailed within the society, and began to oppose the social inequalities like caste system, untouchability and irrational
customs and practices. Another consequence of the intervention of the Basel Mission in Malabar society was the rise of nationalist spirit in Malabar.

Three saintly-like persons were perhaps the most influential in transforming the precolonial Malabar into the modern Malabar. Major part of the study is devoted to explore their activities and their consequences in creating new thinking among the people of Kerala in general and Malabar in particular. First I have dealt with the life and thoughts of Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi. Though he never organised a movement, his ideals of rationalism, free thinking, liberty, equality and secularism gave light and awakening to the people who were in the midst of darkness created by religion. Sivayogi's concept of allround reformation and enlightenment of society based on human love and liberty beyond religion and caste still have a great relevance in contemporary Kerala society.

Sivayogi criticised all the religious beliefs and practices from a rational point of view. He considered religion and caste as the creation of man and not the orders of god. Moreover, to him untouchability was an irrational social practice created by upper castes. All these were proved to be a threat to human life and the development of an egalitarian society. The division of people into various castes is against reason, experience and knowledge and it would help only to preserve sectarianism and inequality.

Sivayogi argued that there was no god, therefore, it was foolish to worship god by fasting and undergoing other mental and spiritual tortures or through worshiping an image. He taught that god never was able to rescue
the people from their misfortunes, and therefore, HE was not a savior. He said that idol worship would not give happiness and salvation. Instead, he emphaised that it was the mind that was supreme and not a god or a senseless and lifeless stone.

Sivayogi considered non-violence as the supreme virtue. Non-violence is not merely abstaining from killing but also abstaining from doing any physical and mental harm towards any living beings. For him, animal sacrifice is a wicked practice. Also, he declared that the customs like Talikettu Kallyanam, Tirandukuli, Pulikudi and child marriage were irrational and superstitious.

The Anandamatha or religion of bliss of Sivayogi was a new way of life aimed at the rescue of human mind from the clutches of religion, caste, ceremonies and rituals and invested it with rational thinking. Mind is the supreme and basic cause for all good and evil in society. He reminds us that only pure and peaceful mind can develop human values and love. Anadamatha believes that man's primary aim is to achieve 'Ananda' or happiness in life, which is possible only by the control of mind through the practice of 'Rajayoga'. Sivayogi asserts that a man becomes truly independent only when he conquers his mind. The control of mind helps people to cultivate good qualities, increase will power, create rational thoughts and helps to wipe out evil qualities.

Sivayogi's believed that it was only through education that people would know the evils and inequalities in society. A man's life without
education is meaningless. Sivayogi was an important exponent of women’s education and gender equality. He taught that it was the male dominated society which denied education and equality to women.

Sivayogi’s rational thoughts and preaching had its impact on the Malabar society. They opposed social evils, encouraged education including women’s education, and stopped the practice of blood sacrifices. Lalithambika Antherjanam, a Malayalam laureate, once wrote that Sivayogi’s work *Sthree Vidyaposhini* was a moral boost for her to raise voice against the social slavery suffered by the women of high castes.

However, Sivayogi and his ideals like denial of religion, caste, god and idol worship did not get much support and popularity in the then existing society. Though his Ananda cult was a novel idea, people failed to understand its real import. Perhaps the failure to understand the power of his modern rational thinking may be the reason. However, the ideals of Sivayogi had its positive impact on the Kerala society, less in his contemporary period, but more in the late colonial and post-colonial Kerala.

In Chapter four I have dealt in detail with the thoughts and practices of Vagbhathananda. He was a disciple of Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, the preceptor of advaita philosophy and a believer of secular and egalitarian ideas and one who worked for the eradication of social and economic inequalities prevailed in the 20th century Kerala society.

Vagbhathananda argued that creation of a new consciousness among the people was needed for the reformation of the society and education was the
means to achieve it. Therefore, he started schools and imparted education to all without any discrimination. Though he also lived a saintly life, he was critical of his own teacher, Sivayogi and Sree Narayana Guru: the former for his undue emphasis on human mind and the later for his promotion of image worship. Moreover, he recognized monotheism as the quintessence of belief in god.

Vagbhatananda’s thoughts, contained in his work *Atmavidya*, had a strong base of rationalism and moral values. He conceived Advaita philosophy as a doctrine which helped the people to understand the importance of performing one's duties even in the midst of all miseries. He was of the opinion that the primary duty of an Advaita follower was to work for the regeneration of the society by opposing casteism, evil customs and rituals. He thought that worship of god was very much necessary for success in life. God is the patron of this world and the scriptures are his directives. The path to God according to him is 'Atmavidya' or knowledge of self through the worship of god. The worship of god through prayer is the suitable way to know god. Religion, however, is a private affair of an individual. All religions provide spiritual light and a true religious follower would never be against another religion since all religions teach universal love and brotherhood.

He was an important preceptor of 'Sanatana Dharma', the soul which was the manifestation of our wisdom as the true happiness or Ananda. The mind is formless and only a pure mind can know the formless supreme being. By Rajayoga Vagbhatananda meant the joining of the mind to the Atman. The
mind which naturally goes out to worldly objects is to be led to the Atman, the supreme bliss. The realisation of Atman through meditation will purge the mind of all evil things.

Vagbhatananda's Atmavidyasangham had been a major force of social change in Malabar. The Sangham as a secular, intellectual and reformative organisation fought for the eradication of social evils. It promoted friendly coexistence and universal solidarity among the people without the barriers of religion and caste. It propagated the principle, 'may all the world live in peace'. The Sangham's powerful slogan, 'Awake, remember the Almighty, Get up at once and fight injustice' sowed the seeds of moral consciousness and virtuous principles in the minds of the people. The Sangham conducted movements against casteism, untouchability, idol worship, irrational rituals and ceremonies and all sectarian tendencies of religion. The Sangham, by giving importance to prayer and meditation liberated a good number of people's mind from the clutches of superstitions and evil customs.

The women of Atmavidyasangham worked for the freedom and equality of women. Vagbhatananda says that elevation of women is essential to the progress of the society. The work of women's division of Atmavidyasangham created awareness among women on education, freedom and equality and a number of women got educated and came to the forefront of social reform activities and the freedom struggle. Vagbhatananda's relentless fight against the superstitions and expensive rituals also awakened the people.
Vagbhatananda considered animal sacrifice as shameful and the people who believed in this custom as despicable fellows. His visit and speeches against animal sacrifice in the important temples in Malabar influenced the temple authorities to stop the practice. Another important campaign of Vagbhatananda was against the use of liquor. He was an advocate of teetotalism and regarded liquor as a poison which destroys individuals, family and society. He asked the Tiyya people to abandon the traditional occupation of toddy tapping and to find other jobs for survival.

Declaring untouchability as a wicked custom Vagbhatananda worked for the uplift of the depressed class. Even before Gandhi christened the untouchables as ‘Harijans’ Vagbhatananda called them so. He along with his disciples visited the huts of untouchables and taught them their rights and gave them spirit to challenge some of the social conventions. The promotion of interdinings, intermarriage, encouraging them to remove caste marks from their body apparels and gestures and bringing them to public roads that were hitherto denied to them were meant to achieve this end. He supported temple entry movements not because he was an idolater, but because he wanted to establish a society of equals.

His eyes fell on the aspect of economic reforms as well. He criticised the exploitation of peasants by the landlords and the British. Vagbhatananda’s criticisms against feudal and colonial exploitation and the support of peasant rights later influenced the union of the peasants and the struggles for their rights.
Vagbhatananda played a vital role in giving inspiration to the freedom struggle. He opposed anti-national views and supported Gandhiji's leadership and constructive programmes. He asked the people to be patriotic, fight against all kinds of bondages and win freedom.

The radical thoughts and practice of Vagbhatananda were not acceptable to the elites of the then existing Malabar society. The lower classes were only in the initial years of developing critical consciousness. Therefore, his thoughts and actions did not receive the deserved recognition. After his demise, the Atmavidyasangham remained as an intellectual movement or a body of intelligent middle class. Moreover, the latter failed to mobilise people against social disabilities. The absence of an economic goal aim and an economic group behind the Sangham also shortened its activities. The entry of other political and peasant organisations was another factor which shortened the working field of Atmavidyasangham.

Despite of all these draw backs Vagbhatananda's rational and humanistic ideas had their own significance in the contemporary society. His efforts contributed to the upward mobility of the depressed classes. His reform activities caused much to the eradication of many uneven practices in society. He made an immemorable service to foster nationalism and create political awakening of the people. His opposition to the exploitation of peasants by the landlords influenced the working class movements of Abhinava Bharath Yuvak Sangham and Karshaka Sangham. The Uralunkal Labour Contract Cooperative Society formed by Vagbhatananda for providing economic self sufficiency to the Atmavidyasangham members grew up as an
important model to the cooperative movement. Today it is the biggest labour contract society in India. Vagbhatananda combined social reform movement, the spiritual and religious efforts and the freedom struggle. The thoughts and reform works of Vagbhatananda have contributed much to the wellbeing and allround development of the individual and society. Undoubtedly Vagbhatananda and his movement did much in bringing about changes in the social life of Malabar.

Swami Ananda Theerthan, a true disciple of Sree Narayana Guru and an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi, drew inspiration for indulging in social reform from his own lived experiences. He identified caste system, superstition, and obsolete social customs as the evils of the society. Discrimination and exploitation of the Harijans were treated as a kind of criminal act and he dedicated his entire life to their uplift. All these experiences and experiments were begun from his own home by bringing an untouchables into his home and feeding them.

He participated and even led some of the struggles for temple entry and opening up of public places to the lower castes. The best example is the struggle he conducted in association with the Sabari Asram. Swami Ananda Theerthan considered caste as a sectarian organisation which had destroyed freedom and unity of our society. It was against rational and humanistic outlook. The treatment of people as avarnas and savarnas was the balckest shame of our society. According to him temple is the biggest institution which protects casteism and untouchability. The service to man is the real
service to god. A person who practices untouchability and oppresses his fellow men is an insult to mankind.

Swami Ananda Theerthan believed that education is the important medium to bring progressive ideas, self confidence, self respect and emancipation to Harijans. For that he started **Sree Narayana Vidyalayam at Payyanur** set up schools and brought in students from different parts of Malabar. Moreover, he secured admission for Harijan children in public schools. He prompted people to organize interdinning and argued against people, especially the Harijans, giving offering to the temples and shrines. For him, the latter was a means to the reproduction of caste subordination.

His opposition to the discrimination towards Harijans like the giving of remnants of the offerings to God in temples in sand, giving of tea in coconut shell and the barber's denial of hair cutting to the Harijans stirred the minds of the Harijans and in various places they began to respond against the discrimination. Swami Ananda Theerthan's opposition to the slave trade and the practice of untouchability in the Andukettu festival of Valliyoor Kavu and other social economic exploitations towards the tribals in Wyanad influenced the later tribal movements in Wynad. Swami Ananda Theerthan worked as the inspector in the labour schools in Malabar. The government was forced to take steps to stop all kinds of discrimination towards Harijan students.

Ananda Theerthan’s social reform activities extended to Tamil Nadu as well. He as a member of the Harijan Sevak Sangh worked at places like Vedaranyam, Melur, Mangulam and other villages in Tamilnadu among
Harijans for their uplift and resisted the practice of the Chavadi courts of Savarna Hindus for punishing the Harijans.

Through Swami Ananda Theerthan had not received proper recognition from Kerala society he has a significant place among the social reformers of modern Kerala. He not only served the Harijans but completely identified with them in their poverty and sufferings. Being a disciple of Gandhiji, he never led Harijans to an armed struggle. He inculcated the spirit of self respect and humanism in the minds of the Harijans. He disapproved Gandhiji’s view of the eradication of untouchability through a change of mind on the part of Caste Hindus. He believed that only the struggle led by the untouchables themselves would bring change. His reform works caused much to wipe out untouchability and many uneven practices. The Harijans got entry into temples and other places which were otherwise denied to them. Hundreds of Harijan children got educated by staying in Sree Narayana Vidyalaya and occupied high positions in society. In short, Swami Ananda Theerthan was the hope and perpetual succor of Harijans in their struggle for existence.

In the last chapter I have discussed in detail the effects of National movement on social reconstruction of Malabar. The nationalists found that the caste system, untouchability and other evil customs, which created a division among the people as a major obstacle to the spread of the new political awakening. Through periodic public resolutions they urged people to work for the eradication of untouchability and other evil practices.
The nationalists in the first phase of the struggle for securing the rights of low castes took up the problem of the denial of admission to low caste children to educational institutions and public roads. The open declaration of social constructivism as a political action by Indian National Congress had its impact on radically changing the social condition of Malabar in the post 1920s. The political conferences of Kerala Provincial Congress Committee at various places organized programmes directly or indirectly challenging the practice of untouchability. The inter-dining organised as a part of the conferences were a boost to the campaign against caste discrimination in Malabar.

The nationalist campaign against untouchability reached a new turn with the launching of Guruvayur Satyagraha under the leadership of K. Kelappan in November 1931. Though the Satyagraha failed to achieve its immediate objective of the opening of the temple to the untouchables, it helped to focus public attention on the age-long social evil of untouchability. The Satyagraha influenced the authorities of many private temples in Malabar to open their temples to the untouchables. The Satyagraha succeeded in bringing the broadest possible unity and mobilising the people. It gave inspiration to the people to fight for their legitimate rights with self-respect. The Satyagraha influenced the later struggles for the eradication of untouchability and the struggles of peasants and workers in Malabar.

The Guruvayur Satyagraha was a milestone in such movements undertaken by the KPCC. The struggle against untouchability became a mass movement after the Guruvayur Satyagraha. The nationalists broke the caste
barriers with the support of the Malabar branch of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. It infused the Harijans with a new awakening and they jointly began to fight discrimination. The formation of the Congress Socialist Party, Abhinava Bharatha Yuvak Sangham and Karshaka Sangham and their struggle against social evils also led to the elimination of caste differences, untouchability and other social evils. Though the nationalists failed to introduce a concrete programme for the social and economic uplift of the depressed classes and excluded them from the forefront of the movements and organisations, their campaign against social evils caused the mobilisation of the depressed classes and brought about changes in the Malabar society.

The social reform movements as a whole had a long and lasting effect on the social fabric of Malabar. The humanistic and rational ideas of social reformers and the reform activities of the Basel Mission and the nationalists had made revolutionary changes in the Malabar society. The lower caste people with greater self-respect, self-confidence and courage began to fight for their rights. Caste system, untouchability and other social evils began to lose their hold on society. The educated people began to think rationally which created awareness among others about the meaninglessness of the prevalent social and religious practices. The reformers' efforts to propagate women's education in a traditional caste oriented society was a significant achievement in the field of emancipation of women. The movement also contributed to the growth of national consciousness and a feeling of oneness. In short, the social reform movements resulted in the creation of a society which was the union of self-reformed individuals. Unfortunately, in
contemporary society renaissance traditions and values are being forgotten. It seems the society is moving back to casteism and religious conflicts. In many spheres of life the spectre of caste is still alive. In these circumstances the thoughts and activities of social reformers and organisations have great relevance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amruthethu</td>
<td>Term denoting the food of high castes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ananda</td>
<td>Bliss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anandamatha</td>
<td>Religion of Bliss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archana</td>
<td>Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asramam</td>
<td>Hermitage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avarnas</td>
<td>Low castes among the Hindus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bali</td>
<td>Performance of obsequies for the souls of departed forefathers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhakti</td>
<td>Devotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmaswam</td>
<td>Land held by the Brahmin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chavadi</td>
<td>A sheltered place where village gatherings are held.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desam</td>
<td>Territorial division or locality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desavazhi</td>
<td>Local chieftain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devaswam</td>
<td>Property of the temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezhuthupallikoodam</td>
<td>Old village school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jannam</td>
<td>Hereditary property right of landlord.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeganmi</td>
<td>The customary term for landlords in Kerala.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatha</td>
<td>Procession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jathi</td>
<td>Caste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanam</td>
<td>A customary land tenure based on mortgage or lease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanakkaran</td>
<td>One who held land on Kanam tenure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karanavar</td>
<td>Head of matrilineal family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karalar</td>
<td>Tenants of temple lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karikkadi</td>
<td>Term denoting the food of low castes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kavu</td>
<td>A small Hindu shrine in a grove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kudiyan</td>
<td>Tenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuzhikanam</td>
<td>A deed of mortgage for the improvement of cultivated lands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makkathayam</td>
<td>Patrilineal system of inheritance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marumakkathayam</td>
<td>Matrilineal system of inheritance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melcharth</td>
<td>Overlease to tenant in favour of a new one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misrabhojanam</td>
<td>Inter-dining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misravivaham</td>
<td>Inter-marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Hermit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monotheism</td>
<td>The belief in one God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namaskaramandapam</td>
<td>Platform intended for prostration inside the temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nercha</td>
<td>Offering; Vow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panthal</td>
<td>Temporary thatched shed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattam</td>
<td>Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygamy</td>
<td>The practice of females having more than one husband at the same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyandry</td>
<td>The practice of females having more than one husband at the same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygamy</td>
<td>The practice of males having more than one wife at the same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polythiesm</td>
<td>The belief in the plurality of Gods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prasadam</td>
<td>A portion of the offering given to the devotees after it has been offered to the deity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pula</td>
<td>Ties of pollution associated with death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sambandham</strong></td>
<td>Liaisons of junior Nambudiri sons with Kshatriya/Ambalavasi/Nair women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sanchayanam</strong></td>
<td>A ceremony to collect skeleton remains of the cremated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Savarnas</strong></td>
<td>High castes among the Hindus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smarthavicharam</strong></td>
<td>Ritualistic trial of a Nambudiri woman for conjugal infidelity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sreekovil</strong></td>
<td>Sanctum sanctorum or the place of the deity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tali</strong></td>
<td>A neck ornament tied as a marriage badge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talikettukal</strong></td>
<td>The ceremony of the tying the tali on Nair girl before puberty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tantri</strong></td>
<td>Officiating priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taravad</strong></td>
<td>A joint family unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theertham</strong></td>
<td>Water received as prasadam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tirandukuli</strong></td>
<td>The ceremony performed when a girl attains puberty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Untouchability</strong></td>
<td>Pollution by touch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unseeability</strong></td>
<td>Pollution by sight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unapproachability</strong></td>
<td>Pollution by approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uralar</strong></td>
<td>Trustees of the temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urni</strong></td>
<td>Protected water tank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vannathimattu</strong></td>
<td>A ceremony by which the women of high castes gain purification after the delivery by using a cloth washed and brought by a woman of vannathi caste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verumpattam</strong></td>
<td>Simple lease mostly held by tenants at will.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verumpattakkaran</strong></td>
<td>One who holds land on verumpattam.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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APPENDICES
BRAHMANANDA SWAMI SIVAYOGI
VAGBHATANANDAN
SWAMI ANANDATHEERTHAN
SREE NARAYANA VIDYALAYA, PAYYANUR