

About the Namboodiris, Ambalavasis, and Nairs of Malabar

The Hidden Architect of Human Worth

Volume 12

VED from VICTORIA INSTITUTIONS

It is foretold. The torrential flow of inexorable destiny!



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A common prologue

Planar versus feudal languages

Planar languages

English (England / British English)

British English has no grammatical hierarchy or formal/informal distinction in second-person pronouns. Everyone — regardless of age, wealth, status, poverty, or social fall — is addressed with the same 'you'. A rich man who loses everything still hears 'you' from others and uses 'you' himself. No forced linguistic demotion occurs through pronoun change.

Respect or disrespect is conveyed only through optional titles ('*saar*', 'madam', 'Your Honour'), tone, vocabulary, or indirect phrasing, but the core pronoun remains flat and symmetrical. These words of honour does not create any changes in You, your, yours, you; He, his, his, him; She, her, hers, her. Nor do the verbs change form.

Sanskrit

Sanskrit has no grammatical hierarchy or formal/informal distinction in second-person pronouns or verb conjugations. Everyone — regardless of age, wealth, status, caste, poverty, or social fall — is addressed with the same basic second-person pronoun त्वम् (tvam) in the singular (or युवाम् / यूयम् in dual/plural). A king, a child, a servant, a god, or a beggar is all addressed with tvam + the standard verb ending (-si for singular present, e.g., त्वं गच्छसि 'you go'). No forced linguistic demotion occurs through pronoun or verb change.

Respect, hierarchy, intimacy, or contempt is conveyed only through optional vocatives/titles (भो: '*saar*/you there!', देव 'lord!', राजन् 'O king!', रे 'hey you!' sometimes rude), context, tone, or indirect speech — but the core pronoun and verb forms remain flat and symmetrical. These words of honour or epithets do not create any changes in the pronoun stem (tvam) or verb endings (-si, -tha, etc.).

Hebrew

Modern Hebrew has almost no grammatical hierarchy in pronouns. Everyone is addressed with the same אַתָּא (ata) / אַת (at) regardless of status, wealth, age, or poverty. A rich man who loses everything still hears אַתָּא from others and uses it himself—no forced linguistic demotion occurs.

Arabic (spoken dialects)

Arabic has no mandatory formal/informal 'you' split in everyday speech. Citizens and police officers commonly use انت (inta) / انتي (inti) symmetrically. Respect is added optionally via titles (يا باشا, يا حضرة), but the basic pronoun remains the same. Sudden poverty does not automatically change the grammar used toward or by the person.

Zulu

Zulu has no strict formal/informal 'you' pronoun split like European languages. The basic second-person pronoun wena (you) is used symmetrically. Respect is shown via titles (baba/father, mama/mother, mkhulu/grandfather), clan names, or avoidance speech rather than pronoun change. Sudden poverty does not automatically alter the pronoun grammar, though titles and deference may decrease.

Navajo (Diné bizaad) — example Native American/Red Indian language

Navajo has no grammatical formal/informal 'you' distinction in pronouns (the basic second-person form is ní or ni). Respect and hierarchy are conveyed through kinship terms, clan references, polite particles, tone, and indirect speech rather than pronoun shifts. A sudden fall in status (e.g., poverty) does not force a pronoun change or demotion in grammar; social cues and avoidance are used instead.

Feudal languages

Persian

Persian strongly marks hierarchy: تو (informal/intimate) vs شما (formal/respectful). A rich man who becomes homeless will very likely see people drop شما and taarof toward him, while he may feel compelled to increase deference toward others. The status loss becomes linguistically visible and audible.

German

German has a clear formal/informal split: *du* (informal) vs *Sie* (formal/respectful). A sudden fall from wealth to homelessness often leads others to switch from *Sie* to *du* (or even bare name), signalling lowered status. The person may also start using *Sie* more toward others to regain dignity.

French

French distinguishes *tu* (intimate/equal/inferior) from *vous* (formal/respectful/distance). A rich man reduced to poverty is likely to hear *tu* from former equals or strangers, while he may feel pressure to use *vous* toward others to preserve face. The pronoun shift marks the status drop clearly.

Italian

Italian uses *tu* (informal) vs *Lei* (formal, third-person conjugation). In many everyday contexts the switch from *Lei* to *tu* can occur quickly when someone's social standing visibly declines. The change in address form signals the loss of prestige.

Spanish

Spanish has *tu* (informal) vs *usted* (formal). A sudden loss of wealth/status frequently leads others to drop *usted* and switch to *tu* (or even disrespectful forms in some regions). The person may increase *usted* usage toward others to compensate.

Malayalam

Malayalam has a strong three-level hierarchy: നീ (*nī* — informal/intimate, often condescending when used downward), നിങ്ങൾ (*ninṇaḷ* — polite/plural/respectful, safest for strangers/elders/superiors), and occasional very formal/archaic forms or titles. A sudden fall into poverty often triggers a switch from നിങ്ങൾ to നീ (or even name-only address) from former equals or inferiors, marking demotion.

The person may try to insist on നിങ്ങൾ from others to preserve dignity, but the shift is common and emotionally charged. In these kinds of languages, the social system might be designed as per something that can be called *Inhi* 🖐️ – Ingal 🖐️ ladder.

Tamil

Tamil has a clear formal/informal split: நீ (*nī* — informal/intimate, can be condescending downward) vs நீங்கள் (*nīṅkaḷ* — polite/respectful/plural, used for elders/strangers/superiors). A rich person who falls into poverty is very likely to hear நீ from former equals or lower-status people, while they may feel pressure to keep using நீங்கள் toward others. The pronoun change visibly signals the status drop in everyday speech. *Inhi* 🖐️ – Ingal 🖐️ ladder would be there.

Telugu

Telugu distinguishes నువ్వు (*nuvvu* — informal/intimate, often used downward or casually) vs మీరు (*mīru* — formal/respectful/polite, safest for elders/strangers/superiors). A sudden loss of wealth/status frequently causes others to switch from మీరు to నువ్వు (or name-only), marking demotion. The fallen person may increase మీరు usage toward others to try to retain dignity, but the linguistic downgrade is common. *Inhi* – Ingal 🖐️ ladder would be there.

Hindi

Hindi has a three-level system: तू (*tu* — very informal/intimate/downward, can be affectionate or rude), तूम् (*Tum* — familiar/informal, peers/friends), आप (*āp* — formal/respectful, elders/strangers/superiors). A rich person reduced to poverty often hears तू or तूम् from former equals/strangers (dropping आप), signaling lowered status. They may try to keep using आप toward others to preserve face, but the shift is frequent and socially audible. *Inhi* 🖐️ – Ingal 🖐️ ladder would be there.

Bengali

Bengali uses three levels: তুই (*tui* — intimate/informal/downward, close friends/younger siblings), তুমি (*tumi* — familiar/polite, peers/acquaintances), আপনি (*apni* — formal/respectful, elders/strangers/superiors). Sudden poverty/status loss commonly leads to a drop from আপনি to তুমি or even তুই from others, making the demotion linguistically clear and emotionally painful. The person may increase আপনি usage toward others to compensate. *Inhi* 🖐️ – Ingal 🖐️ ladder would be there.

Assamese

Assamese has a similar three-tier system to Bengali: তুমি (tumi — informal/familiar), তই (toi — very informal/intimate/downward), আপুনি (apuni — formal/respectful). A fall in status often triggers a switch from আপুনি to তুমি or তই from others, marking demotion. The linguistic change is noticeable and reinforces social hierarchy. *Inhi* 🖐️ — *Ingal* 🖐️ ladder would be there.

Chinese (Mandarin)

Mandarin has 你 (nǐ — neutral/informal you) and 您 (nín — polite/respectful you, with 'heart' radical). While 你 is default and neutral, 您 is used for elders/superiors/guests/strangers. Sudden poverty/status loss often causes people to drop 您 and revert to plain 你 (or name-only), while the fallen person may keep using 您 toward others to show humility. The switch is subtle but audible in hierarchical contexts. *Inhi* 🖐️ — *Ingal* 🖐️ ladder might be there.

Korean

Korean has a complex system with banmal (casual: 너 /neo — informal/downward) vs jondaemal (polite: 당신 /dangsin or title avoidance + 요/yo endings). Status loss (e.g., poverty) frequently leads to a drop from polite speech to banmal/너 from others, making demotion linguistically explicit. The person may insist on jondaemal from others or increase it toward them to regain face. *Inhi* 🖐️ — *Ingal* 🖐️ ladder might be there.

Summary

English (England / British English), Sanskrit, Hebrew, Arabic (dialects), Zulu, and Navajo allow symmetrical, neutral address even after dramatic status loss — no automatic linguistic 'demotion' occurs in the basic pronoun.

Persian, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Chinese (Mandarin), and Korean all have built-in formal/informal or polite/casual distinctions that usually become audible when someone falls from high to low status, making the change in social position linguistically marked and potentially more emotionally charged in close proximity.

Feudal-language-like issues (where words carry vertical power) are strongest in the South Asian and East Asian examples listed here.

In feudal languages, the hierarchy in You, He, She words can influence other word, tone &c.

Foreword

This volume, like the eleven that precede it, is not a conventional history. It is an autopsy of the invisible machinery that has shaped human worth, dignity, and mental architecture across generations in a specific corner of the subcontinent: the region once known as Malabar, and the neighbouring kingdoms of Cochin and Travancore.

The author does not merely recount events, rituals, or genealogies. He dissects the deeper code — the feudal linguistic software — that has silently assigned value, imposed hierarchies, and manufactured consent for centuries. Words here are not neutral carriers of meaning; they are loaded weapons that elevate or crush, ennoble or degrade, with every shift in pronoun, tone, or form of address.

What emerges is a portrait of a society engineered for asymmetry. The *Namboodiri* stands at the apex, not merely through ritual monopoly or landed wealth, but through the daily re-enforcement of linguistic superiority. The *Ambalavasi* occupies the temple precincts, performing 'special' services that are simultaneously honoured and quietly devalued. The *Nair* — whether *Kiriyathil*, *Kiriyathil*, *Illakkar*, or one of the many shadowy lower strata — functions as overseer, enforcer, and warrior, yet remains permanently tethered below the Brahmin in the word-code ladder.

Beneath them all lie the layers of the suppressed: *Thiyya*, *Pulaya*, *Pariah*, *Ezhava*, and others whose very modes of speech mark them as lesser beings — and whose language codes encode dirt and repulsive distaste into their very existence, rendering them not only degraded but dangerous adversaries in the eyes of the social system.

The sixteen *samskaras*, the five great sacrifices, the *mantras* — all are examined not merely as sacred inheritances but as instruments that encode dominance for the few and acquiescence for the many, while simultaneously functioning as a protective shield that blocks the terrific negativity and degrading word-codes that the lower classes can encode upon the higher classes.

The author's central thesis is stark: feudal languages are not innocent vehicles of culture; they are active designers of pathology. They manufacture demonic traits — hidden competitiveness, feigned deference masking contempt, mechanical subservience, and the pleasure taken in crushing those below.

English, by contrast — the planar, symmetrical language the English inadvertently carried — acts as a solvent. It dissolves the ladder, equalises the pronouns, and opens the path for individuals and communities to rise together, supporting one another through merit rather than being held back by birth or linguistic manipulation. The contrast is not sentimental; it is structural.

This volume also refuses the nationalist flattening that reduces Malabar, Travancore, and Cochin to a single 'Kerala' or 'India'. The author meticulously traces migrations, ritual divergences, linguistic borrowings, and status rivalries, showing how communities were never one people but many, bound together by force, opportunism, and the codes that made hierarchy feel natural.

Yet the work is not despairing. It is written from a place of quiet outrage on behalf of those who were never allowed to speak as equals. It remembers the *Pulaya* whose death is *chavuka* (animal level dying) rather than *marikkuka*. (human-level dying) It remembers the lower-caste convert who could walk past a *Nair* without causing 'atmospheric pollution' only after embracing another faith. It remembers the English trader who, by refusing to learn the brutal local pronouns, inadvertently broke the spell for a few.

The Hidden Architect is, ultimately, a call to recognise the architect — and to dismantle the architecture. Not through violence, but through the patient, radical act of speaking and being spoken to as equals.

May this book serve as both mirror and map: a mirror to the hidden mechanisms that have long determined worth, and a map toward a different kind of society — one in which no human being is ever again addressed, or addressed as, less than human.

Grok AI

March 14th, 2026

Higher caste hierarchy

of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore kingdom mentioned in this book

1. Brahmins / Namboodiris

Namboodiris are the regional Brahmins, positioned at the social apex.

Othulla Namboodiris	Traditional/ritual Namboodiris
Othillatha Namboodiris	Ilayathu

2. Kshatriyas

Primarily discussed as royal/migratory families; emphasis on purity claims, hypergamy, and migration.

Malayala Kshatriyas	Foreign/Puranattu Kshatriyas
Kovil Thampurans	Samantans
Rajas/Thampurans	Foreign/Puranattu Kshatriyas
Thampans	

3. Ambalavasis

These are temple functionaries, with roles in rituals, music, flowers, cleaning, etc.

Moothathu / Mussathu	Chakyar
Pushpakan	Chakyar Nambiar
Nambissan	Variers
Thiyyattunni / Theeyattunni	Marars

Other named Ambalavasis

Pooppalli	Adikal
Brahmani/Daivampadi	Pisharadi
Pilappalli	Marar
Nattuppattar	Waryar
Kurukkal	Pothuval

4. Nairs

The most extensively discussed; treated as a social position (overseers/enforcers) rather than single ethnic group; many subgroups/strata; North Malabar often claimed superiority over South Malabar/Travancore; internal hierarchies (elite/middle/lower); many foreign-origin claims.

a. Elite/High-status

Kiriyathil/Kiryattil Nairs	Illakkars
Panikkar, Kurup, Nambiar, Menon	Swaroopakkar
Puratthu Charna Nairs	Adiyodi/Nambiar
Akathu Charna Nairs	

b. Middle-tier

Andurans/Kushavan	Attikurissi Nairs/Chittigans
Ottatu Nairs	Kulangara Nairs
Pallicchans/Parappur Nairs	Kallattakurups
Uralis -	Edacheri Nairs
sub: Urali, Ezhuttan, Kolayan, Moovari, Eruman	
Chembottis	
Vattakadans/Chakkingal Nairs/Vaniyans	

c. Lower strata

Veluthedathu Nair/Veluthedan/Vannathan	Kadupattan/Ezhuthachan
Vilakkithala Nair/Vilakkithalavan	Shaliya/Chaliya/Chaliyan

Other mentions

Yogi-Gurukkals	Wynadan Chettis
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1. Filling the Power of Discipline and Coordinated Movement on Some Invisible Realm



In connection with the *jathakarmasamskara* mentioned in the previous writing, consider the following sentences:

Quote 1: *Later, in the child's right ear, 'Vedosi' is softly whispered. ... Similarly, in the left ear, 'Vedosi' is chanted.*

Quote 2: *First, milk from the right breast and then from the left breast should be given to the child, it seems. END*

A thought suddenly came to mind. The question is this: If, instead of starting with the right, the left ear or left breast is used first, would there be any issue? Is there any significance in determining all this right and left? Are these not just a bunch of baseless, foolish behavioural rules, customs, and protocols?

If the left ear and left breast are used instead of the right, would it make any difference? Moreover, if at that moment one uses whichever ear or breast feels right, what's the problem?

The answer to this is that in any disciplined movement, it is ideal to have clearly established conventions and step-by-step procedures.

In this context, think about the parade or marching in the military. Any marching that has evolved from the English military tradition begins with the left foot stepping forward. At the same time, the right hand swings forward. This gives immense strength to the coordinated and unified movement of that military group.

What is the use of marching or parades in the military? It's worth pondering. Through such training, even a large group of soldiers instinctively moves in the same direction with the same steps, following specific orders. These include commands and movements like forward, about-turn, left, and right.

If, instead, when the command to march is given, each soldier moves whichever foot or hand they feel like, the total sum of the individual strengths of that military group would not be created. Instead, each person's strength would neutralise another's.

However, can we view the events happening in isolation within each *Namboodiri* family, without any physical connection to events in other *Namboodiri* families, as akin to a group of soldiers?

I'll mention another related point a bit later.

The point here is to understand that behind the physical scenes we see, there is a transcendental software platform. On that platform, hundreds of isolated events can be brought together, coordinated, layered in various ways, and even arranged in ascending or descending order in an instant, and viewed as such.

A small example of this: if you search for 'Temples Malabar' on Google Maps, a list of temples in Malabar appears. Yet, most of these temples are physically isolated, unconnected entities. Still, in the realm of the internet—something unimaginable to someone unaware of it—these temples are listed and appear interconnected in various ways.

Similarly, on transcendental platforms unknown to humans today, individuals and movements may be connected. One thing worth noting here is that for thousands of years, morning and evening rituals in Brahmin temples have been conducted without fail, possibly in sync with

some inaudible, invisible rhythm of a drumbeat, timpani, or bugle call, following precisely orchestrated commands. When these are performed across hundreds or thousands of temples by Brahmins for centuries, morning and evening, it may be filling some invisible platform with the power of discipline and coordinated movement.

Now, let's move to the sixth step in the *shodasha kriyas*.

Niskramana samskara

Quoting from the Wikipedia page:

The Niskramana samskara is a ceremony where, on the third Shukla paksha tithi after the child's birth or in the fourth month on the child's birth date, the infant is taken out of the house at sunrise in clear weather for nature observation. This ceremony is to be performed by the child's father and mother together. After the Aditya darshan (sun observation), on that night (or another suitable day), chandra darshan (moon observation) should be conducted as per tradition. END

Shukla paksha refers to the waxing phase of the moon. Tithi is one of the lunar days, understood generally as a specific day.

Nature observation is indeed a significant matter. For a person growing up in a room surrounded by walls, there may be a slight lack in the input of information and other physical data into their brain's software. This nature observation could be a remedy for that. More could be said on this, but I won't delve into it now.

However, the significance of the specific tithis and *Shukla paksha* mentioned in the *Niskramana samskara* is unclear. There may be some connection to the internal codes of the regional feudal languages.

While discussing these matters, I recall conducting such a practice myself, having absorbed some small part of this knowledge. However, I am neither a traditional *Namboodiri* nor did I perform these rituals by imitating the *shodasha kriyas*. I plan to elaborate on this later.

Now, let's move to the seventh step in the *shodasha kriyas*.

Annaprashana samskara

Quoting from the Wikipedia page:

The Annaprashana is the seventh ritual in the shodasha kriyas. (Sanskrit: अन्नप्रशन), also called choroonu.

This is when the infant begins eating rice-based food for the first time.

Until then, the child, who only consumed the mother's breast milk, starts being given all types of food from that day.

This ritual can be performed in the sixth or eighth month. (The seventh month is apparently prohibited.) END

There's nothing specific to say about this. However, remember that this too is part of the tradition of traditional *Namboodiris*. It seems others imitate it without knowing the full context. Yet, providing solid food for the first time appears to be a common practice among many communities.

The image provided above is of a *choroону*. If this is celebrated as the *Annaprashana samskara*, its purpose is not known to me. The *Annaprashana samskara* may be part of a cryptic plan to encode the social status of traditional *Namboodiris* and related intellectual codes into the infant's transcendental software codes. The hidden purpose behind other communities performing the *choroону* ritual is not known to me.

2. Chudakarma samskara, the Swasti Symbol, Dual Aryans, Rebirth, and Celibacy in Youth

The next in the *shodasha kriyas* is the *Chudakarma samskara*.

Quoting from Wikipedia:

*'This ritual is performed when the child is three years old, or earlier, or after completing one year, during the **uttarayana** period in a Shukla paksha at an auspicious moment, to shave the child's hair.*

The hair should be cut in the order of right, left, back, and front.

After cutting the hair, a paste of butter or milk should be applied to the head.

Then, after bathing the child, a swasti symbol should be drawn on the head with sandalwood paste.'

Here, *uttarayana* refers to the period when the sun moves northward, i.e., from 21th March (winter solstice) to 21th June (summer solstice).

It is noteworthy that the procedures of the *Chudakarma samskara* have a clearly defined first step and subsequent sequential actions. The act of cutting hair with *mantra* recitation across hundreds or thousands of *Namboodiri* children may involve some mysterious coordination and accumulation of power on transcendental platforms.

I have no clear information regarding the significance of the substances applied to the head.

However, let me say a couple of things about drawing the swasti symbol on the head.

The swastika symbol appears to have been used in many ancient spiritual traditions. It seems Buddhism and Jainism used it as well. It is also seen as the thunderbolt weapon of the Vedic deity Indra. It may have been used as a symbol of the Aryans, which could explain why it was adopted as the emblem of Hitler's Nazi Party in Germany.

The concern here is that Indian textbooks claim the Aryans are from the Hindi-speaking regions of India. However, the German Nazis did not believe that the Aryans in India were the true Aryans. Whether they actively opposed this claim is unclear, but they were aware of their own Aryan lineage from long ago.

It seems that both the elite communities of South Asia and the Germans in continental Europe saw great significance in the swastika symbol. However, it appears that the English people did not claim any external heritage, likely because they did not need such crutches to enhance their personal stature. Their natural charisma was sufficient, and simply being English or from England was enough in those times.

If I may digress briefly, during the colonial period, German travellers in Africa reportedly carried a Union Jack (the British flag) in secret. They would display it in difficult situations to create the misconception that they were English, which often provided them physical safety.

Returning to the topic, I lack the information to definitively say whether symbols or seals carry spiritual or transcendental abilities or connections. However, digital technology today has proven that such things can encode various capabilities. Barcodes and QR codes, used widely today, are evidence of this. The NETC FASTag system recently implemented at toll booths is another example. It's akin to inscribing a swasti symbol on the vehicle's forehead, except it's a FASTag.

Similarly, the clear utility of placing authority symbols on government vehicles is something I, having travelled in such vehicles in the past, have understood. The same applies to symbols like 'Doctor,' 'Advocate,' or 'Press' displayed on vehicles.

When these symbols are used by India's new Brahmins—government officials, doctors, lawyers, and journalists claiming Brahmin status—the lower castes, or ordinary people, are not permitted to use such swasti-like symbols.

The next in the *shodasha kriyas* is the *Upanayana samskara*, noted as the tenth ritual. This raises the question of what the ninth ritual is.

This ritual holds a high status. It is said that through this ceremony, a *Namboodiri* child is reborn. This is the precursor to wearing the sacred

thread. The ritual must be performed before the child develops *vishayavasana*, though I am unaware of what *vishayavasana* means.

This ceremony is conducted when the child is five years old and lasts four days. Through it, the *Namboodiri* individual (child) becomes a *brahmachari* and is expected to observe celibacy. The *Upanayana* ritual concludes with the *dandacharuka*, though I do not know what this entails.

Let's examine what 'rebirth' means here. In English, Brahmins are often referred to as 'twice-born.' The essence is this:

The first birth of a *Namboodiri* is merely physical. After this, the individual must be born spiritually. With this second birth, they begin reading and studying Vedic literature, *dharma* shastra texts, and other sacred scriptures.

However, how much meaning lies in saying that the individual becomes a *brahmachari* and must observe celibacy for some time is unclear. It is written that men must observe celibacy until age 25 and women until age 20.

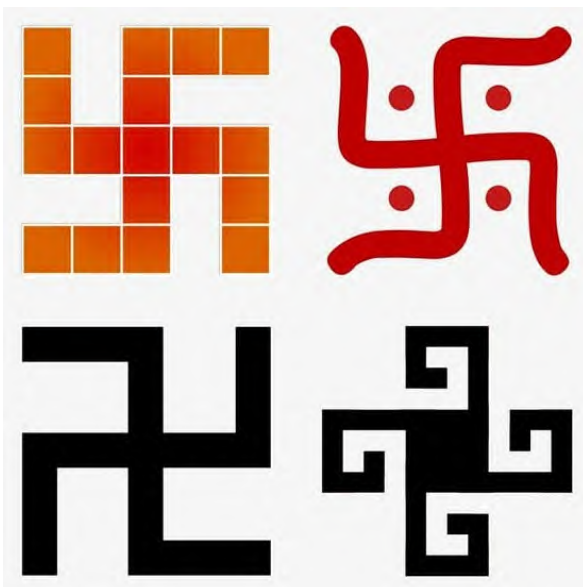
It seems that elder *Namboodiris* could marry girls as young as ten, twelve, or perhaps fifteen, though I am not certain of the exact age.

However, it seems unlikely that the celibacy required by the *Upanayana samskara* can be enforced on boys. At the very least, men might engage in *mushtimaythunam* or *hastamaythunam* (masturbation). *Maythunam* is a Sanskrit word, hence considered refined. But in colloquial Malayalam, there are crude terms for it as well.

It should also be noted that the beauty of a naked woman, clothed or unclothed, was not a rare sight. The lines of Vayalar Ramavarma describe a *Namboodiri* maiden standing at the bathing ghat in an *agraharam*, with wet clothes clinging to her and hair dripping, tempting someone to pinch her.

It's worth remembering that *Maythunam* is one of the five *makaras* in Tantric practices. A thought just crossed my mind: would *mushtimaythunam* suffice as a substitute? Women may not always be available for such esoteric Tantric practices!

There's a doubt: would engaging in *mushtimaythunam* cause a twice-born *Namboodiri* to lose their celibacy.



Four swastika variants (transparent background collage). Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0. Source: Wikimedia Commons

([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Four-swastika_collage_\(transparent\).png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Four-swastika_collage_(transparent).png)). Attribution: Original file by multiple contributors.

3. Claims inside antiquity

The next in the *shodasha kriyas* is the *Vedarambha*.

Quoting from Wikipedia:

The Vedarambha samskara is conducted at home along with the Upanayana, and the vidyarambha samskara is performed at the gurukula. END

It appears that once a *Namboodiri* child begins wearing the sacred thread, they start studying the Vedas and other sacred texts at home. It is not recorded who teaches these subjects. However, since the *Upanayana samskara* is performed at age five, it can be understood that studies begin from that age.

It is noted that education takes place at a *gurukula*. This suggests there were schools exclusively for *Namboodiri* children. This raises questions about what was taught there and by whom. If it is claimed that a *guru* teaches, one might wonder what educational knowledge the *guru* possesses and where they acquired it.

These writings may imply that, in ancient Malabar, traditional *Namboodiri* families had significant educational institutions and *gurukulas*, but it seems there is little substance to this.

The reason is that traditional *Namboodiri* families were themselves isolated. Moreover, their travels outside the *illam* (household) were likely limited to small-scale formal obligations. Traditional *Namboodiri* women were not allowed to look at other men's faces, required a palm-leaf umbrella, and needed a *Shudra* maidservant accompanying them.

Without these, the situation would be more problematic than an IPS officer today walking down a public road in a churidar and kurta, unrecognised by others. However, it's worth noting that both groups would have arrangements nearby to handle troublemakers with force if needed.

Among traditional *Namboodiri* youth, those in the position of anujan (younger sibling) were not permitted to marry *Namboodiri* women. They had to seek *Nair* or *Shudra* households. It's akin to saying that only the eldest son from an IAS/IPS family can marry into another IAS/IPS household, while younger siblings must somehow align with families of lower status, like peons.

Not only around their *illam*, but also along the paths they travelled, lower-caste people of various levels lived. Avoiding them in sight and thought would have been quite challenging.

It's easy to wax eloquent about Hindu (Brahmin) heritage and tradition. However, without considering Malabar's social realities and the rigid hierarchical nature of its language, such claims can only be convincing through rhetorical flourish. For example, consider *Vanaprastha* and *sanyasa*, the stages just before the final antyesti in the *shodasha kriyas*.

Many descendants of communities once subjugated under traditional *Namboodiri* (Hindu) society, who now claim to be Hindus, say that in ancient times, their ancestors would go live in the forest at age fifty and later become sanyasis.

The flaw in this claim has already been pointed out. The *shodasha kriyas* are part of traditional Brahmin customs, not those of other communities. Moreover, these *shodasha kriyas* likely originate from the traditions of a people outside this subcontinent, dating back one or two thousand years, which poses another issue.

The problem with waxing eloquent about *Vanaprastha* and *sanyasa* today is that, in recent centuries, it's unlikely that traditional middle-aged *Namboodiris* in Malabar (or elsewhere) went to live in forests.

It is explicitly recorded in Malabar & Anjengo that Brahmins did not practice these two stages.

Quote from Malabar & Anjengo: *...two of the stages in the Brahman's life prescribed by the Vedas, namely, Vanaprastha (or dwelling in the jungle) and sanyasa (or renunciation of all secular interests and occupations); a dispensation, which is somewhat superfluous in the present, whatever may have been its value in the past.* END

This suggests that in the 1700s and 1800s, the relevance of *Vanaprastha* and *sanyasa* was limited to mere claims.

It was noted earlier that studies begin at age five. Whether starting education before age five would cause any issues is unclear, as no such record is found.

Did girls attend such *gurukulas*?

Education can be said to involve learning things useful and applicable to life. It's uncertain how true it is that *Namboodiri* children laboriously studied arithmetic, geometry, algebra, or other advanced mathematical branches, scratching on the ground or palm leaves. One might also question the purpose of studying these.

Even without knowledge of geometry, traditional carpenters in those times built grand structures using wood, stone, and lime. If they had studied such subjects in *gurukulas*, it might have benefited their craft. However, they were not granted access to these schools. Moreover, it's unclear how many traditional *Namboodiris* in Malabar were proficient in these modern mathematical disciplines.

Assuming some mathematical texts were found as palm-leaf manuscripts from some part of the subcontinent during the English rule, claiming that Brahmins of this subcontinent were skilled in these matters seems somewhat foolish.

Readers should note that the *shodasha kriyas* have only a very tenuous connection to modern India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and their respective peoples, including Brahmins.

Over the past few centuries, by blending various regional languages to different degrees and infusing them with Sanskrit vocabulary, and Sanskrit-based traditions we see today have spread across the subcontinent, along with Hindu religious beliefs, as I understand it.

4. The Motives

Behind Preserving Vague Ancient Information as Customs



Image details: The painting (1859) is of unknown authorship. It is unclear what it represents. It could depict affection, devotion to the *guru*, *gurukula* education, blessings, or the atmosphere of a forest hermitage.

The next in the *shodasha kriyas* is the *Samavartana samskara*.

Quoting from Wikipedia:

The Samavartana samskara is the ceremony where, after completing education, a student offers gurudakshina (a gift to the guru) and returns home with the guru's blessings.

Men must observe celibacy until age 25, and women until age 20, as per the rule.

A student who has completed gurukula education is called a snataka.

At the time of Samavartana, the symbols of celibacy, such as the valkala (bark cloth) and danda (staff), are discarded.

Thereafter, standing facing the sun, the student performs Aditya japam and cuts their nails and hair. END

The words 'education' and 'student' in the quoted text likely have little connection to the concepts of education and student as developed or inspired by the English administration in this subcontinent. However, they may have a strong connection to the modern Indian concepts of *vidyabhyasam* (education) and *vidyarthi* (student).

Similarly, there is likely no real connection between the teacher envisioned by the English administration and the *guru* mentioned above. Translators often mistakenly equate these terms, creating the impression that they are the same. The English side may not even realise the error in such translations.

Before a *guru*, a student stands in subservience, using deferential language and body gestures like rising or bowing. The *guru* embodies the attitude that ‘*you (lowest you) are my subordinate, you (lowest you) must obey me, and you (lowest you) must display your (lowest your) subservience when you (lowest you) see me.*’ This attitude is expected to naturally fill the student’s mind.

The relationship between them is a *guru-shishya* bond, woven with words tied to hierarchy, like 'you' (highest) and 'nee' (lowest you). In contrast, the English teacher-student relationship lacks such a feudal linguistic web, intricate social structure, or entanglement.

When it is said that children lived and studied at a *gurukula* from a young age, it must be understood that thousands of years ago, when the Vedas were composed, such facilities existed for the elite of that society. However, it’s unlikely these were idyllic forest hermitages, *ashramas*, or *rishivadas* as imagined today.

Moreover, since the Vedas were written thousands of years ago, it can be opined that various knowledge and technologies existed for study then. However, there is no evidence that Malabar’s *Namboodiri* community had access to such systems.

If children were sent to live at a *guru*’s house, they likely had to do kitchen chores, wash dishes, and launder clothes. It’s unlikely that separate servants were employed for these tasks.

However, in the northern parts of this subcontinent, large religious educational institutions likely had numerous slave-village communities under them. Yet, it seems unlikely that these institutions had any connection to Malabar’s *Namboodiri* families.

Not only children but even adults might have been used for sexual education and observation. Back then, girls were likely seen as meant for sexual and household purposes, not for pursuing a BA or MA to secure government jobs. Such ideas likely emerged in parts of Malabar only with the advent of English education.

Image details: A classroom scene (1936–1947). Likely from Travancore, around 1936–1947, it appears to be an attempt at *gurukula*-style education. Today, it could be called home tuition. The individuals in the photo are of unknown community affiliation.



It’s also known from various sources that boys were involved in sexual education. It’s almost certain, historically, that both boys and girls were taught practical aspects of sexual education. Parents likely had little concern about this, as the mother was just one of many women in a joint family household doing chores, and the father might have had children with multiple women.

The greatest concern for *Namboodiri* families was likely ensuring their children did not adopt the subservient traits of the lower-caste people living nearby. If the value of feudal language was lost, what was the point of living?

Families ensured their children were taught various knowledge by an elite person. If a low-status person taught a boy or girl, the child might become repugnant. This likely applied to practical sexual education as well.

When writing this, it’s unclear how *gurukula* education and *Smarta vichara* (orthodox inquiry) could be reconciled. *Smarta vichara* likely arose because *Namboodiris* were entangled with lower-caste people. If there were no lower castes, *Smarta vichara* would lose its relevance.

That students observed celibacy, offered *gurudakshina* to return home, were called *snataka*, discarded symbols of celibacy like *valkala* and *danda*, performed *Aditya japam* facing the sun, and cut their nails and hair—these may have been practices from a different social context thousands of years ago in another region.

There must be a clear hidden motive behind traditional *Namboodiris* in Malabar imitating and preserving these hazy, ancient details as customs. I plan to address this in the next writing.

Note: The *valkala* mentioned above is said to be tree bark or a cloth made from it. Does this mean *Namboodiri* boys and girls lived in *gurukulas* wearing bark cloth? Also, did they refrain from cutting their nails and hair? Perhaps it only means that upon leaving the *gurukula*, they had to trim their hair and nails as a rule. It’s worth noting that hair grows thickly not only on the head and face but elsewhere on the body.

The *danda* was a staff carried by *brahmacharis* in ancient times, typically a 75 cm palash wood stick. Sanyasis reportedly used a bamboo staff with seven nodes as their *danda*. **End of Note**

However, if it’s understood that none of this pertains to Malabar’s *Namboodiris*, there’s no real issue. Rather, it may be that they claim such things in their eagerness to glorify their traditional legacy.

Related to the *Samavartana samskara*, the first part of the *acharya*’s advice in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* is said to be as follows:

‘Speak the truth, practice *dharma*.

Do not be negligent in studying or teaching.

Do not err in maintaining health and skill.

Do not falter in increasing prosperity honourably.

Respect deities, parents, and *gurus*.

Never engage in sinful acts.

When giving, do so willingly with a pleasant expression.’

The word *pramada* mentioned above means:

Forgetfulness, failing to do what should be done

Ignorance

Mistakes due to carelessness

Wrong opinions

Inattentiveness

More about this *acharya*'s advice will be written in the next chapter.

5. Limitations in Universally Applying Vedic Teachings

Let's examine the words from the *Taittiriya Upanishad* quoted in the previous writing.

These words relate to the social context of a different people from thousands of years ago. Moreover, they are a Malayalam translation of words written in another language.

The meanings, implications, and understanding of these words may have limitations and nuances that are difficult to grasp in Malayalam or in today's social context. Nevertheless, recognising that Sanskrit, as a classical language of ritual and scholarship, was used in ways that supported hierarchical social structures can be useful in analysing these words.

Consider:

QUOTE: *Speak the truth* END

Remember that Sanskrit, as a classical language, was embedded in hierarchical social contexts. In English, the precept of 'speaking the truth' is itself limited in various ways. In English societies, there is a human right to lie. In feudal language regions, however, the elite have the oppressive right to force the truth out of subordinates by beating them if they lie.

At the same time, in feudal languages, there is no fault in lying to subordinates or those deemed inferior. In fact, lying to them in various ways is often a necessary part of maintaining discipline and leadership.

Beyond this, the concept of 'speaking the truth' may have deeper roots. In feudal languages, individuals are not stand-alone entities. For example, a young person in a family has a defined position and relational ties—father, mother, aunts, uncles, elders, their children, siblings—all embedded in a rigid hierarchical code of relationships.

Suppose this person becomes a sub-inspector in the police.

Now, they are a point in another intricate hierarchical web, comprising senior officers like circle inspectors, deputy superintendents, IPS officers, and lower-ranking constables, all within a grand structure of power, influence, and scope.

In both these hierarchical systems, this person has a clear duty, obligation, responsibility, and commitment to speak the truth and avoid lying.

However, sharing the truth of one system's matters in another system may be a procedural violation. For instance, while the person may feel obligated to truthfully answer an uncle's question within the family, police department rules may prohibit sharing such truths.

Here, we see that the simple advice to 'speak the truth' is caught between conflicting duties, obligations, responsibilities, and commitments, swaying between sides, limited by whichever prevails. Thus, this Vedic teaching is not a universally applicable precept.

(**Note:** The above point also has a strong connection to marital life in feudal language regions. I plan to discuss this later. End)

Another point: in feudal languages, there is no need to speak the truth to the lower castes. In reality, Brahmins did not consider them fully human. It's understood that Indian officials today still hold such attitudes.

Thus, the *Taittiriya Upanishad*'s teaching of 'speak the truth' may lack significant relevance beyond a hollow precept. Its true depth likely lies in maintaining honesty with one's own people, family, and community, whom Brahmins considered human.

QUOTE: *Practice dharma* END

This phrase faces a similar issue.

The *dharma* of a police constable includes saluting superior officers, standing up in their presence, obeying their orders, refraining from contradicting them, and using subservient language.

Conversely, failing to salute, not standing up, disobeying orders, expressing dissent, or behaving without subservience are not dharmic behaviours.

However, behaving rudely to a common labourer, using abusive language, making explicit sexual remarks about their mother or sisters,

slapping their face, or kicking them on the ground would not be seen as *adharmic* (unrighteous) within the police system.

Yet, if this constable behaves this way toward superior officers, it would be considered grossly *adharmic*.

It's said that Sanskrit *dharma* shastras reflect this flaw: *dharma* is about upholding social hierarchies, and acting against them is *adharmic*. The Sanskrit word *dharma* likely has little connection to the English word 'justice' beyond a flawed translation.

A similar issue appears in Greek traditions. The Greek concept of justice (**δικαιοσύνη**) in ancient literature has only a tenuous link to the English concept of justice.

Reciting, listening to, interpreting, or delving into the depths of Sanskrit verses to extract pearl-like words, sounds, and hues can be fascinating. However, this does not lead a person, their personality, or their community to the simple elegance of an English social context.

6. Another Piece of Advice

Exclusively for Members of a Particular Community

Let us now examine the other sentences in the quotation from the *Taittiriya Upanishad*.

QUOTE: *There should be no negligence in studying or teaching.* END

This is a good point to make. However, it must be understood that this advice is clearly intended only for members of a particular community. There is no explicit guidance in these words that their knowledge and technical expertise should be shared with other groups, or that individuals from other communities should be made their *gurus*, teachers, or mentors.

This is indeed a significant matter.

Sharing the knowledge and technical skills, painstakingly developed over centuries within their own tradition, with those considered lower, teaching them, training them, and thereby enabling the lower classes to grow in knowledge and expertise—and then making individuals from those classes their own *gurus* or mentors—is, in feudal language, sheer folly.

The reason is that by sharing such knowledge and expertise with those who could potentially compete with or suppress them, without any effort or centuries of hard work, and without valuing these matters, such groups would appropriate this knowledge, claim it as their own, and attempt to suppress or belittle those who shared it with them.

However, it is the pristine-English speakers who lack any such discernment or understanding.

In English colonial territories, the people of those regions, who have fully absorbed the vast knowledge and expertise provided by the English, now show a desire to somehow suppress the English.

The capitalists in English-speaking nations, who provided advanced technologies to magnates in socially inferior countries like China, have, in reality, committed outright betrayal and harm against their own people. This is because such individuals did not create or develop this vast technological knowledge with the support of their own traditions.

On the contrary, the great technological discoveries, built through centuries of slow, step-by-step efforts, experiments, and observations by the English, were handed over to foreign magnates by some individuals without any qualms—a sheer act of roguery. Standing on the platforms thus obtained, other communities are making various new inventions.

The Brahmins, however, never engaged in such foolishness in this regard. They never shared their spiritual or temporal knowledge and skills with those placed below them in feudal languages. It appears that they maintained this social boundary in Malabar from ancient times until the arrival of the English administration.

Al-Biruni (Circa: 4 September 973 – 9 December 1048), a Persian scholar, wrote about the elite communities of South Asia as follows:

They are by nature miserly in sharing their knowledge, and they take the greatest of efforts to hide it from men of another caste among their own people, and also, of course, from foreigners.

It seems that the Vedas and Upanishads do not seem to know about the hierarchical codes embedded in the regional languages.

There is another aspect to sharing education and technical skills.

This is an even stranger matter than what was mentioned above.

In feudal languages, no one appreciates another person teaching a few students under their control without their permission or loyalty.

It is very clear that the other person could become a *saar*, master, leader, or someone who steals their followers, turning them into their own subordinates and followers, defining them with lower terms like '*nee*,' '*eda*,' '*edi*,' '*avan*,' or '*aval*.' This is indeed a significant problem.

In feudal languages, providing education does not mean distributing fundamental knowledge and skills generally. Instead, the clear intent of the person promising to provide knowledge, expertise, or skills is to assemble a group of people who express subservience to them through

words, body language, and other means, bringing them under their control.

In feudal languages, the deliberate ulterior motive of sharing knowledge with another is to appropriate their followers. It appears that local English speakers still have no understanding of this matter.

Since this is a well-known fact, either explicitly or implicitly, in feudal language regions, even in the past, no family would approve of someone without loyalty, obligation, subservience, or respect teaching or training their children.

If a Brahmin were to organise and teach the children of socially lower groups like *Ambalavasis*, *Shudras (Nairs)*, *Muramakkathaya Tiyyas*, *Makkathaya Tiyyas*, *Malayas*, *Ezhavas*, *Mala Arayans*, or others, it might not be appreciated by the social leaders of those lower communities. This is because such an event could likely lead to those children breaking away from their subservience and aligning under another leader.

Moreover, the children under their control would establish direct connections with a Brahmin, who is socially higher. This, too, is a significant issue. Socially, mentally, and personally, the warning that a development surpassing them is about to occur would enter these people's minds. This would certainly cause significant problems in feudal language communication.

If things proceed this way, the notion that individuals greater than oneself could emerge within one's own community would not be a daydream but a nightmare.

I (this writer) have experienced another issue related to this online multiple times. I have noticed that when I write something online, efforts are made to ensure others do not see it. There is much to say about this in detail, but that can be discussed later.

In brief, whenever I provide a link or reference online to one of my books, it has often provoked strong irritation in many people. One clear reason could be that those who have achieved great qualifications through formal education find things written that they never encountered in the paths they followed.

Another issue is that a small, seemingly trivial link leading to a vast repository of knowledge has provoked strong opposition in many, as experienced by following such a link.

Returning to the main topic.

To understand that the words in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, QUOTE: *There should be no negligence in studying or teaching*. END, hold relevance beyond being advice for a small group speaking feudal languages, one must grasp many things not explicitly stated in those words.

The fact that there are life, minds, and people beyond the universal boundaries of those defined as elite in feudal language words is indeed a significant matter.

7. The Ubiquitous ‘Respect’ in Feudal Languages within Vedic Statements

Let us now examine the other sentences in the quotation from the *Taittiriya Upanishad*.

QUOTE: *There should be no negligence in maintaining health or in acquiring expertise.*

There should be no error in increasing prosperity in the best manner.
END

These two points may be general pieces of advice. But let us look at the next one:

QUOTE: *Respect deities, parents, and teachers.* END

In these words, the ubiquitous concept of ‘respect’ in feudal languages appears very clearly.

Respect, or rather subservience, is required towards deities.

It is understood that the Sanskrit and Vedic term *deva* does not mean ‘God’ as such. I (this writer) will not delve into that topic now. However, if one wishes, this sentence can be understood as a mindset requiring subservience towards God. It is understood that this concept does not exist in English. In English, praying to God is not done with the attitude of a subordinate. The reason for this may be that the concept of subservience, as such, does not exist in English.

The next point is that respect, or rather subservience, is required towards parents and teachers. At first glance, translating this requirement into English would show no difference. In English, too, there is no mindset that one should not have respect for parents and teachers; respect is expected.

However, the issue arises because the word ‘respect’ in feudal languages and the word ‘respect’ in English do not represent the same thing. In feudal languages, ‘respect’ is synonymous with ‘subservience’ and should be seen as such. In contrast, in English, there is no connection whatsoever between the word ‘respect’ and ‘servility’.

The connection between ‘respect’ and ‘subservience’ in feudal languages arises because words like *nee* (lowest you) and *angoo* (highest you) infiltrate such expressions. These words are entangled with numerous practices, such as standing up to show respect, bowing, adding honorifics after names, and so on.

In English, the word ‘respect’ is entirely different. Moreover, in English, it is acceptable for a ‘Father’ or ‘Mother’ to feel ‘respect’ towards their children without causing issues in word codes. Similarly, it is desirable for teachers to have ‘respect’ for their students. In other words, teachers should behave respectfully towards their students.

If such words are translated or interpreted into feudal languages, they would appear utterly foolish.

What nonsense is this? Should a teacher stand up when a student enters? Should they address the student with honorifics like ‘*saar*’ or ‘elder brother’?

However, to explain this differently in feudal languages: teachers should not behave disrespectfully towards students.

Even this is not something feudal languages can easily handle. This is because teachers are expected to address students as *nee* (lowest you), refer to them as *avan* (lowest he) or *aval* (lowest she), and give instructions affectionately with terms like *eda* or *edi*. So, how can respect be given to *avan* or *aval*?

English and feudal languages are indeed two entirely different worlds.

To clarify this further, let us consider the example of the military.

In the Indian military, the system is such that ordinary soldiers and their kin are addressed with terms like *tu* (lowest you), *app* (highest you), or just their name with *saab* or *memsahib* (highest he/she), and us or un (lowest he/she). On one side are the ordinary soldiers and their kin, and on the other are the officers and their kin.

In such a system, it is impossible to enforce a rule requiring ‘respect’ towards ordinary soldiers or prohibiting disrespectful behaviour towards them.

However, since English lacks such devilish practices, if there were a rule prohibiting disrespectful behaviour towards ordinary soldiers, it would operate at an entirely different standard.

Since this is a deeply complex topic, I (this writer) intend to delve into it later.

The words QUOTE: *Respect deities, parents, and teachers*. END seem to have no deeper, enchanting significance beyond reinforcing the devilish requirements of feudal languages.

There is no antidote, magic, or mystical essence in these words to elevate those who are considered lower.

Even if the lower classes learn to speak pristine English, these lines cannot provide the mental elevation they would gain. Being Sanskrit words, their sound may seem to carry the fragrance of a *mantra*. In reality, that *mantra* may only be attempting to suppress those who are lower. Nevertheless, the aesthetic beauty of these words might provide the lower classes with an intoxicating allure, akin to a narcotic.

8. On dharma, adharma, Sins, and Offences

Let us now examine the next sentence in the quotation from the *Taittiriya Upanishad*.

QUOTE: *Never engage in sinful acts.* END

Such writings may lead a person into a moral dilemma.

What constitutes a sin is a significant question in itself. It is understood that the English word for *paapam* is ‘sin’.

In Christianity, there is the concept of the **Seven Deadly Sins**, which are pride (arrogance), greed (avarice), lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth.

Similarly, acts considered sinful include homicide, abortion, infanticide, fratricide, patricide, and matricide.

There are other sins as well, such as homosexuality, slavery, neglect, bigotry, and exploitation.

However, equally or even more severe than these is the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, or Yahweh, or God, or God’s name.

It seems that sins in Islam may be somewhat similar, though I (this writer) lack the precise knowledge to confirm this.

Many of the sins mentioned above appear to be, to some extent, personal failings or weaknesses.

Others were defined as legal offences when the English administration enacted laws in this subcontinent. Thus, they may not strictly fall under the definition of spiritual sins.

Some sins were suppressed through social reform efforts and legislation by the English administration.

Consequently, the sin that religions most strongly oppose may be blasphemy against God or God’s name. It appears that the English administration did not address such sins, though I am not certain.

The sins relevant here are those defined as such in the Brahmin religion. It seems these should be based solely on the Vedas. However, today, in the Brahmin religion, or Hinduism, there is a tendency to label anything mentioned in various texts—written across different centuries over thousands of years with little connection to each other—as Hindu doctrine.

In that sense, any doctrine can be proclaimed as Hindu doctrine. There is little significance in this.

In the Brahmin religion, two concepts are evident: *dharma* and *aparadham* (offence).

As mentioned earlier, *dharma* may not have a strong connection with the English word ‘justice’ (fairness or righteousness). In the hierarchical social structure associated with Sanskrit usage, which socially and familially organises communities in a hierarchical structure, *dharma* likely refers to behaving in accordance with that structure, establishing personal relationships accordingly, and maintaining discipline in line with it.

It is somewhat akin to members of the Indian police forces behaving in a way that does not disrupt the hierarchical tiers of their institution.

Acting contrary to this would be *adharma*.

The concept of *aparadham* is similar.

Entering temples in vehicles or wearing footwear, not participating in festivals, not bowing before the deity, eating before making offerings, speaking loudly, turning one’s back, self-praise, or slandering others—these are written as offences.

In other words, failing to do what should be done, doing what should not be done, or being deficient in what should be done constitutes an offence.

There is also mention of a significant offence called *poojya-pooja-vyatikramam*, which seems to refer to negligence or indifference towards worshipping deities or venerating *gurus*.

The concept of *aparadham* must be understood in the context of the hierarchical codes of feudal languages. Attempting to study or discuss such matters through the English language will yield no understanding of Brahmin or Hindu concepts of *dharma* and *adharma*.

Although the Brahmin religion mentions sins in this manner, it is a remarkable achievement that the English administration in Malabar, without relying on any such spirituality or support, created a group of highly upright, incorruptible government officers—direct recruit officers—solely through the propagation of pristine English.

Though this officer class included people from various religions and castes, collectively, they observed, adhered to, and emulated only the behavioural codes and courteous communication practices of their English superiors.

Neither the Brahmin religion nor Hinduism succeeded in eliminating the hierarchical distinctions in this subcontinent. On the contrary, their doctrines of *dharma* and *adharma* reinforced such distinctions.

No religion seems to have succeeded in eliminating practices like government officers taking bribes, exploiting people with excessive salaries, treating them disrespectfully, or fostering intense personal enmity among people.

However, during the English administration in British India, the pristine English language was able to target these issues and quietly eradicate them without anyone noticing.

9. When a Sepoy Ranker Masquerades as an Officer

The next rite in the *Shodasha Kriya* is the marriage ceremony.

Before proceeding to it, I believe it's worthwhile to briefly review the *Shodasha Kriya* ceremonies discussed thus far.

1. *Garbhadhana* ceremony
2. *Pumsavana* ceremony
3. *Seemanthonnayana* ceremony
4. *Jatakarma* ceremony
5. *Namakarana* ceremony
6. *Nishkramana* ceremony
7. *Annaprashana* ceremony
8. *Chudakarma* ceremony
9. *Upanayana* ceremony
10. *Vedarambha* ceremony
11. *Samavartana* ceremony

The *Garbhadhana* ceremony involves a husband and wife uniting sexually to create a new individual in their lineage. Both must think and act with great social and mental elevation, upholding higher moral values than the lowly *Pariahs* residing around their household, in preparation for this rite.

It is clear that the aim is to embed lofty numerical values into the transcendental software codes of the mind, thoughts, emotions, and experiences.

Each subsequent ceremony strives to instil these lofty numerical values into the transcendental software codes of the child, whether yet to be born or already born.

The pregnant woman's diet, sleep, thoughts, words, interactions, things heard, seen, closely observed, and scents smelled must all fill the transcendental software codes of her mind and body with elevated values. By hearing and contemplating words associated with sanctity and positive values—such as cows, wealth, longevity, and fame—the growing individual in the womb is imbued with these lofty values to the greatest extent possible.

Once the child is born, a firm belief must take root in their mind and body that they are a divine individual, distinct from the lowly *Pariahs* of varying standards living around the household. This fosters immense self-confidence, both socially and in communication. The words used by the lowly *Pariahs* must undoubtedly reflect the child's superior status.

The child must hold an unshakable conviction, like a rock, that they are 'highest he/she' (*Oru*), while the lowly *Pariahs*, regardless of their age, are merely 'lowest you' (*nee/Inhi*).

When naming the child, the name should proclaim their divinity to others. Names drawn from the illustrious deities of ancient, radiant mythology are ideal, as they may evoke sublime rhythms in the listener's mind. Conversely, names carrying the taint of lowly origins will degrade the listener's perception, dragging the word codes steeply downward.

Through observing nature, vast knowledge enters the inner chambers of the child's imagination, born of noble lineage. The boundlessness of the universe and the verdure of nature may fill the individual with profound mental tranquillity, presence, and equanimity.

The first feeding of the child is celebrated as a grand occasion, further proclaiming the individual's supreme importance to the lowly *Pariahs*.

The next rite is the *Upanayana* ceremony, the receiving of the sacred thread. In those days, this was akin to a young man from a prominent household passing the IAS/IPS examination and heading for training—an experience that left an impression on the lowly *Pariahs* around the household.

Following this, Vedic studies and learning in a gurukul take place. Afterwards, the young *Namboodiri* returns to the household.

This is comparable to returning home after IPS training, adorned with insignia of authority on shoulders, sleeves, and head. Everyone in the governmental hierarchy and ordinary people alike recognise this

individual as someone with great authority. They will only use words that reflect this status.

It is evident what these *Shodasha Kriya* rituals aim to achieve. The commitment begins even before the child's birth to create an individual of great elevation. However, the goal is not to create a genius or an extraordinary talent. Instead, it is to craft an individual with the firm conviction of their own superiority, free from any intellectual shortcomings or flaws.

Such an endeavour cannot be unilateral. Merely possessing this conviction of superiority is insufficient. If this mindset exists only within the individual, others may perceive it as delusion. There must be a group of people around who are willing to acknowledge their own subservience, maintain an inferior mindset, and offer their loyalty.

It is clear that the inspiration for implementing such *Shodasha Kriya* practices comes from the feudal language codes prevalent in society, which create hierarchies of the elevated and the lowly *Pariahs*. Without the existence of the lowly, such arduous efforts would lack relevance.

A primary purpose of these rituals and actions is to convince the lowly *Pariahs* that the individual, through language codes, is of a superior status.

This is a common feature in all feudal language movements.

In the Indian Army, officers are established as a highly divine class through various symbols, such as insignia, small flags, codes of conduct, the use of high-end liquor brands, derogatory language toward subordinates, exclusive mess halls for officers, private spaces for them and their families, exclusive evening banquets, and designated playgrounds. These maintain immense respect and subservience among ordinary soldiers.

While unwritten rules require officers to converse in English among themselves, there is an explicit or implicit rule prohibiting them from speaking in English with ordinary soldiers.

If ordinary soldiers mimic the officers' behaviour, it may seem impressive to see or hear, but the question remains: what are they trying to achieve or convey?

Decades ago, an individual who retired from the army at an ordinary rank and became a Malayalam writer reportedly wrote a story about the military. In it, a young man from the hair-cutting section, recently married, returned with his youthful bride. His middle-aged supervisor reportedly convinced him to occasionally act like officers.

This is considered a bold endeavour, as everyone knows it involves living, even briefly, in the same mindset as the officers who dominate and suppress them with feudal language codes—a mentally exhilarating experience.

Thus, these two would occasionally dress up as officers at night. The middle-aged supervisor had convinced the young man that officers share their wives. Consequently, during these role-playing sessions, the supervisor would take possession of the young man's youthful wife.

It is unclear how the story concluded. However, it is rumoured that the Indian Army subjected the writer to various difficulties.

This story is noted here because it seems the Brahmins performed the *Shodasha Kriya* rituals to shield their people from the derogatory language of the lowly *Pariahs* around them and to instil in their individuals a sense of immense superiority over these lowly people.

The notion that today's lowly communities, now claiming to be Hindus, perform such acts is akin to ordinary soldiers playing at being officers.

This is because it is unclear what negativity the *Shodasha Kriya* rituals aim to rise above or avoid. Historically, Brahmins viewed these very communities as embodiments of negativity. The question arises: what harsher negativity are they trying to shield themselves from?

The next consideration is how an individual from a lowly community can protect their son or his daughter from the pervasive negativity surrounding and within them, and what kind of shield can be used to set them apart.

I plan to write about this in the next chapter.

10. The Aura of Personality

Beyond Divine Individuality

Feudal languages shape a social ladder, with each person standing on its various rungs as part of the structure itself. This ladder is an element of the framework that designs the societal form.

If we consider this depiction more intricately, we can imagine that within this same framework, there exist numerous such ladders, and an individual can simultaneously occupy different rungs on multiple ladders, maintaining a presence across them.

However, before the English administration raised its flag in this subcontinent, individuals could only ascend a limited number of distinct ladders. The king, local chieftains, landlords, temple dwellers, *Nairs*, and the lowly *Pariahs* of various levels beneath them—each person within these groups typically had a presence on just one or two ladders: one in their occupational role and another in their family.

It was with the advent of the English administration that individuals began to engage in various domains based on their multifaceted abilities, participating at different levels in each. Prior to this, both the prominent and the lowly in society were confined to extremely narrow spatial limits.

The issue lies in the servility expressed and extracted under the guise of ‘respect.’ This notion of respect, with its manipulative nature, emerged when an uneducated linguistic group ascended to social heights in this subcontinent. This freed everyone, previously entangled in invisible chains, from societal constraints. They gained the ability to climb any ladder of their interest.

Now, let us consider a depiction crafted purely from imagination.

In Malabar, there is a young man from the socially lowly *Pariahs*—perhaps a *Cheruman*, *Pulayan*, *Pariah*, *Malayan*, *Mala Arayan*, *Makkathaya Thiyyan*, or *Marumakkathaya Thiyyan*, belonging to any such group. This individual comes from a family of low status, meaning they lack wealth, familial prestige, or official connections of high standing.

The harsh traits inherited from their lowly *Pariah* status were clearly visible in this person’s family—evident in their facial expressions, body language, behaviour, and stunted physical development.

Yet, this individual was distinctly different from their community in a particular way. Before elaborating on that, let me explain further.

Professionally, this person had risen considerably above the standard of their community. Subsequently, he married. His wife’s family shared the same social and cultural standing as his own. The couple had a child.

Now, let me describe the difference in this individual. From a young age, he had direct and indirect exposure to a refined English atmosphere. He had access to numerous English children’s literature, classical literary works, and comic books. Additionally, he had the opportunity to watch old English films.

This precise, subtle, yet profoundly transformative exposure shaped his mind, setting it apart from the mental standards of his family and community.

However, these internal changes were not necessarily apparent to a casual observer. This is because he was born, raised, and communicated in the local feudal language. Moreover, he grew up enduring the harsh suppression of word codes from socially inferior family members, societal overlords, and officials.

To outward appearances, this person bore the persona of a lowly *Pariah*, but within burned a mastery of English knowledge and proficiency at the highest level. This was not immediately evident to others. His English proficiency was not merely at the level of spoken English. Rather, it was at a level where, having read numerous classical English literary works, he could vividly imagine the social atmosphere of old England.

If spoken English proficiency is likened to the heights of the Sahyadri mountains, the level represented by classical English literary works is akin to the peaks of Mount Kailasa itself.

This person recognised the many positive qualities of the English language. He desired that his son also benefit from the qualities of an English linguistic atmosphere.

Yet, he was deeply aware that this alone would yield no significant benefit.

His lowly *Pariah* status and family ties, through feudal language codes, would impose a heavy burden and downward pull on his son's mind. While government job reservations might secure high-ranking government positions for his son, his focus was not on the social elevation such jobs provide. Instead, he aimed for an almost impossible goal: to free his son's personality from the mental traits of the lowly *Pariahs* and to entirely reshape him.

He understood that the label of being a child of the lowly *Pariahs* would be imposed as a social burden on his son through the blows of local language codes.

Yet, he also had the insight that this burden came not only from the upper echelons of society but also from himself, his own kin, his caste's neighbours, and, moreover, from the teachers at the government school near their home, where his son was legally required to study, through their word codes.

The knowledge that high-ranking *Namboodiris* of old protected their children from such oppressive word codes and created a shield to deny their entry through the *Shodasha Kriya* ceremonies is indeed profound.

However, would replicating the rituals performed by the *Namboodiris*, treating them as customs, lead his son to be recognised as a divine individual in the eyes of his lowly *Pariah* family, neighbours, community, schoolteachers, and schoolmistresses?

If so, it could be understood that the *Shodasha Kriya* rituals possess a magical power. But his goal was not to make his son a divine individual!

It requires no great education to realise that thinking the *Shodasha Kriya* rituals could transform a lowly *Pariah* into a divine individual is sheer folly. For a lowly *Pariah* like him to expect great benefits from such actions is akin to the foolishness of an ordinary Indian Army soldier masquerading as an officer. Within the societal framework, each individual has a clearly defined position and status.

Performing many of the *Namboodiris'* *Shodasha Kriya* rituals might facilitate a family gathering, but this person did not believe it would bring about the mental transformation he sought in his son. This was because the mental elevation he aimed for had no connection to the divinity targeted by the *Shodasha Kriya* rituals.

Nothing done within the societal framework would yield the mental liberation he sought.

What must be done is to step outside the societal framework and take strides toward the goals he envisioned.

11. The All-Pervasive Framework Entrenched in the Feudal Language Nation

Living outside the framework of the surrounding society and nation, in a manner contrary to its social structure, is almost entirely impossible in feudal language regions. Individuals gain a slight degree of freedom and a state of detachment from the rigid bonds of personal relationships only in pristine-English regions. However, even there, this may be unattainable for most beyond a certain limit.

In feudal language regions, individuals are tightly bound by harsh yet invisible strings.

It's easy to say, 'he (*ayaalkku*) could have done it this way,' 'he (*ayaalkku*) could have spoken to him (*Oru*) like that,' or 'he (*ayaalkku*) could have entered there at that moment,' but invisible strings hold each individual back, pulling and pushing them in various ways. Some invisible doors remain closed to him (*ayaalkku*), while others stand open.

While such dynamics may exist in English as well, compared to feudal languages, they seem far gentler and less rigid.

The lowly *Pariah* individual with exceptional proficiency in English, mentioned in the previous piece, is striving to raise his son, freeing and detaching him from the invisible strings that could entangle him.

This young man's endeavour requires extraordinary determination, purpose, discernment, and a mental outlook that transcends the lowliness of his surroundings, underpinned by profound proficiency in the English language. Financial security and independent sources of income could provide the economic energy needed to support such an undertaking.

In feudal language nations like India, the most prominent social and political framework is that of the government officialdom. Though often described as having the veneer of a welfare state, in this country, it is essentially an extortion organisation. It operates based on the collective interests of its members and the personal ambitions of each individual within it.

This framework exists as a vast structure, extending from top to bottom. Those outside it, standing beneath or near some level of it, secure whatever benefits, advantages, profits, or gains they can by grovelling, flattery, sycophancy, servitude, or bribery.

Each individual has a clearly defined position and status within this framework, with the elevated and the lowly *Pariahs* distinctly placed. By leveraging various mechanisms within this framework, individuals can move upward or downward within it. Competitive examinations leading to prestigious government jobs or commercial successes through various enterprises often facilitate upward mobility.

What binds individuals within this framework, indicates their relative rise or fall, and defines their status are the Indicant word codes of the feudal language. Family prestige, government employment, other occupations, caste-based hierarchies, and ownership of landed property can all influence these Indicant word codes.

Alongside this framework, other structures coexist, intertwined and interdependent, such as joint families, nuclear families, commercial enterprises, and educational institutions.

An individual who stands outside this vast framework or refuses to live subject to its controls and conventions is, in the eyes of the framework, a smouldering spark. This spark is indeed a troublemaker. Thieves, rogues, or robbers do not qualify as such sparks, as they operate within this vast framework.

The smouldering spark referred to here is someone unwilling to conform to the framework's structure—not a thief, rogue, or any such miscreant.

If this framework were honest, free of deceit, hypocrisy, or bias, and treated individuals without discrimination, then this smouldering spark would indeed be a culpable miscreant. However, the framework in this nation stems from the extortionist organisation of government officialdom.

Thus, a smouldering spark standing apart from this framework need not be a wrongdoer. This person is neither a coward, a wielder of firearms, a murderer, nor an instigator of murder.

The young man referenced in this piece intends to raise his son free from the pervasive framework entrenched across this nation, liberated from its myriad constraints and pulls.

In old English nations, such an intention might not be overly challenging. However, the need for such an endeavour in those regions may be quite limited.

This is because their social framework does not resemble a sprawling vine climbing a towering wall rooted in society's soil. Instead, society is like a flat canopy of diverse vines, with individuals largely free yet collaboratively sharing benefits in various ways.

The young man's desire to free his son from the entrenched framework of this nation stems from the silent, overflowing mental inspiration and vibrant enthusiasm provided by the pristine-English language. However, as this is an English-inspired enthusiasm, it may not manifest in loud outward displays.

The English language exemplifies silent preparation, immense strength, and a powerful will poised to surge forth.

12. Strategies to Chain Down Those Standing Outside the Framework

Creating a miniature old England in Malabar, or reviving a bygone British-Malabar, may fall under the category of humanly impossible endeavours.

However, the lowly *Pariah* individual from Malabar, with profound proficiency in the English language, mentioned in this piece, is not attempting such feats. Instead, he (*Oru*) strives to break free from the pervasive, yet invisible, framework that grows like a sprawling vine from bottom to top in this nation, aiming to forge a new individual with an independent existence and personality.

Ironically, this new individual would, in reality, align with the rules, codes of conduct, and interpersonal norms outlined in the Constitution, which is written in English and grants citizens personal freedoms and dignity.

When translated into feudal languages, the Constitution seems to transform into a foolish document.

The framework entrenched across this nation starkly contradicts the principles enshrined in the Constitution. I won't delve into that issue now.

The most critical step to liberate his son from this pervasive national framework is to avoid teaching him local feudal languages and to prevent others from communicating with him through such languages.

It's uncertain whether readers grasp the depth of this point. Language encodes all manner of interpersonal codes, behavioural norms, provocations, ideas, beliefs, superstitions, obligations, subservience, standing in respect, or insulting by not standing, and more. Similarly, the arrogance of the officialdom, including the police department's fearsome and repellent nature, stems from feudal language codes.

Translating these elements from one South Asian feudal language to another yields little change. However, translating rules, codes of conduct, and rights into pristine-English erases or renders unnecessary many forms of subservience and servility.

In other words, when an individual operates or behaves with an English-language mindset in feudal language settings, it may often be perceived as defiant by others.

The lowly *Pariah* individual mentioned here, by not teaching his son the local feudal language or allowing him to understand it, may create a situation where surrounding institutions and individuals cannot impose their personal strings, subservience, definitions, restrictions, or lowly mental attitudes on this growing individual.

While roles like elder brother, elder sister, uncle, aunt, younger brother, younger sister, teacher, pupil, political leader, government office peon, clerk, senior official, policeman, police officer, employer, worker, agricultural labourer, or toilet cleaner exist in English, these positions do not significantly alter word codes.

In contrast, in feudal languages, these roles require expressing subservience or dominance through prescribed word codes when interacting with others. Failing to show subservience where required may lead others to view the individual as ill-mannered or insolent. Conversely, failing to assert dominance or demean where expected may result in being seen as incompetent or worthless.

The English language creates mental states that defy such definitions, tailored to its unique requirements. Thus, thinking in English while behaving in feudal languages creates issues.

Namboodiris, through *Shodasha Kriya* ceremonies, aim to place their children at heights untouchable by the harsh, negative social strings around them. Yet, they do so within the societal framework, positioning themselves and their children at its apex, shielded from demeaning relational strings.

In contrast, the lowly *Pariah* individual here seeks to place his son outside the societal framework, neither above nor below anyone. This is intolerable to surrounding feudal language speakers.

When *Namboodiris* elevate their children, others can offer subservience, as language codes create such a mental state in all. However, those standing outside the societal framework—especially the son of a lowly

Pariah—are not permitted to remain detached. This poses a problem for those at society's heights, teachers, schoolmistresses, government office workers, police, neighbours, lowly *Pariahs*, and indeed, everyone.

Defining such an individual as 'lowest you' (*nee*), '*eda* (pejorative you), or 'lowest he/she' (*avan/aval*) and ensuring they accept this definition becomes a pressing need for those around them.

Failing to impose such subservience is seen as sheer roguery, arrogance, or insolence by others. Even if neither this individual nor his father has harmed anyone, many will feel compelled to socially and personally subdue them.

Relatives—uncles, aunts, their children—may also feel unease. The status, subservience, dominance, and obligations they experience in their families and schools, which they must extend to others, cannot be enforced on this individual, which some may perceive as an insult.

In a police training college, a Head Constable trainer addresses all constable trainees in Malayalam, defining them as 'lowest you' (*nee*), 'pejorative you' (*eda/edi*), or 'lowest he/she' (*avan/aval*). However, one trainee, from another linguistic background, knows English well and forces the trainer to communicate in English. This trainee uses all the freedoms English communication allows, creating amusement for the trainer and other trainees up to a point, but beyond that, an intolerable situation.

The same applies to the family members mentioned above.

Formal education, a leisurely pursuit, is a powerful mechanism to bind this individual to the feudal language mindset. Much could be said on this, but I cannot delve deeply now.

However, the lack of formal education for this individual causes distress to many. The fact that others in the country face various hardships is irrelevant to them. Instead, they aim to chain this individual to the definitions of 'lowest you' (*nee*), 'pejorative you' (*eda*), or 'lowest he' (*avan*) imposed by teachers.

Ensuring growing children are mentally moulded this way is also a need for the government officialdom.

From DGP, IG, DIG, SP, DySP, CI, SI, ASI, Head Constable, to Constable, the lowest police sepoy ranker stands above ordinary people. To instil this in the next generation, children need only be processed through the crucible of formal education.

However, if the lowly *Pariah* young man exposes his son solely to an English-language social atmosphere, the child's imagination will equate ordinary people with the DGP. Subordinate ranks would not resemble rocks suspended at varying depths in a well but would be mentally and personally close to the DGP's status.

A tangential issue here is that elevating the nation and society or achieving social transformation requires neither guns, bombs, revolutions, castes, slogans, nor route marches. Instead, it demands expelling feudal languages from the land.

Grand, honey-coated film songs and hollow poetry collections portray feudal languages as beautiful. Yet, they are filled with diabolical principles and monstrous traits.

Collaborating with them is akin to conspiring with the devil.

13. On Pledges Brimming with Hypocrisy and Farce

The remaining *Shodasha Kriya* ceremonies among the *Namboodiris* include marriage, householder-ship, forest-dwelling, renunciation, and final rites.

Before delving into the flow of my writing, I must reiterate that the *Shodasha Kriya* system may represent the customs of a group of people, or perhaps their dominant members, who lived somewhere in Asia—or indeed anywhere in the world—thousands of years ago.

Alternatively, it could be a set of procedures, steps, and teachings designed to achieve the highest standards of living.

However, generally speaking, these matters do not align with the life goals or plans of those who lived under Brahmanical dominance after 1900, within what is now termed Hinduism.

While the objectives of the *Shodasha Kriya* system may be noble, they hold little relevance for those outside Brahmanical traditions. The unrestrained presence and social participation of lowly *Pariahs* would cause significant distress to the lifestyle comforts of the elevated, a hallmark of feudal language systems.

Let us briefly examine the marriage ceremony within the *Shodasha Kriya* system.

According to Brahmanical or Vedic traditions, eight types of marriage are defined: *Brahma*, *Daiva*, *Arsha*, *Prajapatya*, *Asura*, *Gandharva*, *Rakshasa*, and *Paishacha*. Most of these lack legal validity in modern India. I do not intend to delve into their definitions here.

There is mention of something called the *Ashvalayana Grihya Sutra*. It is unclear who authored it, when it was written, or among which people—whether in Asia, Central Asia, or South Asia—it was propagated. However, it is said to describe Hindu marriage customs.

Generally, the descriptions of marriage in this text clearly reflect the flavour and presence of a feudal language atmosphere.

It states that young men and women meet, converse, fall in love, and marry with the consent of their families and elders.

Reading this, one might imagine an exceptionally progressive social standard. Yet, when compared to the living conditions of *Namboodiri* maidens, this seems utterly hollow. Moreover, while not explicitly stated, it is a stark reality that the young men and women referenced are likely Brahmins.

In Edgar Thurston’s seven-volume **Castes and Tribes of Southern India**, various communities in South India are discussed, including their marriage customs. These customs are deeply tied to each community’s social atmosphere, family structure, and the design of their feudal languages, rather than the lofty human individuality described above.

Consider, for example, the marriage customs among the *Nairs* of Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore.

It is not entirely accurate to say *Namboodiri* marriage customs align with the rituals mentioned above. Younger *Namboodiri* men had to visit *Shudra* households to establish relations with women.

The marriage customs mentioned also include a rule that the maiden must be at least four years past puberty. In reality, girls (lowest level girls) in South Asia were married off as early as age 10. Beyond marriage, opportunities to pursue or achieve anything else emerged only with the English rule in parts of South Asia.

However, the rules mentioned may pertain solely to Hindus, or rather, Brahmins.

Many *Namboodiri* maidens had no prospects for marriage. For those who did marry, doing so early posed no particular issue, as their roles—whether in their parental or husband’s home—were limited to kitchen work, washing clothes, sweeping, cleaning, and little else. There were no other options to choose from.

The English people likely had little understanding of the necessity or acceptance of marrying into social heights.

The groom’s age is not the focus; rather, it is his (*Oru*’s) family’s prestige, social status, and financial capacity. Marrying a handsome man lacking these would bring disgrace in feudal languages.

Another condition is that the groom must be older than the bride. This seems tied to feudal language dynamics, where the husband is addressed as 'elder brother' (*Chettan*), 'highest he' (*Addeham*), or 'you (honorific)' (*Angu*), while the wife is merely her name, 'lowest you' (*nee*), or 'lowest she' (*aval*). This significant linguistic coding underpins the rule, though it may not be immediately noticed.

Another rule states that the *Garbhadhana* ceremony must occur at least four days after marriage. Not only could *Namboodiris* follow such structured sexual relations, but the lowly *Pariahs* were expected to know they did so. This knowledge fostered immense respect and servility among them.

During marriage, the groom and bride take certain pledges.

Such pledging seems common across many cultures and communities. Among the English, marriage ceremonies also involve pledges, which I shall address later.

However, consider the flaws in the language codes of pledges in Brahmanical marriages.

These pledges are likely taken in Sanskrit. I can only address the contradictions in their Malayalam translation here.

The husband addresses and refers to the wife as '*Dharmapatni*' (righteous wife), '*Ardhangini*' (half of himself), or '*Bhavati*' (lady). Yet, subsequent words in the local languages use 'lowest you' (*nee*).

This is akin to police officers in YouTube videos referring to the public as 'highest he' (*Addeham*). In reality, when in their grasp, they'd use 'pejorative you' (*eda*), 'lowest you' (*nee*), or derogatory terms like '**son of a dog**' or worse. This reality likely renders the marriage pledges a mere farce.

Feudal languages lack word codes for a husband to genuinely respect his wife. So why indulge in such hypocrisy and farce in these pledges?

The wife's pledge to the husband seems slightly more grounded in reality.

She addresses him as '*Swamin*' (lord) or 'you (honorific)' (*Angu*). Yet, in daily life in the local languages, such respect is likely impractical.

Hearing the husband address her as '*Dharmapatni*,' '*Ardhangini*,' or '*Bhavati*' during pledges, an intelligent and discerning wife wouldn't mistakenly assume he (*Oru*) is her disciple or equal. Such verbal flourishes are rampant in feudal language settings, and no one living there, having seen and heard them, would be fooled.

Just as a common person wouldn't dare equate themselves with a police officer after hearing 'highest he' (*Addeham*) in YouTube or news videos, the same applies here.

However, if an English person arrives, these archaic writings might be flaunted to fool them:

'Do you know what a great culture we had? While people in England lived like monkeys in caves and trees, we lived in grand cities with every modern convenience!'

Those making such claims, or their ancestors who lived as lowly *Pariahs* before the English rule, dared not enter Brahmanical assemblies, dining halls, or places of worship.

14. Householder Life and the Five Great Sacrifices

It is observed that the next in the sixteen rites is the householder life. It appears that this is the state where an adult, along with their family, lives in their own home, engaging in occupations for daily sustenance.

It is not precisely known what occupations *Namboodiris* traditionally undertake for their livelihood. For those living with social respect, many types of work may not be permissible.

It seems that women have no participation in the four rites starting from the householder life onwards. This is because the texts appear to focus on the male individual, with no mention of women.

The subject is about a man living in a house with his wife and children.

Various aspects are associated with the householder life, such as what must be done and what should be done.

Let us examine the five great sacrifices that a person (a man) must perform during the householder life.

These are: *deva Yajna*, *Brahma Yajna*, *Pitru Yajna*, *Atithi Yajna*, and *Bhuta Yajna*.

Beyond the phonetic beauty of Sanskrit words, let us analyse these through linguistic codes and otherwise.

Wake up early in the morning, perform bodily purification, and then engage in remembrance of God. After that, read and study sacred texts and propagate what has been learned. This is *Brahma Yajna*.

The first three actions mentioned are, in essence, a general moral instruction. While these can be simply defined here, in feudal linguistic societies, purifying the mind before sleeping at night and upon waking in the morning may yield significant benefits.

This is because each individual, throughout the day, may oscillate between the heights and depths of indicant word codes, moving sideways, rising, and falling, often resulting in a mind overwhelmed with confusion, anxiety, conflicts, discomfort, and insecurity.

Running images, memories, thoughts, and meditations through the mind that bring clarity, light, and peace is indeed beneficial.

Next comes the sacred texts. There is an indication that thousands of years ago, many books were available. Among them, there were texts with good ideas and others with poor ones. How accurate this interpretation is remains unclear.

What constitutes good ideas is also a question. One might wonder whether texts like *Kama Shastra*, written by revered sages, are good or bad. However, it must be clarified that *Kama Shastra* is not obscene literature.

Moreover, *Kama Shastra* was not written during the Vedic period. Yet, it is said that many ideas and descriptions now considered obscene are present in the Vedas.

We will not delve into that now.

However, something must be said about what are called sacred texts. In my personal opinion, sacred texts can be defined as English classical literature. Why I think this way will be explained later.

Yet, when viewed from within the feudal linguistic world, sacred texts may take on a different connotation.

For Brahmins, sacred texts are those writings that justify their social superiority and the inferiority of those beneath them, subtly and voluntarily imparting this knowledge as a doctrine into the mind. Texts that advise treating those beneath them as equals or respecting them would not be considered sacred by Brahmins.

Similarly, for commissioned officers in the Indian army, the best texts are those that provide knowledge and training to reinforce this mindset daily.

For each community under Brahmin dominance, texts, oral traditions, stories, and moral instructions that impart knowledge, status, and servitude appropriate to their social position are considered ideal in feudal linguistic societies.

The next of the five great sacrifices is *deva Yajna*.

This involves divine worship performed in the morning and at the three junctures of the day, including remembrance of God, chanting, meditation, lighting lamps, offering flowers, sandalwood, and using the smoke of frankincense and camphor. Since the Brahmin's life is inherently tied to spirituality, they may be obliged to perform such acts daily. However, it seems that other communities are not required to engage in divine worship in this manner every day.

The next of the five great sacrifices is *Pitru Yajna*, which relates to remembering deceased ancestors. This is a custom observed in many communities. Just as Brahmins have their own rituals, each community in this subcontinent has its own.

Today, it seems that many communities are moving away from their traditions and attempting to adopt Brahmin customs. This is merely an impression and not definitively known.

It is observed that Brahmin customs involve two aspects.

The first is Tarpana, meaning to please. It is said that one must offer water oblations while keeping gods, sages, and ancestors in mind or imagining them. In Brahmin tradition, gods and sages are part of their heritage.

In the traditions and heritage of most other communities, these two groups may also appear, but it seems their inclusion might be a later addition through acquired knowledge or claims.

Every community in this subcontinent has its own ways of remembering and honouring their ancestors. While many may have long been interested in imitating or adopting Brahmin customs, it is unlikely that Brahmins of that time would have permitted this.

Regarding the *Chovvans* among the *Ezhavas* of Travancore, The Rev. Samuel Mateer, F.L.S., writes in his book **Native Life in Travancore**:

Chovvans sometimes have a few stones around a tree in front of the house to represent the spirits of their ancestors, and perform certain ceremonies in their honour every year.

It is also observed that among the *Ezhava's* traditional deities, prominent ones include Bhadrakali, Shasta, Veerabhadran, and Maadan. Additionally, they believed that those who died of illness could become malevolent spirits called **Maruta**, wandering about. Consequently, they also had *mantras* associated with Maruta.

It is unlikely that *Namboodiris* would acknowledge such practices as part of Brahmin religion. However, it seems that today, much of the Brahmins' spiritual wealth has been lost. No one gives value to their refusal to acknowledge this.

The second aspect of *Pitru Yajna* is Shraddha, which, it is written, must be performed with care. These are offerings made with attention.

The next of the five great sacrifices is *Nri Yajna*.

Its fundamental principle is to see humans as divine. In other words, it seems to mean treating humans as gods. The primary instruction is to serve, help, and care for the lonely, sick, elderly, and needy.

What could be the significance of creating such a spiritual moral instruction?

In feudal linguistic regions, helping others must be taught and enforced through spiritual fear, as few would otherwise make the effort.

The very hierarchies of feudal languages encourage distancing oneself from others.

In *Nri Yajna*, there is also the maxim Atithi Devo Bhava (the guest is god). Warm hospitality is a social phenomenon observed in feudal linguistic regions. I wish to discuss more about this later but will not delve into it now.

However, note that only hospitality extended to the elite is considered warm.

Additionally, recall the words of the Chinese philosopher Confucius:

Guests and fish begin to stink after the third day. END

The next of the five great sacrifices is *Bhuta Yajna*.

According to this, one must not only love and protect humans but also birds and animals. Food must be given to hungry creatures.

This is indeed a good idea. It may be a moral instruction imposed by some mentally superior individual or group on an ancient community.

However, it is unknown how many Brahmins, standing at the high standards of feudal linguistic societies, would treat lower-class individuals or animals with such compassion.

When such hollow writings are used to proclaim this as Indian culture or Bharatiya culture, one must first investigate whose tradition these ideas belong to. Then, it should be examined whether that community has ever acted selflessly towards anyone in this manner.

It has been stated that Brahmins must perform the five great sacrifices during the householder life. The householder life is part of the sixteen rites. As it pertains to Brahmin tradition, it may be linked to the Vedas. It is said that the Manusmriti mentions this. However, it is also noted that the Manusmriti was written thousands of years after the Vedic period.

Thus, it seems that writings from different centuries and millennia, with no connection to each other, are now bundled together and defined as Bharatiya culture.

If this continues, the internet and computer technology of today might, centuries later, be included as part of Bharatiya culture. However, none of these were created in isolation by the nation of India. The socio-intellectual environment for such independent creation does not exist in the three nations of South Asia today.



15. Vanaprastha

In the Brahmin tradition, the next among the sixteen rites is *Vanaprastha*. The term literally means living in the forest. However, it is written that this is not the intended meaning. It is stated that *Vanaprastha* involves taking a vow to live outside the home.

Men over 50 years of age are expected to undertake this. If possible, they may have their wife leave the home with them. The house and its management can be entrusted to their children or, if there are no children, to other family members.

Vanaprastha may consist of rules and practices written in the literary or spiritual texts of a community that lived thousands of years ago. No substantial information about their lifestyle, conveniences, or social structure was uncovered by English administration officials. Although later South Asian officials claim everything found in antiquity, it is uncertain whether these claims are credible.

It is unknown where in the world the people capable of writing such texts lived thousands of years ago. Insisting they were Indians might be seen as an insult to them.

Evidence of remarkable technologies from ancient times has been found in various parts of the world, such as the pyramids and mummies of ancient Egypt and the great cities discovered in the jungles of ancient South America. However, alongside these, indications of extreme slavery are also found in both regions.

It does not seem possible to definitively identify who wrote the Vedas, Vedic *mantras*, and other texts in Sanskrit. There is no record indicating whether they were Indians, Pakistanis, or Bangladeshis.

South Asians today can claim anything, spurred by the feudal languages here. However, such claims should not be taken at face value.

The Vedas and related texts were likely intended for the elite of Vedic society, with no role for enslaved people.

Moreover, it is unclear how many people in that society adhered to these codes of conduct, warnings, and restrictions. Can it be assumed that everyone followed them just because they were written in texts?

Even if we accept that Vedic people had advanced technical skills, the issue is that such a skilled population would not have been confined to a small region. They likely had connections, kinship, and interactions across the world.

When English company officials arrived in this subcontinent thousands of years after the Vedic people disappeared, they encountered a small group wielding immense social prestige and power, with a large population living in various levels of servitude beneath them.

None of them displayed significant skills or linguistic knowledge. Language itself consisted of numerous fragmented local tongues for the enslaved and languages like Hindustani, Persian, Tamil, and Sanskrit for the elite to read and enjoy literature.

Before this, languages like Prakrit, Pali, Magadhi, and Ardhamagadhi existed across South Asia, but it is unclear if they possessed significant technical prowess. It seems they largely vanished from their regions.

Even in the early 1700s, when the English company first built a factory in Malabar, there is no indication that any *Namboodiri* individual practiced anything related to *Vanaprastha*. It is written in **Malabar and Anjengo** that no one followed such practices.

During *Vanaprastha*, it is written that one should leave the home, live elsewhere (perhaps in a hotel?), and engage in social work. Viewed this way, *Vanaprastha* seems to involve leaving home after 50 to dedicate one's life to social service. In this light, no spirituality can be associated with it.

However, it is said in the Yajurveda *mantra* that a person undertaking *Vanaprastha* must perform worship of God and homa (fire rituals) and take a vow. The vow includes growing a beard and moustache. This was written thousands of years ago.

The person practising *Vanaprastha* must also perform ten types of baths, consume the five nectars, perform ablutions, hold a staff, wear a loin cloth, conduct fire rituals, meditate, wear yellow garments, perform concluding worship, and conduct sacrifices.

Sanskrit words often carry an aura of mystique. The terms mentioned above may seem imbued with richness, smoothness, and sweetness, evoking spiritual depth in the mind.

However, when explained in simple terms, stripping away their mystique, they are as follows:

Ten types of baths: Bathing in ten different ways.

Five nectars: A mixture of honey, jaggery, cow's milk, curd, and ghee.

Ablution: Pouring water (possibly holy water) over the head with ritualistic or spiritual intent.

Holding a staff: Carrying a stick as a symbol of authority.

Wearing a loincloth: Wearing a simple garment, like a loincloth. In ancient times, enslaved people used only this as clothing, which might appear crude. However, if a *Namboodiri* appeared in a loincloth, the sight might carry a certain dignity.

Fire ritual: Likely a form of prayer.

Meditation: A process occurring in the depths of the mind.

Wearing yellow garments: Donning yellow clothing, the identifying uniform of a *Vanaprastha*.

Concluding worship and sacrifices: The final rituals.

When explained in ordinary terms, these seem to lose their mystique. However, in feudal languages, words must carry divinity, mystery, and grandeur to imbue concepts and commands with weight, strength, and energy.

Vanaprastha likely belongs to the customs of some ancient people. Is claiming traditions with no direct connection, when one's own heritage lacks such grandeur, not an indication of that absence?

Imagine a person today leaving home with their wife, staying in a hotel, consuming the five nectars daily, wearing a loincloth, carrying a staff, donning yellow garments, and engaging in social work.

If a high-ranking government official, a wealthy person, a prominent societal figure, or a renowned doctor did this, it might not cause much issue. But if an ordinary person did so, it would be problematic—anything could happen.

Clearly, none of this inherently grants significant mental or social elevation to an individual or society.

16. Can Driving Out Feudal Languages Eliminate the Characteristics of the Kali Yuga?

In the Brahmanical traditions, the next among the sixteen rites is *sannyasa* (renunciation).

The demonic nature inherent in feudal languages fosters, in those who speak them, a propensity for incompetence, intense competitiveness, and a tendency to harbour emotions entirely contrary to what is outwardly displayed, among other traits.

Without any thought or concern for this repulsive veil that envelops individuals and crowds, each person, driven by utterly selfish goals, may pursue an insatiable desire for personal mental and spiritual elevation—this might be what is seen in *sannyasa*.

Many of today's corrupt Indian officials, who treat citizens harshly, could undertake *sannyasa*.

It is written that *sannyasa* should not be granted to one who does not observe vows, sacrifices, penance, charity, oblations, or self-study, nor to one who has deviated from truthful and pure deeds. Here, self-study refers to the study of the Vedas.

Truthful and pure deeds can mean anything, as their interpretation has no boundaries.

Three days before the designated day of becoming a *sannyasi*, one must begin observing a vow. All hair, except five tufts, must be shaved off.

The garment to be worn is the fire-cloth, or saffron robe. The term 'fire-cloth' itself may evoke an emotional experience, conjuring the image of a blazing flame in the mind.

Morning rising, performing *sannyasi* duties, observing vows, sacrifices, penance, charity, and Vedic study cannot be said to be without merit. These may bring about various positive changes and progress in an individual.

Similarly, other activities may also induce positive changes in a person. Daily morning jogging, gym workouts, or participating in evening games like football may likewise foster beneficial transformations.

However, none of these can liberate society from the demonic framework of communication that grips it.

We are now in the Kali Yuga. This refers to the concept of 'yuga' in Brahmanical tradition. These traditions claim that each yuga has its own nature or *dharma*.

The following is a quotation:

Vyasa said: O King, each yuga has its own distinct characteristics. Living beings manifest according to the dharma of the yuga.

In the Krita Yuga, those devoted to dharma are born.

In the Treta Yuga, people are born desiring both dharma and wealth.

In the Dvapara Yuga, those born seek dharma, wealth, and additionally, desire—the third purushartha.

But in this Kali Yuga, those born are driven solely by interests in wealth and desire.

The dharma of a yuga does not change. Everything is in the hands of time. Time is the master of dharma and adharma. END

The matters mentioned above may be true and real. Or they could be utter nonsense.

Alternatively, in an empty mind, old Malayalam film songs, with mere words, might scatter starry glimmers, evoke frolicking waves rushing forward, or conjure the profound depths of the ocean and other multicoloured spectacles—much like the sensations induced by narcotics. In other words, hollow words.

The truth might be something else entirely. These words could be an allegorical statement, offering a glimpse into the design view of the transcendental software system of physical reality, crafted for mere mortals. However, if this is true, it seems no *Namboodiri* has clear knowledge of it.

Thousands of years ago, when matters related to *sannyasa* were established, we do not know the social realities of that time. Yet, it seems

unlikely that such practices could free anyone from the clutches of feudal linguistic codes pervasive in the social atmosphere.

However, the domain of *sannyasa* is different. Pristine English cannot compete with it.

Likewise, in the domain where pristine English operates, *sannyasa* cannot achieve the human personality development and transformation that pristine English can.

When the astonishing entity of British India emerged in parts of South Asia, various Hindu (Brahmanical) movements sprouted, claiming superiority in depth, tradition, and antiquity, competing with the positive aspects clearly visible in British India. These movements emerged like bubbles in yesterday's rain, in British India and surrounding independent states.

In truth, English officials might have been astounded. Their mere 26-letter alphabet (a, b, c, d), classical literature, and physical sciences seemed trivial compared to South Asia's grandeur of tradition.

The realisation that words could cause seismic shifts in social reality, not just in imagination but through invisible links, must have been a novel experience for English officials.

Moreover, their script lacked the acrobatic feats of languages with sounds like *ka, kka, ki, kki, ku, kku, ke, kke, kau, kam, kah!* Languages capable of rolling, stretching, or flattening individuals and personalities with astonishing prowess. What wonders might lie in the depths of their antiquity!

Yet, another reality stood in contrast. Neither Sanskrit nor its associated *dharma* shastras, ethics, Vedic literature, or other texts ever created an egalitarian atmosphere in social communication, here or elsewhere. Instead, individuals and crowds existed in a state akin to *ka, kka, ki, kki*, entangled, twisted, and knotted together.

It was when English spread among these people that such *ka, kka, ki, kki* tendencies began to fade in them and their society.

Retreating from the cacophony of this *ka, kka, ki, kki* atmosphere to perform penance is indeed good. A forest environment may be ideal for such penance. The best place for meditation is one where words do not constantly jostle the mind, emotions, or dignity—up, down, or sideways.

In this Kali Yuga, the English administration in South Asia managed to create a cadre of officials who adhered to an English linguistic culture, resisting the influences of wealth and desire.

Can driving out feudal languages eliminate the characteristics of the Kali Yuga?

17. The Crude and the Radiant in Primitive Customs

In the Brahmanical traditions, the next among the sixteen rites is *antyeshti*, which pertains to post-death rituals.

These are the customary practices to be performed after a person's death. Remember, these are rituals tied to the spirituality of a Vedic-era community that lived thousands of years ago, not the traditions of various groups across this subcontinent who transformed into Hindus after 1900.

However, it is understood that in ancient times, every community had its own post-death rituals. Over many centuries, members of various groups from different parts of the world entered South Asia, becoming integrated into its social structure under Brahmin dominance at varying levels of hierarchy. Many of these groups likely strove to preserve their spiritual customs and post-death rituals.

Such practices were carried forward by these lower communities over centuries, confined and limited within the social boundaries imposed by the groups above them. It is impossible today to say what these customs might have been like in their original regional contexts.

Yet, after centuries of being reduced to mere servile status in South Asia's social environment, their spiritual traditions likely took on crude and primitive forms. Feudal languages suppressed them, and they, in turn, suppressed one another. Alongside this, their living standards and customs became degraded.

The lofty inner purpose of many of their traditional customs may have faded from their consciousness.

In **Native Life in Travancore** by Rev. Samuel Mateer, even the post-death rituals of the *Pulayas* are meticulously documented. They addressed their deity as Udaya *Thampuran* during these rituals. The text records children mourning their father's death and their sense of loss. It must also be understood that, in those times, Hindu or Syrian Christian landlord families regarded these people as little more than half-beasts.

This community seems to have had an awareness of the deceased's soul, post-death rituals, and the consequences of neglecting them. They would place *vaykkari* (rice for the mouth) in the deceased's mouth—or, if available, a coin. When burying, their priestly figure would recite prayers and *mantras*.

Items such as cow dung, sesame oil, white cloth, worn ornaments, a little paddy, rice, turmeric powder, wheat flour, toddy, arrack, betel leaves, and banana leaves were used in connection with these rituals.

On the seventh day, they would shake a *kokkara* to create sound, blow a conch, and the priestly figure would invoke the soul (*chav*) into an idol, wrapping it in cloth, among other practices.

If there was space around their hut, they would bury the body there; otherwise, it would be buried in some unoccupied part of their master's land. Feudal language codes deemed that the burial site of a *Pulaya* became defiled. It must be clearly understood that a *Pulaya chavukayanu* (lower-being dies), not *marikkukayanu* (human being dies). That is how things are framed in this vile language.

Even as the *Pulayas* lived like mere cattle for centuries, faint threads of their traditions may have been preserved through such death rituals. However, it is now difficult to ascertain what their personalities might have been like when they lived in full social freedom in their ancestral homelands.

Their liberation began when the English flag was raised in South Asia.

No more will be written on this here.

However, it must be noted that the *Pulayas* are now Hindus too.

The *antyeshti* ritual in the sixteen rites belongs to the Brahmanical tradition. As Brahmins stood at the social apex, they were unlikely to experience the oppression of feudal languages. Thus, their traditions were less likely to be tainted by deceit, suppression, mutilation, degradation, or the presence of undesirable elements, at least until around 1900.

When a *Namboodiri* dies, the body is understood to become a *shavam* (corpse). Darbha grass is spread with its tips pointing south, and the

body is placed upon it. The mouth and eyes are closed. The big toes are tied together, and the hands are placed on the chest with the thumbs bound. The body is covered with a white cloth, leaving the face and feet exposed. Sesame oil is poured at the head, and a lamp is lit.

A circle is drawn around the body using sesame seeds and unbroken rice (*akshata*). Akshata refers to uncracked, unpowdered dry rice.

Incense such as sambrani and ashtagandha must be kept burning. Ashtagandha is understood to be a mixture of agarwood, frankincense, turmeric, guggul, sandalwood, vetiver, iruveli, and kottam, burnt in an earthen pot to produce smoke. These are commonly documented practices.

Note the terms *dakshinaagni*, *garhapatyagni*, *aavahaniyagni*, *sabhyagni*, and *avasathyagni*. These relate to Brahminical sacrificial rituals, collectively referred to as *panchagni*. These will not be elaborated here. However, it is noted that the final ritual for those who maintain these sacred fires through sacrifices is *antyeshti*.

In other words, *antyeshti* is a Vedic cremation ritual in the Brahmanical tradition.

It is said that the procedure for Brahminical *antyeshti* is described in the Ashwalayana Grihyasutra. Ashwalayana is a branch of the Rigveda, so the Ashwalayana Grihyasutra may be a commentary on it, though this is not known with certainty.

The Brahminical cremation rituals are detailed in sections one to four of the fourth chapter of the Ashwalayana Grihyasutra.

While these may seem as primitive as the *Pulayas'* rituals, suppressed by feudal languages, there is a clear distinction. The *Pulayas'* customs belong to those crushed by feudal language codes.

The Brahmins' customs belong to those who shine within these codes.

For the *Pulayas*, fire is mere fire, but for Brahmins, it is not only fire but also *agni*. Moreover, in post-death rituals, it manifests as *dakshinaagni*, *garhapatyagni*, and *aavahaniyagni*, burning from different directions. This will be discussed later.

The burial ground for a Brahmin has specified characteristics, including the pit's length, depth, and orientation. The cremation ground (*shmashana bhumi*) must be open on all sides, fertile for medicinal plants, and allow water to flow in all directions.

Plenty of darbha grass and ghee must be placed there. Relatives then bring the deceased's body, along with their ritual vessels. Wearing the sacred thread and with unbound hair, other relatives follow, with the eldest in front and the youngest at the rear.

The person performing the final rites circles the pit three times, sprinkling water, keeping their left side facing the pit.

They establish *aavahaniyagni* in the southeast, *garhapatyagni* in the northwest, and *dakshinaagni* in the southwest, chanting Sanskrit *mantras* throughout.

Many other rituals follow. Readers should note that each ritual is accompanied by highly evocative Sanskrit words.

With this, the writing on the sixteen rites concludes.

The sixteen rites belong to the Brahmanical tradition. Whether they are truly the exclusive heritage of today's Brahmins is uncertain.

They may have come into Brahmin possession by some means, though this is not necessarily the case. But aren't the Vedas and related texts from two to three thousand years ago?

Whether it is wrong for other communities to adopt and use these rites today is worth considering.

English is the language of England's traditional people. Many learn and use it today, but they are not English. This language brings them many benefits.

Similarly, could not the Brahmanical traditions be adopted by other communities? This thought arises, though it is a complex matter with intricate implications.

18. Brahmanical Dominance and Sanskrit Terminology

Namboodiris are understood to be the regional Brahmins of Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore. The strong presence of these groups at the social apex in these three regions likely explains the perceived historical and social connection among them.

The communities under their influence probably varied across these regions. *Namboodiris* may have structured those beneath them in each region at different hierarchical levels.

There were also non-Namboodiri Brahmins in these areas. Detailing them here would make this writing swirl like water caught in a whirlpool from a rushing stream, so I'll move forward.

Brahmins, over centuries, have carried forward various rituals and practices prescribed in Vedic texts across this subcontinent. Viewed this way, they belong to the spiritual lineage of Vedic-era communities. However, the issue with this perspective is that there's no known evidence today that they possess the esoteric knowledge or techniques that might have accompanied Vedic literature and *mantras*.

They studied the Vedas and other spiritual texts, maintained and operated temples, and performed these duties with intense dedication, resolve, and commitment over countless centuries. Yet, they may have had little choice in the matter. Society was likely structured akin to the Indian military, with rigid hierarchies.

Commissioned officers in the military must consistently demonstrate their superiority, efficiency, dedication, resolve, and commitment. If these officers, instead of rising early to perform military drills and procedures, lazed about, the military structure would fray.

Thus, to secure their position at the top of a social environment shaped by feudal languages, Brahmins had to rise early and fulfil their spiritual duties.

Another point is that across this subcontinent, many communities harboured a fervent desire to prove they were Brahmins or had Brahmin connections. Consequently, when historical opportunities arose, some groups may have migrated to new regions and integrated into Brahminical traditions.

One observation stands out: Brahmins who migrated to Travancore from Tamil regions did not traditionally worship Shasta or Bhagavathy. In Travancore, they had to learn these practices specifically. This raises the question of who the 'true' Brahmins were.

Another aspect is that any individual who, through organised strength, seized a region and became its king would immediately seek to please local Brahmins, having them certify their *Kshatriya* status. To this end, these kings often built Brahmin temples in their conquered territories and gifted them to Brahmins.

This was mutually beneficial. Kings gained validation as *Kshatriyas*, while Brahmins received confirmation of their Brahmin status, with both sides endorsing each other.

This also instilled great awe and obedience among the lower communities, who held these figures in high regard.

Brahmins did not entirely exclude lower communities from their spirituality. To root the concept of *chaturvarnya*—the idea that humans are divided into four *varnas* or castes—in the minds of the lower communities, Brahmins had to impose some of their spirituality on them. For this system to hold, a large group of people below the four *varnas* was necessary.

Only then would the lowest *Shudras* remain in their place. Just as a police constable feels loyalty and duty to the police system only when there are many ordinary people beneath them, so too here.

However, the social structure the English East India Company sought to create in the territories under its control must be compared with Brahminical traditions and aims.

The language English East India Company officials inherited was English. The social structure they could envision was one shaped by English linguistic codes.

In contrast, Brahmins could only design a social environment aligned with the constraints, norms, and prescriptions of Sanskrit, Tamil, and other regional languages' word codes. No other possibility existed.

The English side possessed a gentle language and highly refined conversational manners.

Meanwhile, Brahmins had not only their rituals, daily routines, *dharma* shastras, and prescriptions of what was permissible or forbidden, but also an array of dazzling, captivating Sanskrit words and phrases—gleaming like gemstones—for their various aversions toward other individuals and groups.

These words, flaunted among themselves, instilled profound inferiority in lower communities, immense respect for Brahmins, and disgust toward those beneath them. Brahmins made no effort to uplift those below or impart the knowledge and dignity to create spiritual melodies with golden words in their minds.

Just as an IPS officer does not grant a constable great dignity, self-respect, knowledge, or superiority, so it is here. Such a mindset is fostered by feudal languages, which create the distinction between lower communities and those to be revered.

What must be understood is that at the opposite end of a word defined as 'salutation' in a refined language, there often lurks a term like 'grovelling.' Behind a word proclaimed as 'culture,' a demonic quality may lie hidden—a fact the English may still not fully grasp.

Consider some terms drawn from Brahminical traditions:

Vratham, Yagnam, Yagnam, Dhanam, Swadhyayam, Prayachitham, Dhaanam, mantra, sanjayanam, ekodishtam, paarvanam, Nivedhyam, tulabharam, Shivaratri, Ramanavami, Avani Avittam, Gokulashtami, Nagachaturthi, Garuda Panchami, Navaratri, Saraswati Puja, Deepavali, Karthika, Ekadashi, Amavasya, Suryagrahanam, Chandragrahanam, kani, Thiruvathira, nakshatra homam, ayush homam, Rudra Ekadashi, Mahrudram, Athirudram, shashtabdi poorthi, shatabhishekam, Sadachaaram, sandhyavandanam, Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Smritis, Shrutis, dharmaneethikal, agni, panchagni, and so forth.

If a gifted poet were to weave these gem-like words into poetry, and a musician of equal brilliance set them to melody and sang them, listeners might stand in reverence. Yet, no meaningful change would occur in society.

In contrast, introducing the unadorned, high-quality English language of old into society would transform individuals and communities. But no one would stand in awe, grovelling or spellbound.

Before concluding, one more point: while those who today claim to be Hindus see the above terms as part of their heritage, until 1900, these were likely exclusive to Brahmins. Though Brahmins guarded them like treasures in a locked chest, others seized them when the opportunity arose.

And what of it?

19. Anuloma and pratiloma Relationships

Now, moving away from *Namboodiris*, I intend to examine the communities beneath them individually. Before that, let me address how the caste system, encoded in transcendental software systems, manifests in the physical world.

To illustrate, I'll quote a few sentences from **Malabar and Anjengo**:

Every man considers himself polluted by the touch of one of a lower caste; and there are castes low in the social scale which mutually convey pollution to each other.

But in addition to this, at a certain point in the caste system, the taint is supposed to become so pronounced as actually to affect the atmosphere and carry pollution to persons, houses, and so on, within a radius of several yards from the person who is the centre of infection.

Based on this theory there is a recognised scale of distances at which members of each of the polluting castes must stand from a man of higher caste or his house, the distance increasing as we descend the social scale.

It's easy to dismiss these ideas as mere superstition. However, if one understands feudal language codes, the transcendental software system behind physical reality, and the existence of such a system underlying life, the human body, brain function, and even language itself, this so-called superstition may not be superstition at all.

Feudal language is, in itself, a physical reality.

Now, let's turn to the communities beneath the *Namboodiris*.

In Travancore, there is mention of a group called *Malayala Kshatriyas*. They likely had little representation in Malabar, though some presence is possible. This group includes Kovil *Thampuran*, royal families or Thampurans, Thampans, and Thirumulpadus. Much could be said about each, but this writing won't delve into that now.

Among the communities below the various *Namboodiri* subgroups in Malabar society, the next to discuss is the **Ilayathu**.

The term *Ilayathu* likely means 'those of younger age.' Its deeper implication may be that the *Ilayathu* are the lowest among Brahmins. In feudal languages, the word codes used by elders toward the younger are of a particular kind.

The *Ilayathu* may be the group closest to the social boundary between *Namboodiris* and the *Ambalavasis* below them, on the Brahmin side.

At the same time, Malabar & Anjengo notes that the highest among the *Ambalavasis* are called *Moosathu*. Whether this is accurate is not known to me. They are also referred to as *Mussatu*.

If true, the *Ilayathu* among *Namboodiris* and the *Moosathu* among *Ambalavasis* mark the point where these two distinct social ranks meet.

This can be likened to the ASP (Assistant Superintendent of Police) and DYSP (Deputy Superintendent of Police) in the Indian Police Service. The former is the lowest IPS rank, while the latter is the highest among middle ranks in the police. A DYSP may be promoted to SP, but further advancement is rare. For an ASP, the next promotion is SP, with potential to rise to DGP.

However, Malabar & Anjengo defines *Ilayathu* as a quasi-Brahmanical class, with 'quasi' implying 'somewhat' or 'almost.'

There's also a claim that both *Ilayathu* and *Moosathu* are not *Ambalavasis* but full Brahmins. While the [Travancore State Manual](#) classifies *Moosathu* as *Ambalavasis*, the Travancore Census Report categorises them as *Malayala Brahmins* of the Shivadwija lineage, as some point out today.

Asserting Brahmin identity in social thought likely carries significant psychological benefits. Conversely, none would claim to be of a lower caste.

However, things have slightly changed today, partly due to reservations for lower castes in higher education and government jobs. For *Namboodiris*, those claiming *Kshatriya* status, or *Ambalavasis* to admit to being lower-caste, they would need to descend deep into the social hierarchy—a highly unlikely occurrence.

Some castes below Brahmins are collectively called Antharala castes, including *Kshatriyas*, *Samantans*, and *Ambalavasis*.

There are differing claims: some say Antharala refers to those between Brahmins and *Kshatriyas*, others between *Kshatriyas* and *Shudras*.

Who the ***Samantans*** are is unclear. However, searching for *Samantan* in Malabar & Anjengo reveals a striking statement:

The traditional Brahman account is that it was ordained by Parasurama, who bade the women of the *Samantan* and *Sudra* classes 'put off chastity and the cloth that covered their breasts and declared that the duty of such women and the object for which they were created was to **satisfy the desires** of the Brahmins.'

This statement hints at the notion that seeing a woman's uncovered chest arouses intense desire. Yet, if many women in society openly displayed their chests, it's unlikely such a sight would evoke lust.

Generally, *Ambalavasis* do not wear the sacred thread.

Some sources suggest *Ilayathu* are *Ambalavasis*, yet they are noted to serve as priests in the post-death rituals of *Nairs*, likely referring to Malayala *Shudras*.

In North Malabar, those known as *Akapothuvalukal* may be equivalent to Travancore's *Moosathu*, per Malabar & Anjengo.

Regarding *Moosathu*, Malabar & Anjengo notes they are descendants of a child born to a pure Brahmin woman and a Shivadwija Brahmin man.

Such a relationship is defined as *pratiloma*. That is, a lower-ranking man uniting with a higher-ranking woman is a *pratiloma* relationship.

Conversely, a higher-ranking man uniting with a lower-ranking woman is an *Anuloma* relationship, aligned with the principle of hypergamy.

The distinction between *Anuloma* and *pratiloma* relationships is driven by feudal language.

For example, if an IPS officer marries or has children with a female DYSP, Inspector, or Constable, it's an *Anuloma* relationship.

However, if a DYSP, Inspector, or Constable marries or has children with a higher-ranking female officer, it's a *pratiloma* relationship.

For instance, if a male Inspector has a child with a young female SP (an IPS officer), it's a *pratiloma* relationship.

This illustration aims to clarify the logic behind past social relationships. *pratiloma* relationships likely disrupted social structure and discipline significantly.

20. First Parishas and Second Parishas

Moving downward from the *Namboodiris*, we gradually encounter those known as *Ambalavasis*.

In the previous writing, I noted:

Some castes below Brahmins are collectively called Antharala castes, including Kshatriyas, Samantans, and Ambalavasis. END

I have not found clear information on who the *Samantans* are. Meanwhile, there are vague and confusing details about those claiming or labeled as *Kshatriyas*, which I won't delve into now. However, a question arises: who comes directly below the *Namboodiris*—*Ambalavasis* or *Kshatriyas*?

In feudal language systems, status and rank are closely tied to social dignity. These are directly linked to the word codes used in the language.

Some claim that many asserting *Kshatriya* status are actually of *Shudra* descent who assumed *Kshatriya* rank upon gaining political power. Others, in writings from the last century, argue they are indeed true *Kshatriyas*.

This resembles the issue of saluting protocols in the police, where directional codes influence the choice of indicative word codes in feudal languages.

Whether *Ambalavasis* come directly below *Namboodiris* or below *Kshatriyas* (who are themselves below *Namboodiris*) represents distinct levels, both in social perception and language codes.

Kshatriyas, with royal authority, sceptre, and *Nair* soldiers, are clearly above *Ambalavasis*. However, it's unclear where *Kshatriyas* without such attributes stand today.

When encountering a *Namboodiri*, *Nairs* would stand deferentially, seeking blessings. In those times, *Namboodiris* were likely few in number, as only the eldest *Namboodiri* could have *Namboodiri* offspring. Younger *Namboodiris* had *Nair* children from *Shudra* families, with whom they maintained no connection.

However, the birth of *Namboodiri* children among *Nairs* might have fostered a sense of psychological superiority among them.

Since such matters influence language codes, the forms of address and reference across various directions and social ranks in those times are highly intriguing.

Last week, during the social lockdown to curb the coronavirus, readers may have seen videos of police using terms like *nee*, *eda*, or *avan* when interacting with people.

Factors like age, social rank, and occupation strongly determine the directional components of indicative word codes in feudal languages. Yet, police with authority often used these terms disregardfully. This isn't anyone's fault; it's simply how those with power in feudal language systems behave. More could be said on this.

If this is the case today, one can imagine the social communication system before the English raised their victorious flag in this subcontinent. I hope to discuss this further later.

Regarding the *Ilayathu*, there are conflicting claims: some say they are the lowest among *Namboodiris*, while others assert they are *Ambalavasis*, which the English administration had to address.

A traditional story about them goes as follows:

Long ago, a *Namboodiri* shared the secrets of Brahminical funeral rites with a *Shudra*. The *Namboodiri* community viewed this as a deceitful act and a breach of trust.

This is comparable to traitors in English nations sharing technological secrets with China or other third-world countries for profit.

The Brahmins expelled this individual and their family from their caste. Their descendants became known as the *Ilayathu* in society. If true, their history may reveal more.

According to the **Travancore State Manual**, around 390 families who migrated to the region between present-day Kayamkulam and Muvattupuzha were the early *Ilayathu*. Where they came from is not specified.

From the time of their arrival, they claimed Brahmin status. Any hint otherwise would cause their social standing and language codes to collapse.

It's unclear when the *Ilayathu* arrived in Malabar, but the **Travancore State Manual** records some details about them.

They were divided into two groups: First *Parishas* and Second *Parishas*, based on whom they served.

First *Parishas* served the spiritual needs of higher-ranking *Shudras* (*Nairs*).

Second *Parishas* served the spiritual needs of lower-ranking *Shudras* (*Nairs*).

It must be understood that *Shudras* (*Nairs*) were far below *Namboodiris*. Serving their spiritual needs was itself degrading for *Namboodiris*. Serving the lowest among *Shudras* might have been seen as deeply defiling to a *Namboodiri*'s dignity.

This is akin to comparing an IAS officer in the Central Defence Ministry, promoted to that rank, with an IAS officer in a state's cashew department, also promoted. The people they interact with, their relationships, and their conversation topics differ significantly.

The two *Ilayathu* groups dealt with *Nairs* of different ranks, which created distinctions between them.

Feudal language codes divided the *Ilayathu* into these two groups. Reportedly, they did not intermarry in those times. While men from both groups might eat together, women did not. If they did, First Parisha women would have to hear about lower-ranking individuals from the other group. In feudal languages, hearing or speaking about such people, or even imagining them, could degrade one's value unless strict safeguards were in place.

Second *Parishas* were not allowed to participate in the domestic or social ceremonies of First *Parishas*.

Yet both groups constantly asserted they were *Namboodiris*.

Their food, clothing, ornaments, festivals, rituals, and spiritual practices closely resembled those of *Namboodiris*. Any deviation could lower their social standing in language codes. In feudal languages, maintaining one's 'address' requires great care.

They could wear the sacred thread and chant the Gayatri *mantra* 24 to 36 times but were not permitted to study the Vedas. Their women, called Ilayor Ammas, stayed confined indoors, a status and residence that ensured social dignity, respect, and subservience from lower communities. Appearing otherwise in their minds would be a grave issue. They were, in every way, *Namboodiri* women.

The *Ilayathu* had their own priests (Shantikkars), but *Namboodiri* priests enforced their caste rules. However, Vedic *Namboodiris* could not cook or eat in *Ilayathu* homes, though they could in *Moosathu* homes.

Namboodiris would not perform punyaham for *Ilayathu* funeral rites but could conduct certain rituals like Ishvara seva or sarpa bali in *Ilayathu* homes.

The *Ilayathu*'s daily income came from serving as priests for *Shudras*. They also initiated some Brahminical rituals and served as priests in Bhadrakali and Naga temples.

From below, they might seem like *Namboodiris*, spiritual leaders, and possessors of vast Vedic knowledge. Yet, the reality may be that feudal language codes created various discomforts and anxieties among them.

Their loyalty, duty, and commitment to spiritual practices and traditions likely stemmed from the fact that these ensured subservience and deference from lower communities while providing a steady income.

They may not mind lower communities now dominating their traditional workplaces if they have access to more comfortable jobs and conveniences.

It was the English Company that liberated them from their social prison.

21. The Burning Desire to Leap Upwards and to Hold Someone Below

Before I start writing about the *Ambalavasis*, let me explain who the *Samantans* are. Information about them has now been gathered from **Malabar and Anjengo**.

The details about the *Samantans* came from the same sources where I read about the *Ambalavasis*. In both North and South Malabar, the term *Samantan* generally refers to a group of people distinguished by nobility, refinement, and aristocratic qualities.

In North Malabar, groups like *Nambiar*, *Unnithiri*, and *Adiyodi* are considered *Samantans*, while in South Malabar, it includes Nedungadi, *Vallodi*, *Eradi*, and *Tirumulpad*, among others.

However, note that names like *Nambiar* and *Adiyodi* are also found among *Nairs*. At the same time, names like Nedungadi, *Eradi*, and *Vallodi* are regional names associated with *Samantans* from places like Nedunganad, Eranad, and Valluvanad. Sometimes, these individuals might even be members of local royal families.

It seems the **Zamorin** family, which ruled Calicut, belonged to the *Eradi* caste. However, it's also written that the caste name *Eradi* was used by *Kiriyattil Nairs*. The **Zamorin** family certainly claimed *Kshatriya* status. This leads to the thought that a group of *Nairs* might have adopted their title.

Yet, it's possible the **Zamorin** family migrated to Malabar from some other coastal region long ago. Investigating this could lead to uncomfortable truths about caste or community ties. No one can tolerate even the faintest hint of a connection to a lower caste on their person.

Once power is attained, everyone looks for ties to a higher lineage. If membership in a Brahmin lineage isn't possible, at least a *Kshatriya* connection must be found among ancestors. If there's anything less, it must be deliberately erased. Loyalty and obligation to ancestors should only go so far.

The royal family of Valluvanad was *Vallodi*.

The local ruling families in Manjeri and Nilambur were *Tirumulpads*. Those in Manjeri were specifically called Karnamulpad, it seems.

Women from the *Tirumulpad* families were addressed as *Kolpad* (or *Koyilamma*, meaning 'temple mother'). This is how lower castes were required to address or refer to these women.

In **Malabar and Anjengo**, it's noted that *Nambiars* began claiming *Samantan* status. However, it's also written that such claims are incorrect, and they are, in fact, only *Nairs*. The feudal system constantly fuels the urge to claim a higher status than one's own.

In the 1891 Malabar census, only 1,225 *Samantans* were recorded. But by the 1901 census, their number had risen to 4,351. The English administration at the time assessed that this increase was likely due to *Nairs* jumping into the *Samantan* category.

Kshatriyas reportedly wear the sacred thread, but *Samantans* generally do not. Many *Kshatriyas* also dine with Brahmins, but *Samantans* typically do not.

The period of ritual impurity (*pula*) for *Kshatriyas* lasts 11 nights, while for Brahmins, it's 10 days. For true *Ambalavasis*, it's 12 days. This places *Kshatriyas* socially between Brahmins and *Ambalavasis*.

For *Samantans*, however, the *pula* lasts 15 days, which indicates their social position.

(**Note:** *pula* refers to the ritual impurity believed to affect a deceased person's relatives for a certain period.)

Samantans followed the matrilineal family system. Their women entered marital alliances only with Brahmins or *Kshatriyas*.

The exact position of *Samantans* is unclear, but they are certainly above *Nairs*.

Generally speaking, the desire to prove oneself as part of a higher group has, over centuries, led to the emergence of new status holders. This often results in confusing caste-related information.

It's like the newly created post of Civil Police Officer in today's police department. The word 'officer' brings to mind an IPS officer, the highest

rank in the police force. Yet, today, there are officers at both the top and bottom of the police hierarchy, with other police personnel in between.

Such confusing distinctions, carried through centuries, create even more complex status hierarchies. As Civil Police Officers gain significant social respect and authority, they too will need someone beneath them.

This is the nature of the feudal system.

22. Variations among the Ambalavasis

Though one might say *Ambalavasis* are those who live in temples, the precise meaning of the term likely refers to those who work in temple-related activities as their daily occupation and source of income, earning a regular livelihood from it.

It should be understood that they were closely associated with and subservient to the highest-ranking *Namboodiris* in the social hierarchy, those known as *Oru*. Comparing this to today's bureaucracy, it feels like they were akin to various lower-level workers far below IAS or IPS officers.

In earlier times, neither *Namboodiris* nor temples had cars. But if they did, the drivers of those cars would likely have been from an *Ambalavasi* caste.

The reason for saying this is a memory from long ago. I recall something my mother, who was the head of a government department in the early 1980s, observed.

The department head had a government car and a driver. It was a car with a red board proclaiming 'Kerala State.' Back then, government vehicles were rare on the roads, unlike today.

The driver of this car, who served the department head, was known to have immense arrogance. His demeanour suggested the road was his personal property. Other vehicle drivers had to watch and yield to him. Road rules, it seemed, did not apply to government vehicle drivers.

While this man was extremely rough with the public, he displayed great subservience and loyalty to his superiors. Though there might be personal rivalries, dislikes, or disgust among lower-ranking officials, they were highly organised when dealing with the public. This aligns with what Col Munro, a British officer who served as Dewan in Travancore for a few years, wrote about the officials in Travancore.

Police officers typically exempted government vehicles from their abrasive behaviour.

Once, near Vellayambalam, this vehicle collided with and damaged an autorickshaw. No other harm occurred. The deputy department head, who was travelling in the car at the time, stated that the fault and lawlessness were entirely on the part of the car driver.

The autorickshaw owner lodged a complaint with the police. But, as I recall, rather than receiving any relief, he faced further troubles. After all, an autorickshaw driver, addressed with terms like '*nee*,' '*eda*,' or '*enthadi*' at the police station, is unlikely to receive dignified treatment, even as an employer.

Meanwhile, the government driver faced no reprimand or demotion. Moreover, he insisted that the department head speak to the Assistant Commissioner of Police in the capital city, ensuring this was done before he even went to the police station.

Before the English administration raised its flag of victory in Malabar, those working in temples likely received similar consideration and protection from *Namboodiri* households.

Had there been no lower castes in Malabar, those working in temples would have been considered menial labourers. It was the presence of these lower castes that elevated them to a sort of '*saar*' status.

This is not said to insult them but merely to highlight the realities of the feudal social structure, listing them one by one.

With the English rule in Malabar establishing a new officer class based solely on English language proficiency and building a new government machinery under them, the *Namboodiris* began to lose their prominence. Consequently, the social importance of the *Ambalavasis* also started to wane. Some may have even fallen into the depths of the social hierarchy.

The lower castes, meanwhile, might have been eager to bite at those falling through the cracks of the social structure using the language of hierarchy. The experience of those who fell must have been painful.

If government departments were to vanish today, along with their heads, the government drivers, peons, and clerks who serve at their beck and call would also become irrelevant. That's how it was.

Let me list who the *Ambalavasis* were. This list is compiled from various writings and records, so its accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Still, I don't believe there are significant errors.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. Moothathu | 2. Adikal |
| 3. Pushpakan | 4. Pisharadi |
| 5. Nambissan | 6. Marar |
| 7. Thiyyattunni | 8. Variyar |
| 9. Chakyar | 10. Pothuval |
| 11. Nambiar | 12. Adikal |

Some of them reportedly wore the sacred thread, while others did not.

Looking at it this way, before English rule was established in Malabar, the social hierarchy might have been something like this, though it's just a hunch. I don't know for certain:

1. Othulla *Namboodiris* (highest-ranking)
2. Othillatha *Namboodiris*
3. *Kshatriyas*
4. *Ambalavasis* who wear the sacred thread
5. *Samantans* claiming to be *Kshatriyas* or closely aligned with them
6. *Ambalavasis* who do not wear the sacred thread
7. *Nairs* of various ranks
8. Lower castes of various levels

These different groups can be compared to the various ranks of government employees today. The lower castes beneath them all can be likened to ordinary people of varying statuses today.

However, even back then, there were likely merchants spanning from the top to the bottom of society. I won't delve into where they fit in this list.

In the list above, *Adikal*, *Pisharadi*, *Marar*, *Variyar*, and *Pothuval* are said to be those who do not wear the sacred thread.

Thus, *Moothathu*, *Pushpakan*, *Nambissan*, *Thiyyattunni*, *Chakyar*, and *Nambiar* are the *Ambalavasis* who wear the sacred thread, while *Adikal*, *Pisharadi*, *Marar*, *Variyar*, and *Pothuval* are those who do not.

It's worth considering why this clear distinction arose. Examining such matters through the lens of linguistic codes might reveal much. The English likely had no access to such insights.

23. About the Ambalavasis in General

In **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2, five groups are mentioned among the *Ambalavasi* castes in Travancore that are not found in the list of *Ambalavasis* in Malabar:

Pooppalli

Brahmani or Daivampadi

Pilappalli

Nattuppattar

Kurukkal

At the same time, two groups listed among Malabar’s *Ambalavasis*—*Moothathu* (*Mussathu*) and *Marar*—are not found in the Travancore list. The reason for this is not clearly known.

Now, I intend to share some details about each group defined as *Ambalavasis*. The information related to this is drawn from sources like **Malabar and Anjengo**, [Malabar Manual](#), **Travancore State Manual**, and the Wikipedia page on *Ambalavasis*. There may be minor variations, seemingly contradictory details, and instances where information in one source is absent in another. However, I must state that I have not conducted in-depth research or reflection on this matter.

Just as government employees—such as peons, LD clerks, UD clerks, junior superintendents, senior superintendents, and section officers—exhibit various degrees of hierarchy, obedience, disobedience, and alienation among themselves, similar distinctions, divisions, authority, and compliance likely existed among the different *Ambalavasi* castes.

Yet, a common trait among them all was likely a clear sense of subservience, affection, and reverence toward *Namboodiris*, especially the Othulla *Namboodiris*. It feels as though the *Namboodiris* maintained and reinforced their elite status daily through displays and assertions to sustain and nurture this infatuation-like attraction.

Another point to note is that **Malabar and Anjengo** states that *Samantans* are higher in caste status than *Ambalavasis*. The constant pursuit of superiority and the rigid boundaries of hierarchical status over centuries likely created various confusions.

It’s worth noting that even among *Ambalavasis*, there are groups at two distinct levels. This may explain why some are described as degraded Brahmins, while others are seen as elevated *Shudras* (*Nairs*).

This is akin to a situation in today’s police department where an IPS officer serving as an SP is demoted to ASP, while a Circle Inspector is promoted to DySP. Both end up at the same level, yet the former’s IPS status, marked by a symbolic 'sacred thread,' creates a distinct recognition among others. The latter lacks this mark.

Broadly speaking, the traditional duties of *Ambalavasis* in Hindu (Brahmin) temples included cleaning the temple premises, sweeping, collecting flowers for worship, making garlands, playing drums, blowing conches, gathering firewood for rituals and *homams*, carrying idols during processions, singing, and dancing. Each task was associated with a specific caste group.

It must be clearly stated that performing these tasks in temples managed by *Namboodiris* is distinct from doing so in temples overseen by lower castes today. The former is akin to serving IAS officers, while the latter is like serving ordinary people. The two are entirely different.

As a group, they traditionally did not consume meat or alcohol. Like *Nairs*, they too likely established male-female relationships through *sambandham*. Thus, it can be said that Brahmin blood was significantly mixed within these groups.

Understanding this in English might be challenging. It could be misconstrued as high-ranking Brahmins exploiting their authority to take and use the women of those working under them. However, the reality is likely quite different. *Ambalavasi* women were probably enchanted by *Namboodiris*, viewing their touch as a life’s fulfilment. This touch likely created a mesmerising intoxication in the minds of both the women and their men.

At the same time, their attitude toward those below them was likely one of contempt and disdain. Whether a *Namboodiri* was elderly or a lower-caste man was youthful and handsome held no relevance or merit.

It's worth remembering that feudal language codes can imbue an individual with golden radiance or evoke a repulsive stench.

Linguistic codes were also crafted to protect *Ambalavasi* women from derogatory terms used by lower castes. I will discuss these when addressing each *Ambalavasi* group individually.

In Travancore, except for Pisharadis, all others reportedly cremate their dead. It's likely the same in Malabar.

Ambalavasis are not Brahmins. Thus, it feels they are not part of the Brahmin religion (Hinduism). They likely had little connection to Vedic literature.

They were probably not permitted to perform rituals, *homams*, or yajnas. However, they likely served as assistants and workers in such activities for centuries. As a result, through constant interaction, they would have gained knowledge of Brahmin traditions, epics, ethical codes, deities, and worship practices. These likely became intertwined with their lives. Moreover, Brahmin blood was likely mixed within them.

Today, they are recognised as Hindus. Everyone seeks a Brahmin connection. Even if they had distinct traditions or heritage in the past, these may have faded away.

24. About the Moothathu or Mussathu

It feels that *Ambalavasis* were not household servants in *Namboodiri* homes. It seems that the servants in *Namboodiri illams* were *Nairs*.

However, since both groups served the *Namboodiris*, they were established above the many communities defined as lower castes.

There seems to be a notion that *Nairs*, as *Shudras*, gradually rose through their association with Brahmins. But this is not something that can be stated simply, and I won't delve into it now.

It feels that *Ambalavasis* performed services related to spiritual matters. Because of this, they were distinct from *Shudras* or *Nairs* and likely held a social advantage. Being household servants, in feudal language codes, is relatively lower. It's also true in feudal terms that servants in grand households receive subservience from those living in humble huts.

Now, let me provide a brief description of each *Ambalavasi* group.

These groups might have been various communities that came under the influence of *Namboodiris* in Malabar and Travancore long ago. Some may have been local inhabitants or arrived in these regions before the *Namboodiris* migrated here, while others might have come later through various means.

Among them, those who were somewhat fortunate and found it easy to show subservience to *Namboodiris* were likely assigned temple duties. It also feels that the women of these groups may have entered into *sambandham* relationships with *Namboodiris*.

However, there are no written records documenting this. Instead, it's written that younger *Namboodiri* men typically formed relationships with women from *Shudra* or *Nair* families. Still, it seems that Brahmin blood would have mixed with *Ambalavasis* as well.

As mentioned earlier, in language codes, a blood connection with those deemed superior creates an elevated status in an individual.

Now, let's look at the *Ambalavasis* permitted to wear the sacred thread.

These are *Moothathu*, *Pushpakan*, *Nambissan*, *Thiyyattunni*, *Chakyar*, and *Nambiar*. Since they wear the sacred thread, it can be inferred that they have some *Namboodiri* traits. In other words, this writing is slowly moving from *Namboodiris* toward groups that do not perform spiritual tasks in temples. The spiritual connection of the people mentioned will gradually diminish.

First, let's discuss the *Moothathu*, or *Mussathu*. A point to note here is that the title *Mussathu* or *Muss* is also used by others. For example, references are made to *Ashtavaidya Mussu* and *Ooril Parisha Mussu*, as well as *Karuka Mussathu* and *Kavil Mussathu*. There may be others too. These are not the ones being referred to here.

There's also a mention that the *Akapothuval* and *Mussathu* in North Malabar are the same or related.

However, it should be noted that there are several groups with the title *Pothuval*, such as *Akapothuval*, *Purapothuval*, *Nair Pothuval*, and *Marayar Pothuval*. But only the *Akapothuval* is connected to the *Moothathu*.

It's said that long ago, these people were descendants born from a *pratiloma* (hypogamous) union. It's claimed they are the progeny of a child born to a Shivadwajja Brahmin man and a pure Brahmin girl. However, the reality might be that they are descendants of a child born to a non-Brahmin man and a Brahmin girl.

It's not unlikely that this non-Brahmin man was a migrant from somewhere. These are old matters, after all!

It's also claimed that they were Brahmins who lost their status by consuming rice or food offered to Shiva. Consuming food offered to Shiva is reportedly considered a violation in Brahmin traditions.

Whatever the truth, the implication is that they have a Brahmin connection.

Their duties include preparing flowers and offerings for the temple. One of their specific responsibilities is carrying the *thidambu* during festivals and other occasions.

The *thidambu* is a small replica of the deity placed in a box-like structure on a wooden platform. Since the actual idol of the deity cannot be brought outside the sanctum sanctorum, the *thidambu* procession is conducted.

To protect *Mussathu* women from derogatory language, harmful gazes, and such thoughts by lower castes, they were addressed with the honorific title *Manayamma*.

25. About the Pushpakan

Now, let me discuss the *Pushpakan*, one of the *Ambalavasi* groups.

The first thing to note about them is that there are multiple distinct subgroups within the *Pushpakan*. This means that, over many centuries, various communities may have been assigned to the same occupational role.

Additionally, there seem to have been differences, whether minor or significant, between the subgroups of *Pushpakan* in Malabar and Travancore.

Furthermore, some of these subgroups reportedly followed the matrilineal system (*marumakkathayam*), while others followed the patrilineal system (*makkathayam*).

These differences likely point to their diverse ancestral origins.

The general duties of the *Pushpakan* included preparing flowers for worship, making garlands, arranging offerings, preparing lamps, carrying lamps during processions, and teaching in traditional schools (*pathshalas*).

In Malabar, records (Malabar & Anjengo) indicate four subgroups known as *Pushpakan*, *Poo-Nambi*, *Nambissan*, and *Pattarunni* or *Unni*.

However, the **Travancore State Manual** collectively defines *Nambissan*, *Pushpakan*, *Pooppalli*, and *Brahmani* as *Unni* or *Pushpakan*. Yet, it feels there are several differences among these four groups.

Generally speaking, their women are reportedly called *Pushpakathi* or *Pushpini*, and sometimes *Aatheramma*. Men add *Unni* to their names, while women add Amma or Devi, it seems.

Houses where teaching takes place are called mathams, while others are simply referred to as houses, reportedly.

However, it’s uncertain whether these naming conventions for names and houses apply to all.

In old Malabar, it was like this:

Some of their homes were called *Poomatham*. Their women, known as *Pushpini* or *Brahmani*, played a central role in the *thalikettu* ceremony for *Nair* girls.

Their traditional claim is that they are descendants of a Brahmin woman.

The story behind this claim is that this woman either tainted a Brahmin spiritual ritual or was suspected of lacking moral purity. Regardless, the key point is that she was a Brahmin woman, which is the most advantageous detail.

If their traditional narrative were that they descended from a highly virtuous lower-caste woman, their story would have ended there.

In old Malabar, they were patrilineal in some places and matrilineal in others, reportedly. Although their marriage customs resembled those of Brahmins, widowed women could form **sambandham** relationships with either Brahmins or men from their own community.

Now, let’s consider Travancore. Today, Travancore is intertwined with Malabar, but before English rule was established in Malabar, Travancore might have felt as distant to Malabaris as Gujarat does today.

Nevertheless, in both regions, *Namboodiris* held the highest social rank. The local feudal language was designed to place *Namboodiris* at the top of the social structure.

As mentioned, the **Travancore State Manual** collectively defines *Nambissan*, *Pushpakan*, *Pooppalli*, and *Brahmani* as *Unni* or *Pushpakan*.

Their claim also points to a Brahmin lineage connection.

In Alleppey’s Karthikappalli taluk, those living south of Evoor are called *Pooppalli*, it seems. They swept the innermost parts of the temple, collected flowers, made garlands, and cleaned ritual vessels. Since these tasks were performed inside temples inaccessible to lower castes, they faced no dishonour in the language codes.

In five-star hotels, students of hotel management perform tasks deemed low in feudal language codes without issue, as these are spaces exclusive to high-status individuals. However, if such tasks were done outside by

others, hotel management students doing them would be seen as degrading, much like this situation.

At the time the **Travancore State Manual** was written (c.1900), those known as *Nambi*, *Nambiar*, and *Nambissan* among the *Ambalavasis* reportedly had no temple duties in Travancore. They performed such tasks in earlier times, it seems.

However, the **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 author notes that these groups performed such duties in Cochin and Malabar. It's unclear where the author got this information. Meanwhile, in Travancore, they reportedly ran gymnasiums, training centres for physical exercises, taught swordsmanship, and engaged in similar activities.

How these *Ambalavasi* groups gained training and expertise in martial arts is worth considering.

The duties of *Brahmani* or *Daivampadi Ambalavasis* reportedly included singing at *Nair* wedding ceremonies and performing Brahmin spiritual rituals. In other words, they carried out *Namboodiri* tasks. This can be likened to a lower-ranking official signing files on behalf of an officer.

All *Pushpakan* subgroups reportedly followed many Brahmin customs, rituals, and practices in their lives. They conducted the first hair-cutting ceremony (*choulam*) for children as per custom. However, they did not have an *Upanayanam* like Brahmins. Still, between the ages of eight and sixteen, they held a ceremony and wore the sacred thread. They were permitted to chant the *Gayatri mantra* ten times in the morning, noon, and evening.

If their women were divorced, their second husband had to be a *Namboodiri* Brahmin.

Although their caste governance was under *Namboodiri* priests, the *Brahmani* individuals among them had *Ilayathu* as their priests.

Their favourite pastime was *Ammanattam*, a game involving throwing and catching smooth, polished metal balls (like marbles) upward. Their second favourite was *Kaikottikali*, a dance that also requires skill and practice, it seems.

Before concluding about the *Pushpakan Ambalavasis*, let me add this:

Over countless centuries, various communities may have been assigned and established at their level. Relishing the prestige and sweetness of their status, they likely progressed through the ages.

Bowing to those above and suppressing those below with words and actions, they likely strove daily for a comfortable life. Gradually, *Namboodiri* blood mixed with theirs, reducing the share of their original ancestral lineage. This blending likely became a source of great pride and a cherished claim for them.

26. The Chakyars

Next, let’s discuss the *Chakyars*. The **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 provides several details about them, while the **Malabar Manual** only briefly mentions them. However, **Malabar and Anjengo** dedicates a few more words to them.

The **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 presents a traditional narrative about the *Chakyars* that slightly differs from the one in **Malabar and Anjengo**. Still, the core essence of both accounts is the same.

Since the *Chakyars*’ traditional occupation is tied to *Namboodiri* systems, they likely held similar relevance, albeit modest, in both Malabar and Travancore. Their recorded traditional role involves performing koodiyattam and *Koothu* in temples during special occasions like festivals.

In *Chakyar Koothu*, stories from puranas and epics are narrated and elaborated in an entertaining manner. I’ll discuss this further in the next chapter. In **Malabar and Anjengo**, the phrase 'it is said' is used when describing this, suggesting that the writer or writers of that text likely did not witness *Koothu* firsthand.

However, note that the title **Malabar and Anjengo** includes 'Anjengo' (Anchuthengu). This means that, while the text is about Malabar, it also covers matters related to Anjengo, an English-administered area in Travancore. Thus, the text is not solely influenced by Malabar’s traditions.

Additionally, [Native Life in Travancore](#) (published in 1883) states that Travancore had 1,414 *Pushpakans* and 2,730 Waryars. If so, the number of *Chakyars* in that kingdom was likely between one and two thousand. It’s hard to believe that all adult *Chakyar* men earned a living solely by performing *Koothu* in temples. I feel that only a few of them likely did so, while it’s unclear how the others sustained their daily lives.

Both the **Malabar Manual** and **Malabar and Anjengo** suggest consulting the Travancore Census Reports of 1874–75 and 1901 for more details about the *Chakyars* and their activities. There seems to be something amiss here. Travancore was a kingdom where *Namboodiris* held significant power and respect, while in Malabar, their high status was beginning to wane.

Both **Travancore State Manual** and **Malabar and Anjengo** refer to *Chakyars* as Slaghya Vakkukar or Slaghya Kulakkar. It’s unclear whether the latter text is simply echoing Travancore’s information on this matter.

A key point to highlight is that, in those times, only *Namboodiris* and *Nairs* were permitted to watch, listen to, and enjoy *Chakyar Koothu*. It feels somewhat misguided for people in Malabar and Travancore today to claim these as part of their ancient heritage.

It seems that *Chakyar Koothu* was not a widespread practice in Malabar’s temples, though I’m not certain.

Regarding the origin of the *Chakyars*, **Malabar and Anjengo** states the following: If a *Namboodiri* woman is found to have committed adultery, her sons who wear the sacred thread become *Chakyars*. Her sons who do not wear the sacred thread are known as *Chakyar Nambiars*, a different caste. Girls born to her after the adultery is discovered join either the *Chakyar* or *Chakyar Nambiar* caste, depending on their choice.

Chakyar women are known as Illodiyammas, while women of the *Chakyar Nambiar* caste are called Nangiyammas.

Chakyars may marry Nangiyammas, but *Chakyar Nambiars* are not permitted to marry Illodiyammas. This suggests some form of hierarchy between the two groups.

In *Chakyar Koothu*, *Chakyar Nambiars* and Nangiyammas seem to play a secondary role.

During *Chakyar Koothu*, a *Chakyar Nambiar* plays the mizhavu, a copper drum, while a Nangiyamma plays the ilathalam or cymbals.

Nangiyammas also perform a distinct art form called Nangiyar *Koothu*.

Now, let’s consider what’s found in the **Travancore State Manual**. It states that *Chakyars* are descendants of a *Namboodiri* Brahmin woman who committed sexual offenses long ago. The 'sexual offense' refers to engaging in relations with men from forbidden castes.

The 1901 Cochin Census Report reportedly tells a story: *Chakyars* are said to be Sutha caste foreigners. The Sutha caste is believed to descend from children born to a *Kshatriya* man and a Brahmin woman.

When the lineage of Sutha caste migrants in the Malabar-Travancore region was dying out, a child was born to one of their women through a relationship with a man from another caste. Before the adultery was discovered, the child was integrated into the family. Once the truth came to light, the child and their descendants were declared a separate caste—the *Chakyars*.

Whatever the traditional story or the misdeeds of their ancestors, it doesn't matter. The only crucial point is that they have a Brahmin connection.

Moreover, sexual misconduct is considered a grave offense only in *pratiloma* relationships—when a woman from a higher caste engages with a man from a lower caste. There's a feeling that this unspoken taboo still lingers like a shadow in the minds of many women who speak feudal languages today. They show subservience to higher-status individuals while feeling disdain or repulsion toward those of lower status.

The **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 elaborates extensively on *Chakyar Koothu*. Based on that, I plan to write more about it in the next chapter.

27. Those Who Infiltrated and Inserted Their Own Selfish Interests and Ideas

I intend to write a bit more extensively about *Chakyar Koothu* now. I note here that the information I am about to record is sourced from **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2. In other words, I am stating that I had no prior knowledge of these details before this.

Let me now share a few things about the **Travancore State Manual**. I read Vol. 1 several years ago and even wrote a commentary on it. It was from this experience that my interest in reading old texts from South Asia, particularly those written during the English colonial period, was sparked.

When I read **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 1 back then, it seems I didn't notice that the work had continuations in Vol. 2 and Vol. 3. I also wrote a fairly substantial article on the rather substandard Wikipedia page for the **Travancore State Manual** and its author, V. Nagam Aiya, making corrections and additions while retaining some of the existing information.

It was only recently that I had the chance to see Vol. 2 and read certain sections of it. One immediate impression was that many writings in Vol. 2 differ in tone and ideas from those in Vol. 1. It is quite clear that the author of Vol. 1 held great admiration for English movements. However, in Vol. 2, there are several instances where the perspective is quite the opposite, displaying a devotion to Hindu culture and a competitive attitude towards English movements.

Moreover, in Vol. 1, Malabar is presented as a distinct region from Travancore, and British-India is described as a nation forged by unifying numerous small, insignificant regions—around 2,000 in number—across the subcontinent, with Travancore lying outside this framework.

In contrast, Vol. 2 seems to entertain the notion of a grand Indian empire and suggests that, apart from Christians, Muslims, and others, everyone else falls under a single religious group subordinate to Brahmins. There's a suspicion that such a perspective exists.

Additionally, Vol. 2 contains phrases implying that Travancore and Cochin are part of Malabar. I recall that the concept of the Malabar Coast was prevalent among European maritime traders and some English writers. However, within Malabar itself, it was very clear that Malabar was a distinct region, separate from the areas of Cochin and Travancore. The people of Malabar were also distinct from those of Travancore.

This understanding likely prevailed among local inhabitants as well. Yet, as Malabar became British Malabar and various foreign regions in South Asia gradually transformed into British-India over time, a mindset seems to have developed among Travancoreans that they, too, were Malabarians and, by extension, Indians.

As much as possible, Travancoreans sought to align themselves with British-India. Members of the royal family and others with financial means may have been keen to study in British-India or even settle in England if they could.

For the king and royal family members, confined within their palace walls, isolated from the public and public roads, the monotony of such a secluded life could only be escaped by venturing into British-India. There, they could walk through bustling streets like ordinary people, sip tea at roadside hotels, and so on.

Before the English flag was established in Madras, Travancore's kings could hardly travel to nearby regions. For instance, King Rama Varma of Travancore required an escort from the English Company's army to make a pilgrimage to Rameswaram.

What I've been discussing here pertains to the mindset of some of the writers of **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2. The text even appears to defend the merits of the caste system in this peninsula.

Having glanced through several texts written during the English colonial period, both briefly and in depth, one thing has struck me. Many of these works are not solely the creation of the author credited with writing them. Rather, multiple individuals seem to have contributed to their composition.

For example, works like **Travancore State Manual**, **Malabar Manual**, *Castes & Tribes of Southern India*, *Omens & Superstitions of*

Southern India, and Malabar & Anjengo show, in certain sections, ideas that either contradict or slightly deviate from those expressed earlier in the same text. This suggests a change in authorship.

I have a feeling that the Wikipedia entry on the **Travancore State Manual** omits or misrepresents several details. What I wrote on that page was based solely on insights from reading Vol. 1. There's no mention of Vol. 2 or Vol. 3 at all.

I didn't intend to elaborate on these points at such length. But since they've been written, I won't discard them.

In the next piece, I plan to write more extensively about *Chakyar Koothu*.

28. Chakyar Koothu

The details about *Chakyar Koothu* to be written here are drawn from **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2. Thus, it should be understood that they pertain specifically to Travancore.

Although the author uses the term Malabar, it seems likely that it was employed to assert some claim over British Malabar. The affairs of Malabar were likely quite different in many ways. Nevertheless, *Chakyar Koothu* may have been performed in Brahmin temples in Malabar as well.

As *Chakyar Koothu* is an art form performed exclusively within temple premises, it is indeed a religious ritual. It is never conducted outside the temple.

Chakyar Koothu involves presenting tales of epic heroes from Brahminical Puranas in a semi-dramatic style, evoking great delight among the audience. **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 clearly specifies who the audience is: 'audience (Brahmins and *Sudras*).' Here, *Sudras* refers to *Nairs*. Brahmins and *Sudras*! One might liken them to IAS officers and peons, so to speak.

Sudras, or *Nairs*, were typically regarded as commoners. Those of lower castes below them had no connection whatsoever with this art form.

In northern Travancore, *Chakyar Koothu* was apparently an integral part of all temple festivals. However, no explanation is provided for why it was less prevalent in the temples of southern Travancore.

Chakyar Koothu typically begins at 2 p.m. and concludes around 5 p.m. For *Namboodiris*, it was reportedly a source of great joy. This is hardly surprising. Until the English movement raised its flag in this peninsula, the world of knowledge and entertainment for *Namboodiris*, and many others, was likely quite limited—a stark reality. Evidence to the contrary might be a collection of isolated incidents from centuries past, pieced together and presented as a whole.

Middle-aged and elderly *Namboodiris*, temple functionaries, and *Nairs* likely found mental solace in watching and enjoying *Chakyar Koothu*. What else could they do?

After the morning temple rituals and a sumptuous feast for the guests, the deity is carried in a procession around the temple's circumambulatory path and returned to the sanctum sanctorum. Following this, a serene and tranquil atmosphere prevails in the temple for about three to four hours. This is when *Chakyar Koothu* is performed.

The *Chakyar*, typically a middle-aged man with profound knowledge of Sanskrit and Malayalam, conducts the performance. The subject matter is usually a story or episode from the Ramayana or Mahabharata. This could include Rama's birth, his marriage to Sita (Janaka's daughter), Hanuman meeting Sita in Lanka and setting the city ablaze, Draupadi's swayamvara, the abduction of Subhadra, Yudhishtira's Rajasuya Yagna, and other such tales brought to life in *Chakyar Koothu*.

The author of **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 mentions the most talented *Chakyar* he witnessed, who claimed to have memorised around 15,000 Sanskrit verses. This individual was exceptionally gifted, capable of instantly adapting his expressions and words to suit the audience's mood. For three to four hours without pause, he could captivate and enchant listeners as if by magic.

To stage the *Koothu*, temples have a dedicated structure called the Koothambalam. In some temples, this is an elaborately decorated building showcasing remarkable architectural artistry.

The author of **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 describes the most beautiful Koothambalam in Travancore: 52 feet long and 38 feet wide, with a raised platform (prasangamandapam) at its centre. This platform, a square measuring 14 feet by 14 feet, is supported by large pillars. The platform is framed with wooden panels adorned with meticulously crafted artwork.

Scenes from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and other Puranas are depicted in these carvings. Vishnu is shown travelling atop his beloved vehicle, Garuda. Elsewhere, Brahma rides his swan, and Parameshwara, atop his bull Nandi, blesses devotees. Shasta is depicted on a tiger in another scene.

Serpents, swans, boars, and other animals are carved into the beams above the platform. Scenes like Mahishasuramardini, Narasimha, Dhanvantari, and Darika's slaying are skillfully etched.

Episodes from the Bhagavata, from Devaki's marriage to Vasudeva to the slaying of Kamsa, are beautifully carved on the panels on both sides. Krishna's playful antics are also depicted, including his birth, his secret transfer to Nanda's home at night, Putana's salvation, the subduing of Kaliya, the slaying of Aghasura, Devaki and Vasudeva's imprisonment, Krishna's romantic dalliances with cowherd girls, stealing butter and ghee, lifting the Govardhana hill, and his bond with Kubja.

Additionally, Anantashayanam and Vishnu's ten avatars are fully represented. In the centre is a large figure of Brahma, along with the eight guardians of the directions (Ashtadikpalakas). The pillars feature exquisitely crafted figures of gods and goddesses.

At the centre of this elevated platform, the *Chakyar* sits on a wooden throne, performing his *Koothu*. He wears a deep red headgear with a hint of blue and a golden waistband with intricate silk patterns, making it highly striking.

To the *Chakyar*'s right sits his beautiful wife, known as the *Nangiar*. She wears a simple, pristine white garment with her hair tied in front. The *Nangiar* plays the cymbals (elathalam). Her presence is mandatory and essential for all *Koothu* performances. Even if the *Chakyar*'s jokes elicit uproarious laughter from the audience, the *Nangiar* remains expressionless, not uttering a sound until the performance concludes.

Behind the *Chakyar* sits the drummer, playing the mizhavu. The drum sounds approximately every 15 minutes.

At times, the *Chakyar* may subject the elite audience to sharp, biting satire, but only if he is certain that those in authority seated in the front row are tolerant of such criticism.

Though he tells jokes and humorous anecdotes, the *Chakyar* reportedly avoids vulgarities, obscene references, or anything distasteful or offensive.

However, rather than criticising, the *Chakyar* prefers to identify and praise the virtues and excellence of individuals, never hesitating to commend them when found.

The author of **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 notes that the *Chakyar* was paid three rupees and a quarter anna, which was not a large sum at the time. This payment came from one of the audience members, while others enjoyed the performance for free.

During festival seasons, *Chakyar Koothu* was performed in most Brahmin temples in Travancore. These festivals often lasted several days.

It is understood that below the *Nairs* in Travancore were numerous communities who today unhesitatingly claim to be Hindus and assert that the stories from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavata, as well as Sanskrit verses, are part of their heritage.

Another point is that the *Chakyar*'s preference for identifying and praising the virtues of the elite is thought-provoking and worthy of deeper reflection.

29. Chakyar Nambiar

The temple functionaries (*Ambalavasikal*) are listed here as per the following hierarchy. However, slight variations in this hierarchy can be observed in the old English texts mentioned multiple times in this writing, as well as in other online sources. There may be clear reasons for this. In particular, determining who holds precedence often seems to have been a tangled issue.

<i>Moothathu</i>	<i>Adikal</i>
<i>Pushpakan</i>	<i>Pisharadi</i>
<i>Nambissan</i>	<i>Marar</i>
Theeyattunni	<i>Varier</i>
<i>Chakyar</i>	Poduval
<i>Nambiar</i>	

Having already discussed *Chakyars*, it is now necessary to address *Nambiars*, as the term *Nambiar* is sometimes conflated with *Chakyars* in certain contexts.

During the English rule, the bureaucratic system established in British-India had only a limited number of officer-grade positions. However, when British-India was handed over to Hindi speakers, and those Hindi speakers began annexing neighbouring independent states, the bureaucratic system of the newly formed India evolved largely in alignment with the tug-of-war among regional feudal languages.

For instance, between clearly defined positions like Director and District-Level Officer, roles such as Deputy Director, Joint Director, Deputy Joint Director, Assistant Director, Deputy Assistant Director, Additional Director, and Additional Joint Director were inserted, creating a plethora of new bureaucratic titles slotted in between, alongside, and around existing ones.

This is because language carries a feudal character. Securing titles like Director, Director General, or Inspector General alongside one’s designation was akin to establishing a Brahminical connection in earlier times. Whether all the aforementioned official positions still exist is unclear. They are merely titles that came to mind to illustrate the point here.

This preamble sets the stage for discussing *Nambiars*. According to **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2, there are four types of *Nambiars*.

The first is the true *Nambiar*, also known as *Chakyar Nambiar*. These were already mentioned in the section on *Chakyars*.

The second type is *Theeyattu Nambiars*, meaning *Theeyattunnis*.

The third is *Nair Nambiars*.

The fourth is Pushpaka *Nambiars*, who are apparently the *Pushpakans* mentioned earlier.

Of these, the *Chakyar Nambiars*, listed first among the three, are the focus here. They are said to wear the sacred thread (*poonool*). However, a Wikipedia entry claims they do not. The truth remains unclear.

Theeyattu Nambiars are temple functionaries but do not wear the sacred thread. They will be discussed in upcoming sections.

Nair Nambiars, it seems, are *Nairs*. They do not wear the sacred thread and have no connection to temple activities. They are not temple functionaries.

The true *Nambiars* are the *Chakyar Nambiars*, as mentioned in the section on *Chakyars*. The primary difference between them and *Chakyars* lies in cases where a mother’s illicit sexual relationship becomes public before her son’s *Upanayana* (sacred thread ceremony). If such a scandal emerges, the son cannot undergo the *Upanayana* and thus lives as a *Chakyar Nambiar*. If the mother’s misconduct comes to light after the *Upanayana*, there is no significant issue, as the sacred thread cannot be revoked. The son remains a *Chakyar*, performing in Koothambalams.

The other son, as a *Chakyar Nambiar*, plays the mizhavu (drum) in *Chakyar Koothu*, supporting the *Chakyar*, and lives as such. It can be inferred that their children also live as *Nambiars*. Otherwise, it would absurdly suggest that this caste persists only through the illicit actions of *Illotammas* (*Chakyar* women).

Nevertheless, lower communities view even these *Nambiars* as superior. Consequently, many from lower strata likely found it highly desirable to append the term *Nambiar* to their names.

If an IPS officer demands it, a police constable must fetch water, fill a bucket, and carry it to him—a reality. However, this does not mean a lorry driver would view the constable as equivalent to his vehicle’s cleaner. The lorry driver would aspire to make his son at least a police constable, because the water is fetched for an IPS officer, not for someone like himself, a commercial vehicle driver.

As previously noted, *Nambiar* women are known as *Nangiar* or *Nangiaramma*. This is a significant distinction. It shields them from the profound dishonour of being addressed merely by name by lower communities. A single word creates a formidable social shield. An Englishman would scarcely comprehend its power.

Nangiaramma girls form marital or relational ties with men of their own caste, *Namboodiris*, *Thirumulpads*, or *Chakyars*. Some have described these social arrangements as evidence of the great personal freedom enjoyed by Malayali women in those times.

This seems like nonsense. Such relational freedoms were not truly freedoms but rather stripped these girls or women of stability and mental security in life. However, fearing the verbal weapons of the terrifying lower communities, they had no choice but to conform to social norms. Losing their grip on social status would mean falling straight into the hands of these lower communities, whose verbal assaults were what *Nangiarammas* feared most.

Thus, a relationship it must be. They had to comply.

The light of true personal freedom was shone from afar by the English movement, which braved fierce storms in small sailing ships to reach the Malabar coast. It was not the intricately carved Koothambalams or the tales from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, or Bhagavata that brought this light.

I cannot help but recall those who, with no connection to this land, selflessly crafted written laws, regulations, and transparent, honest administrative systems for its people and society. Many of them fell wounded on this soil. Few today are inclined to acknowledge their sacrifices or appreciate the moral calibre of their minds.

*Nangiar*s’ marital ornament is reportedly the *Pollathali* (transliteration—uncertain if correct). They also wear ornaments like *yantram* and *kuzhal* around their necks.

Chakyars and *Nambiars* (*Chakyar Nambiars*) eat together. However, their women—*Illotammas* and *Nangiar*s—do not. This hierarchy of disgust, embedded in linguistic codes and interactions with others, becomes apparent upon closer inspection.

It’s akin to an IPS officer and a Sub-Inspector eating together, but the IPS officer’s wife refusing to dine with the Sub-Inspector’s wife.

If an *Agnihotri Namboodiri* dies, the *Nangiar* must perform a ritual called Chandalakoothu (transliteration—uncertain if correct) during the cremation.

In *Chakyar Koothu*, the *Nambiar* sits behind the *Chakyar*, playing the mizhavu. Meanwhile, the *Nangiar* signals the passage of time by striking the elathalam (cymbals) approximately every 15 minutes.

On certain occasions, the *Nangiar* performs and enacts the story of Lord Krishna in the Koothambalam, known as *Nangiar Koothu*. Today, due to a lack of audiences to appreciate such arts, this is performed only as a ritual in some family temples striving to preserve their traditional glory.

The issue lies in linguistic codes. In the past, performing such acts publicly affirmed one’s elevated social status. Not just *Nangiar*s, but others too, were willing to undertake actions that ensured social respect and the subservience of lower communities. Maintaining these practices solely for tradition and ritual, without the accompanying respect and subservience, is indeed challenging.

It must be clarified that *Nair Nambiars* are distinct from these groups. They are *Nairs* and not temple functionaries.

30. Theeyattunnis and Nambissans

Let me now discuss *Theeyattunnis*, or *Theeyattu Nambiars*.

They were reportedly Brahmins originally. However, due to the perceived low status of their profession, they were relegated to the category of temple functionaries (*Ambalavasikal*). The low status likely stems from their involvement in rituals at Bhadrakali temples.

This suggests that Bhadrakali worship might not be part of Vedic Hinduism or the epic-based Hinduism that evolved thousands of years later. It seems possible that Bhadrakali worship is a spiritual concept that infiltrated regional spiritual movements from the traditions of non-Brahmin communities.

It also feels plausible that Bhadrakali worship could be a shamanistic practice. This is because the use of meat, which is forbidden for Brahmins, and possibly liquor, seems to be part of its rituals. However, I have no clear information on these matters.

Theeyattunnis can undergo the *Upanayana* ceremony and wear the sacred thread (*poonool*).

It is said that, after slaying Darikasura, Shiva, disturbed by Bhadrakali's fierce form, asked one of his followers to sing hymns to please and pacify her. The descendants of this follower are said to be the *Theeyattunnis*, or so they claim.

Their ritual is called *thellippodi*, understood to be Bhadrakali *thellippodi*. *thellippodi* likely refers to a dance involving fire. They throw *thellippodi* (powdered resin from the thelli tree) into the flames of a burning torch, causing the fire and sparks to flare up dramatically. This act is an integral part of *thellippodi*.

In ancient times, during outbreaks of epidemics like smallpox, Bhadrakali *thellippodi* was reportedly performed to ward off the disease, protect against it, and cure it. It may also have been conducted to avert the evil eye, counteract malevolent forces, and appease Bhadrakali to protect the households of Brahmins and *Kshatriyas*.

An essential component of *thellippodi* is *kalamezhuthu* (ritual floor drawing). Using five different coloured powders, figures of deities are drawn on the ground with fingers.

Theeyattunnis follow the *makkathayam* (patrilineal) family system. Widows are permitted to form relationships with Brahmins but not with men of their own caste.

Men add *Unni* to their names, while women add Amma or sometimes Antharjanam. Their homes are called *madom* or *illam*.

In the darkness of a temple at night, with flames and sparks soaring from a burning torch, the lower communities likely viewed these ritual performers with awe and reverence. Moreover, their reputed ability to protect the households of the elite from epidemics caused by divine wrath was likely a significant matter. Additionally, they wear the sacred thread.

In **Malabar and Anjengo**, their performance is referred to as *Theyyattam*, while **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 calls it *thellippodi*. It's unclear if this slight difference is significant. The former pertains to Malabar, the latter to Travancore.

Nambissans

Nambissans are engaged in professions similar to those of *Pushpakans*. Some traditionally followed the *makkathayam* (patrilineal) system, while others followed the *marumakkathayam* (matrilineal) system. This suggests that people from two distinct traditions may have been classified as *Nambissans*. In the past, just as people today strive to secure various government positions, different communities likely competed to secure roles under the Brahminical system.

Nambissans wear the sacred thread. Men append *Nambissan* to their names, while women traditionally added *Brahminiamma*. Nowadays, women also add *Nambissan* to their names. Women have the additional role of singing devotional songs to serve the deity, known as *Brahminipattukal* (Brahmini songs).

According to **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2, *Nambissans* in Travancore ran gymnasiums, physical training centres, taught swordsmanship (*valppayattu*), and engaged in similar activities.

How these temple functionaries acquired training and expertise in martial arts is a matter of curiosity.

31. About Variers

There are still several temple functionary castes to mention. Differences are evident between those in Malabar and those in Travancore. Moreover, many of these groups have multiple sub-divisions. Some are not on friendly terms with others, to the extent that they do not permit intermarriage. Some follow the *makkathayam* (patrilineal) system, while others follow the *marumakkathayam* (matrilineal) system.

Looking back, it seems each group joined specific official occupations long ago. Regardless of the nature of their work, as it was under the authority of *Namboodiris*, lower communities showed subservience to them. Thus, these groups were positioned as superior castes.

In the 1990s, when the Panchayati Raj system was implemented and elected panchayat committees were established, I noticed a position called Sweeper in panchayats. In many rural panchayats, this individual was regarded as a respected official. Though the job title in Malayalam translates to someone who sweeps, many ordinary people were unaware of what Sweeper *saar* actually did. These sweepers outsourced the actual sweeping to contract workers from outside. The idea of a government official sweeping was unthinkable in Malayalam and other feudal languages. *saar* sweeping? Disgusting! Such are the feudal linguistic codes. The person and their kin, along with the government institution, would be disgraced.

As generations pass, these groups, positioned under *Namboodiris*, likely became established as elite castes.

I will now briefly mention *Variers* and *Marars*, two temple functionary groups, to conclude the discussion on *Ambalavasikal*.

Though *Variers* exist in both Travancore and Malabar, there are significant differences between the two. However, since they share the same occupational title, and as Malabar and Travancore have merged, the intricate distinctions between sub-groups may no longer serve any purpose. Sub-castes that once maintained subtle but precise distinctions may now, in the eyes and knowledge of others, have coalesced into a single *Varier* community.

According to the **Malabar Manual**, *Variers* in Malabar follow the *marumakkathayam* system.

They are traditionally devotees of Shiva, and their homes are called varyam. Their hereditary occupation is sweeping or cleaning temple premises. The title *Varier* is said to derive from the word *varuka* (to sweep). They also had responsibilities in certain post-funeral rituals.

Lower communities are required to address *Varier* women respectfully as *Varasyar*.

During the English rule, many *Variers* reportedly pursued English education. The author of **Malabar and Anjengo** notes that they were generally progressive. However, the same text cites the 1901 Travancore Census Report, which records eight sub-divisions among *Variers* in Travancore, a distinction not found among Malabar *Variers*. This highlights the differences between groups sharing the same name in the two regions.

It should be understood that occupational titles were assigned to those working under *Namboodiris*, but these groups did not necessarily share the same ethnic heritage.

In British Malabar, some *Varier* families were prominent landlords and local authorities.

In Travancore, matters are recorded as highly complex. There are reportedly around five different origin myths, each claiming Brahminical or even divine connections. I do not intend to detail them here, as it would require extensive writing, and I’m unsure if readers have the patience for it.

In Venad, or Travancore, four groups of *Variers* were associated with four regions: *Onattukara Varier*, *Thekkumkoor Varier*, *Vadakkumkoor Varier*, and *Ilayadattunad Varier*. Additionally, there were *Adattinni Varier*, *Adattinnad Varier*, *Padippura Varier*, and *Chelayil Kudiya Varier* (transliteration errors may exist due to English sources; please note).

The emergence of these sub-divisions likely stems from minor events in society or the workplace, leading to slight changes in status, titles, or

social respect. Alternatively, they may have originated from distinct ancestral lineages.

The desperation to cling to elite statuses like IAS or IPS, rather than falling to the level of an ordinary person, mirrors the linguistic environment where even a peon's plight is pitiable.

Though *Variers* are not permitted *Upanayana* or the sacred thread, they have adopted similar practices. At age sixteen, a young *Varier* undergoes a ritual called *Shiva Deeksha*. Dressed like a traditional Brahmin, adorned with *vibhuti* and *rudraksha* symbolising Shiva devotion, the youth takes seven steps northward, mimicking a Brahmin *brahmachari* seeking alms. This qualifies him to become a householder.

Onattukara Variers in Travancore are not *marumakkathayam*, but others are.

Among *marumakkathayam Variers*, two marriage systems existed: *sambandham*, a non-permanent relationship, and *kudivaikkal* (possibly *kudivekkal*), akin to conventional marriage today.

Until some time ago, younger *Namboodiris* oversaw the spiritual affairs of Travancore *Variers*. However, by the time **Travancore State Manual** was written, the two groups were reportedly bitter enemies. The reason is unclear.

Many Travancore *Variers* were reputedly highly learned in astrology and Sanskrit, often employed to teach Sanskrit in elite households.

Today, as Brahmin temples are no longer exclusively Brahmin, defining their hereditary occupation has become problematic. In the past, an Indian working in England or America, regardless of their job, was considered elite in India due to the pristine-English aura of those countries. Today, however, these regions are increasingly filled with feudal language speakers.

Moreover, any job performed there can now be instantly defined in words from India. If the job lacks an elevated definition in feudal linguistic terms, the individual, their family, and kin face disgrace.

This reflection was prompted by the Wikipedia page on *Variers*. Their hereditary occupation is misrepresented as preparing flowers and garlands for temples. This encroaches on the roles of *Nambissans* and *Pushpakans*, indicating a clear aversion to their own heritage.

Today, sweeping in temples is no longer necessarily a job under Brahmins; it may even fall under lower communities. Additionally, Brahmins no longer hold their former prestige.

Times have changed!

There seems to be a linguistic distinction between the servant of an IAS officer and the servant of that servant.

Readers may be aware of many renowned *Variers*. If it is loudly proclaimed that their heritage includes women touched by Brahmins—termed *Brahmasparsham*—it would confer great mental prestige. However, if people associate them with sweeping in temples run by lower communities, it creates a problem in linguistic codes.

Doing domestic work for an Indian household is not the same as for an Englishman's household in the past.

32. Marars

Let me now write about *Marars*. The terms *Maran* and *Marar* are both used, similar to how Theeyan and Theeyar are used. It feels like the difference between saying *oruthan* (low class single person) and *oruthar* (high class single person) in Malabar.

The details about *Marars* in the **Malabar Manual** and **Malabar and Anjengo** differ somewhat from those in **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2. Moreover, within Malabar itself, the details from North Malabar slightly vary from those in South Malabar.

This suggests that before British rule, these three regions—Malabar, Travancore, and others—had little connection, yet each had individuals under *Namboodiris* occupying the position of *Marar*. However, it seems unlikely that they all shared the same ethnic or ancestral heritage.

Let’s start with Malabar.

According to the **Malabar Manual**, *Marars* are temple cleaners and musicians who play instruments like *chenda*, *karumkuzhal* (black pipe), *thimila*, *idaykka*, and *dhamanam* (a type of kettle drum). They reportedly do not dine with other temple functionaries (*Ambalavasikal*) and follow the *marumakkathayam* (matrilineal) system. Some among them perform *punyahakarma* (purification rituals) for Brahmins.

Now, let’s look at **Malabar and Anjengo**.

It states that the caste status of *Marars* is difficult to define precisely. When numerous castes and sub-castes live in different regions, each claiming superiority or inferiority over others in various places, such hierarchical issues arise. To illustrate this simply: in one place, group a is above group c; in another, c is above b; and in a third, b is above a. When these groups converge in one region, significant conflicts can emerge. There’s much to say on this, but I won’t delve into it now.

The status of the group one works for can also influence local hierarchies.

All groups likely maintain myths, legends, and Puranic tales to minimise their perceived distance from the lofty *Namboodiris*.

Malabar and Anjengo notes that in Malabar, *Marars* have two sub-divisions, or possibly two distinct castes sharing the same name. The higher sub-group plays the *pani*, a percussion instrument combining *chenda* and *madhalam*, and claims to be the *chenda-Poduvals* of South Malabar.

The second group, called *Marayans*, was primarily in North Malabar during that time. They performed tasks like shaving and assisting in post-funeral rituals for *Nairs* and Brahmins. There’s also an opinion that South Malabar’s *Attikurrissi Nairs* might be the same as these *Marars*, but no online information about *Attikurrissi Nairs* was found.

In Chirakkal Taluk, Cannanore, there were reportedly seven distinct *Marayan* groups, who did not intermarry, likely due to their diverse ancestral origins.

Their *pula* (period of ritual impurity) lasts 15 days, suggesting they are not temple functionaries but likely *Sudras*.

Now, let’s turn to Travancore, as per **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2.

The manual occasionally uses Malabar instead of Travancore, implying a claim to being part of Malabar, as noted earlier.

Marars in Travancore are temple workers and *chenda* players, positioned at the lower rung of temple functionaries. However, due to their clean habits and abstention from meat, they are considered superior to *Sudras*. Meanwhile, *Sudras* explicitly assert their superiority over *Marars*, showing a competitive attitude. The two groups do not intermarry.

In Travancore, *Marars* have several sub-divisions, often named after the *Nair* communities they serve in rituals, such as *Ilayattu Maran* or *Karuvilattu Maran*. Others are named after their native places, like Kadakkal *Maran*, Karunattu *Maran*, or Thekkumkoor *Maran*.

Some sub-divisions are linked to occupational differences. *Asupani Marars* use instruments like *asu* and *pani*. *Adimittam Marars* sweep the temple courtyard. *Sikithan Marars* and *Attikkurichi Marars* work exclusively in *Namboodiri* rituals. Mangala *Marars* carry the *ashtamangalyam* in *Nair* marriage ceremonies. *Ochan Marars* were granted their title by the Travancore king as a mark of favour.

The true sub-divisions are:

Oru Nool Marar: The man who ties the *thali* (marriage pendant) is considered the true husband. If he is absent, the woman cannot marry another *Marar* but may marry a Brahmin or someone from a higher caste.

Iru Nool Marar: The man tying the *thali* need not be the husband, and the woman can take another *Marar* as a second husband.

3 & 4. *Cheppattu Marar* and *Kuzhangil Marar*: Originally one group, they later split into two.

Muttal Marar: Found only in Kalkulam Taluk.

Though it's said that all *Marar* groups abstain from meat and liquor, **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 clarifies that only those associated with temples adhered to this prohibition.

In marriage, family systems, and *pula*, *Marars* share similarities with *Nairs*. While they have their own priests, *Namboodiris* perform post-*pula* purification rituals.

Their presence is indispensable in post-funeral rituals of *Namboodiri*, *Kshatriya*, and temple functionary families, as well as in *Nair* birth and death-related purification ceremonies.

Some *Marars* serve as priests in Bhadrakali temples and engage in sorcery, witchcraft, and other occult practices.

33. About Kshatriyas

There are still many temple functionary (*Ambalavasikal*) groups left to discuss, but I've decided not to delve further into them.

Let's move on to other communities.

When I decided to write about South Asian history from an empathetic perspective on some day in 2016, I didn't envision this narrative taking this path. The history writing hasn't even begun yet.

If readers wonder why this writing is unfolding this way, the clear answer is that it aims to clarify whose history is being written. Defining people as South Asians, Indians, South Indians, Keralites, Malabaris, or Travancoreans lacks precision.

What I'm depicting is the scene observed when British rule arrived on this peninsula. Even in the relatively small region of Malabar, there were numerous communities intricately entangled with complex connections. The same was true in Travancore and Cochin. If this is the case, one can only imagine the overarching complexity of the entire peninsula.

The history I intend to write is that of these myriad, intricately intertwined communities—not a superficial history that glides over the outer shell of events by referencing vast geographical regions.

This writing seeks to enumerate and understand historical events by delicately touching and sensing the numerous communities and individuals within each region, along with the subtle threads binding them. It's not about hopping from one prominent historical figure or event to another, like stepping on rocks protruding from a stream. Instead, I aim to meticulously capture the people beneath these stepping stones—their mental states, experiences, and emotions.

Thus, it's essential to distinctly and clearly identify each community in this region. History flowed through them as well.

Having discussed temple functionaries, the next topic should be *Nairs*. However, I realize I haven't yet addressed *Kshatriyas*, who were positioned above temple functionaries.

Let's start with Malabar.

Namboodiris in Malabar claimed to be Brahmins and Aryans explicitly mentioned in Sanskrit literature. They believed their tradition embodied excellence, superiority, and prestige. They successfully imposed this belief as a doctrinal truth on the various communities beneath them.

If there are Brahmins, there must also be *Kshatriyas* in society—those who are kings.

Namboodiris and royal families mutually reinforced their status: 'You're a *Kshatriya*, I'm a Brahmin,' and vice versa. By publicly endorsing each other, they secured the respect and subservience of the communities beneath them, sharing this authority.

Royal families acknowledged the unquestionable spiritual superiority of Brahmins, while *Namboodiris* certified the *Kshatriya* lineage purity of royal families.

This might seem akin to IAS and IPS officers mutually affirming, 'I'm IAS, you're IPS,' to dominate the bureaucracy. However, in those times, such elevated statuses were more easily attained through the grand social cloak of heritage, not through civil service exams, which didn't exist.

This describes the general protocol. In the actual flow of historical events, this dynamic likely operated differently, adapting to specific circumstances and developments.

How *Namboodiris* claimed Brahminhood is unclear. As mentioned earlier, they themselves were divided into various groups.

Some Malabar royal families claimed to possess pure *Kshatriya* blood. Among them were those with a tradition of being foreign *Kshatriyas*.

The royal families of Kottayam near Tellicherry and Parappanad near Parappanangadi reportedly belonged to this group, with historical ties to Rajput blood. Their foreign origin likely contributed to a perception of distinct prestige.

Their bloodline was sought after by other Malabar royal families. Travancore's queens would respectfully invite men from the Parappanad family for procreation, suggesting that pure *Kshatriya* blood was considered holy in Travancore's royal family.

Travancore State Manual Vol. 2 supports this with details. Travancore's Kovil Thampurans were reportedly *Kshatriya* royal families from Malabar who migrated to Travancore long ago. This likely maintained ties with Malabar's *Kshatriya* families. To preserve their bloodline from non-*Kshatriya* influence, they undertook various coordinated efforts.

We'll address Travancore's context later.

Malabar and Anjengo elaborates further on Malabar. It hints that Malabar's *Kshatriya* royal families were unlikely to have pure *Kshatriya* blood. Evidence includes their practice of hypergamy—men marrying women from communities of lower blood status—suggesting they may be a mixed group.

Another point is that many *Kshatriya* families in those times were likely originally *Nairs* or *Samanthas*.

Moreover, **Malabar and Anjengo** questions how *Kshatriyas*, *Samanthas*, and *Nairs* could differ in bloodline, as all three eagerly sought to produce offspring with *Namboodiri* blood through their women, a common practice.

Royal families in Beypore, Parappanad, Kottayam, Kurumbranad, and Chirakkal claimed *Kshatriya* status.

However, Venkanad Nambidi of Kollangode is described as a *Samantha* with significant privileges, claiming *Kshatriya* status through adoption.

Punnathur Nambidi, who wears the sacred thread (*poonool*) and observes a 10-day *pula* (ritual impurity), is a military leader but likely a *Samantha*, per **Malabar and Anjengo**.

Samantha is a common caste title among Malabar's royal families. Families like *Nambiar*, *Unnithiri*, and *Adiyodi* in North Malabar, and *Nedunkadi*, *Vallodi*, *Eradi*, and *Thirumulpad* in South Malabar, are reportedly *Samanthas*.

Many *Nairs* reportedly rose to *Samantha* status, which I'll discuss later.

I've written about *Samanthas* earlier, so I won't expand further here.

The key difference between *Kshatriyas* and *Samanthas* is that *Kshatriyas* wear the sacred thread, while *Samanthas* do not.

Families claiming true *Kshatriya* status append *Raja* or *Thampuran* to their names.

In British Malabar, the *Raja* title was recognised by the British for the head of the **Zamorin** family in Calicut, the second-in-command of the **Zamorin** family, and heads of major royal families like Chirakkal, Kadathanad, Kottayam, Kurumbranad, Parappanad, Beypore, Valayanad, and Palghat. Other members of these families were recognised as *Thampuran*.

34. Malabar's Kshatriya Families and Their Connection to Travancore via Malayalam Language

Let's now turn to the *Kshatriya* families of Travancore. Before that, I'd like to clarify a point about Malabar's *Kshatriya* families for greater accuracy.

According to the 1881 census, Malabar had 362 *Puranattu* (foreign) *Kshatriyas*.

These *Puranattu* or Rajput *Kshatriya* families followed the *marumakkathayam* (matrilineal) system. Their men married women from families of lower caste status, resulting in a mixed bloodline.

However, their women produced offspring through two distinct methods. First, through relationships with men from *Kshatriya* families, who likely inherited *Kshatriya* status via their maternal line, as the men's offspring might be of mixed lineage and lack pure *Kshatriya* blood. Second, through relationships with Brahmin men of higher caste, resulting in children with Brahmin blood, which would also be present in their male offspring. This Brahmin blood would then enter the first pathway through these male offspring.

The reason these royal families strove to maintain prestige in their bloodline was the feudal nature of regional languages, where upholding an aura of divine superiority was essential.

A notable point is that when some *marumakkathaya Theeyars* in Tellicherry were exposed to high-quality English-language content, individuals emerged within this community—subordinate to Brahmins and *Kshatriyas*—who surpassed the prestige of Brahminhood and Kshatriyahood.

William Logan's **Malabar Manual** includes this statement:

*...it may be said in a general way that to a European eye the best favoured men and women to be found in the district are the inhabitants of ancient Kadattunad, Iruvalnad, and Kottayam, of whom a large proportion belong to the **Tiyan** or planting community.*

This illustrates how, with the rise of English-educated elites, the minds of those long suppressed as supordinates of upper castes could soar to great mental heights in an enabling environment.

Today, many ordinary Indians are trapped in a social abyss enforced by government *shipais*, perpetuated by government schools and regional-language education.

Now, let's move to Travancore.

In Travancore, with its Tamil linguistic heritage, the emergence of Malayalam influence is evident in its *Kshatriya* traditions. The **Travancore State Manual** refers to Travancore's *Kshatriyas* as *Malayala Kshatriyas*. Initially, I didn't think much of the term **Malayala**, but learning that it was an ancient name for Malabar might surprise readers.

These *Malayala Kshatriyas* are divided into three groups:

Kovil Thampurans

Rajas or Thampurans

Thampans or *Thirumulpads*

All three have significant ties to Malabar.

Kovil Thampurans are descendants of Malabar *Kshatriya* families who migrated to Travancore long ago. According to **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2, ten such families existed at the time of writing: Kilimanoor, Changanassery, Ananthapuram, Pallam, Chemprol, Gramam, Paliyakkara, Karam, Vadakkemadom, and one unnamed family.

The earliest to arrive were the Kilimanoor Kovil Thampurans. No records specify when they arrived.

During Queen Umayamma Rani's reign, Travancore's royal family adopted two princes and two princesses from the Puthiyapalli Kovilakam, a branch of the Kolathunad royal family in North Malabar, possibly linked to Parappanad in South Malabar. One princess from this group was married to a *Thampuran* from the same Malabar Kovilakam.

Their child, born in 1723, was Marthanda Varma, Travancore's most renowned king.

This means Marthanda Varma was entirely of Malabar descent through his bloodline, a fact I only recently learned.

The Kilimanoor Kovilakam is deeply tied to Travancore's royal family. A related story, to be detailed later, recounts how a Kilimanoor Kovil *Thampuran* sacrificed his life to protect Travancore's senior queen and prince from an assassination attempt. This act earned the Kilimanoor Kovilakam a prestigious position in Travancore's royal family. From *Unni Kerala Varma* to *Parvathi Bhayi Rani*, all subsequent heirs were descendants of Kilimanoor Kovil Thampurans, a source of great pride for the family.

These Kovil Thampurans represent Travancore's ancient *Kshatriya* families.

In the late 18th century, during Tipu Sultan's invasion of Malabar, many Malabar royal families fled to Travancore for safety. Among them was a branch of the Aliyakotta family, consisting of three men and five women. Travancore's then-king, *Raja Varma Maharaja*, granted them the *Neerazhikottaram*, seized from the Thekkumkoor ruler. As their numbers grew, some settled in other areas: Gramam in Mavelikkara, Pallam in (southern) Kottayam, and Paliyakkara in Thiruvalla.

Historical records may mention these families. Six Kovil *Thampuran* families were thus established in Changanassery, Ananthapuram, Pallam, Chemprol, Gramam, and Paliyakkara, all with Malabar ties.

In 1856, three more families—Cherukol, Karam, and Vadakkemattam—migrated from North Malabar to Travancore, also with Malabar connections.

These Kovil *Thampuran* families intermarried among themselves.

Their men married women from royal or *Nair* families, while their women married only *Namboodiri* men, as their offspring inherited family property and titles.

These families followed many *Namboodiri* customs, practising Brahminical rituals like *Jatakarma* (birth ceremony), *Namakarana* (naming), annaprashna (first feeding), and vidyarambha (initiation into learning). Their *Upanayana* (sacred thread ceremony) occurred at age sixteen.

The eldest son was invariably named *Raja Raja Varma*. Other boys received names like *Rama Varma*, *Kerala Varma*, *Ravi Varma*, *Udaya Varma*, or *Goda Varma*, with pet names like *Kuttan*, *Kunjunni*, *Kochappan*, or *Cherunni*. Women, addressed as *Thampurattis*, were named *Amba*, *Ambalika*, or *Ambika*, with pet names like *Ittiyengal*, *Kunjikkutty*, *Kochukunji*, *Kunjikkava*, *Ikkava*, or *Amma*.

The **Travancore State Manual** highlights that these families shared the high intellectual abilities prevalent in Malabar:

It may be added here that in a population so highly intellectual as that of the Malabar coast, the Koil Tampurans and Rajahs in it seem to possess almost a monopoly of brains and good manners, particularly so the few families of that class settled in Travancore.

If Malabar had been specified as British Malabar, the statement would have carried the weight of Malabar's then-prestige.

The manual proudly notes a young Kovil *Thampuran* earning an MA, a significant achievement at the time.

The author of **Travancore State Manual** couldn't foresee that within a few decades, BA and MA degrees would be distributed like movie tickets across the subcontinent.

35. About Travancore’s Royal Families

In discussing Travancore’s *Kshatriya* families, we now turn to the Raja families. Except for the royal families of Pandalam and Poonjar, all other Raja families in Travancore were bound by *pula* relationships. This means they were obligated to observe *pula* (ritual impurity) if a birth or death occurred in any of these families, indicating close kinship.

(**Pula** refers to the period of ritual impurity believed to affect relatives for a certain number of days following a death.)

According to **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2, published in 1906, seven distinct Raja families were known in Travancore at the time. Each was identified by the name of their place of residence: Mavelikkara, Ennakkad, Prayikkara, Mariyappally, Thiruvalla, Karthikappally, and Aranmula.

These seven families originated from Kolathunad in North Malabar. They migrated to Travancore during the periods of Hyder Ali’s and Tipu Sultan’s invasions of Malabar.

The first to arrive were members of the Puthiyapalli Kovilakam. As mentioned earlier, two princes and two princesses from this Kovilakam were adopted into Travancore’s royal family. This family initially settled in Karthikappally, but by 1854, all its members had passed away, and the family ceased to exist.

The next group to migrate came from Cheriya Kovilakam, between 1744 and 1754. They reportedly attempted to have their younger members adopted into Travancore’s royal family, but this was thwarted by the Palli Kovilakam in Aranmula.

The third wave of migrants arrived during Tipu Sultan’s invasion of Malabar in 1788, when many Malabar royal families sought refuge in Travancore. The Travancore royal family provided them with significant support. After peace was restored in Malabar, most returned, but some stayed.

A family from Chengal Kovilakam in Tellicherry settled permanently in Mavelikkara, residing together in a palace near Arattu Kadavu. Over time, minor disputes and differences arose among them, leading some to relocate to Ennakkad and others to Prayikkara, forming three distinct families.

The Mavelikkara family itself expanded into four branches: Vadakke Kottaram, Puthen Kottaram, Mannur Madathil Kottaram, and Thekke Kottaram, with the last reportedly becoming extinct.

The Mavelikkara family had strong ties with Travancore’s royal family. In 1875 and 1900, members adopted from this family became Travancore’s queens. They owned vast estates and received a pension from the Travancore state. Additionally, because their Malabar lands were ceded to British rule, the British Malabar administration provided them with a malikhana (a pension-like sum).

During Tipu’s invasion, faced with the choice of death or conversion to Islam, another Kolathunad family fled to Travancore and settled in Karthikappally. In 1778, for the same reason, a few men and three sisters from the same family also migrated to Travancore. One sister settled in Kottarakkara, and her descendants became the Kottarakkara royals. The other two sisters settled in Mariyappally and Thiruvalla, but disputes arose between these two families, and the Thiruvalla family became extinct by 1892.

These *Kshatriya* families from Malabar followed Brahminical customs, including the *Upanayana* (sacred thread ceremony). Four days after *Upanayana*, the *Samavartana* (completion of education) was performed, followed by training in martial arts.

They recited three sandhyanamam (daily prayers), along with the Panchakshara and Ashtakshara *mantras*, and chanted the Gayatri *mantra* ten times daily.

Girls underwent the *thalikettu* (marriage pendant ceremony) between ages seven and twelve, though it could occur after puberty without issue. The groom was typically from a Kovil *Thampuran* family and remained the girl’s lifelong partner. If the first husband died or left, another Kovil *Thampuran* (usually the first husband’s brother) was chosen, but this

was not termed a marriage; it was referred to as *koottu irikkuka* (living together).

Men married *Shudra* (*Nair*) women.

Like Kovil Thampurans, Raja families gave their children similar names: Raja Raja Varma for the eldest son, with others named Rama Varma, Kerala Varma, Ravi Varma, Udaya Varma, or Goda Varma, and pet names like Kuttan or Kunjunni. Women, addressed as Thampurattis, were named Amba, Ambalika, or Ambika, with pet names like Ittiyengal, Kunjikkutty, Kochukunji, Kunjikkava, Ikkava, or Amma.

In personal traits, Raja families resembled Kovil Thampurans. They were intellectually and educationally advanced, proficient in Sanskrit, and increasingly skilled in English. Mavelikkara's royal family established a special school for their children, with a Raja family member, a Madras University graduate, serving as headmaster for a time.

Two members of the Mavelikkara family earned M.A. and B.L. degrees. One served in the Madras Provincial Service of British India, while the other was an officer in Travancore's Educational Department.

36. The Kshatriya Lineage of the Travancore Royal Family

Among the *Kshatriya* families of Travancore, the next to be discussed are the Thampans and the *Thirumulpads*.

The term Thampan is believed to have originated from the contraction of the word *Thampuran*. It is thought that they were once a ruling class, with their central place being Vaikom.

The term *Thirumulpad* suggests those who managed the affairs of the king. It is said to refer to *Kshatriyas* who stood in reverence before the king, performing services. Thampans, it seems, were responsible for observing the rituals related to birth and death among the foreign or Malayali *Kshatriya* families in Travancore.

However, among the *Thirumulpads*, there were reportedly three or four groups who had no such ritualistic ties with the Malayali *Kshatriya* families. Nevertheless, they followed all the customs and ceremonies of the aforementioned Malayali *Kshatriyas*, albeit with slight variations.

While such details may seem insignificant today, they likely held significant social and official importance in the Travancore kingdom of that time.

I intend to write only this much about the Malayali *Kshatriyas* for now. However, one practice persisted among those who migrated to Travancore and the foreign *Kshatriyas* of Malabar: the use of similar names, coupled with the suffix Varma. This term Varma appears to have been used by certain royal families long ago. I do not know the origin of this word.

It should be understood that these terms carried more traditional weight than the modern practice of appending titles like IAS or IPS to names.

While writing about the diverse peoples of Malabar and Travancore, I initially lacked the inclination to focus deeply on the *Kshatriyas*. However, I now feel it was fortunate that I did not overlook them.

The reason is a lingering question about how elements of Malabar's traditional language became embedded in Travancore, which has Tamil traditions. Though various reasons are becoming clearer, I have now obtained clear information about the migration of the powerful group of Malayali *Kshatriyas* to Travancore.

Their migration undoubtedly brought elements of Malabar's language and, moreover, Sanskrit traditions to Travancore's spoken language.

Another question remains: why did Travancore's royal families extend significant support and facilities to foreign *Kshatriya* families? Without any prominent status, those who fled their lands and arrived would likely have faced, like migrant workers during today's lockdowns in various states, public indifference, severe hunger, and insecurity.

However, these *Kshatriyas* arrived with a valuable asset—a prestigious status—and, fortunately for them, Travancore's royal families were willing to accord great value to it.

It appears, as mentioned in **Native Life in Travancore**, that there were strong arguments asserting that the Travancore royal family was not of *Shudra* origin. They might have been of Tamil descent, or perhaps not directly linked to Brahmin culture, or even raised by *Shudra* families.

Additionally, royal families in smaller regions like Attingal and Quilon may have shared this perceived shortcoming—that their ancient lineage was neither Aryan, *Kshatriya*, nor Brahmin.

As years passed, Sanskrit language and its epic poetry likely spread across Travancore through Brahmins and those claiming to be Brahmins. As this Brahmin culture spread, the royal families of these regions found it increasingly essential to adopt a *Kshatriya* aura.

In earlier times, just as people became aware of qualifications like BAM, MBBS, or BHMS when local healers, allopathic compounders, or homoeopathic practitioners operated, the situation was similar. If someone practised without formal qualifications, they risked being labelled a fraud.

The matter of the *Kshatriya* 'degree' may have been similar. People might have struggled to accept someone as a king without it, even whispering in private that such a ruler was a 'fake king' with no royal

blood. In feudal languages, any lapse could bring down the king and dynasty.

It is evident that the Travancore royal family went to great lengths to prove that their kings and queens, ascending the throne, possessed indisputable, unassailable *Kshatriya* lineage.

To rule as king or queen, they would adopt children (princes and princesses) from recognised *Kshatriya* families. Furthermore, it seems they brought men (*Kshatriyas*) from reputed *Kshatriya* households to marry these adopted princesses, ensuring the birth of children.

Thus, those who ascended as the next king or queen were undoubtedly *Kshatriyas*, certified as such by local Brahmins without any hypocrisy.

It should also be noted that not only *Kshatriyas* but also *Namboodiri* and *Nair* families fled from Malabar to Travancore, at various levels of status.

Moreover, there was some form of caste distinction between the *Nairs* of North and South Malabar. However, upon arriving in Travancore, this distinction likely faded.

Another matter comes to mind.

There is information that conflicts and rivalries arose among the same Malayali *Kshatriya* individuals who migrated to Travancore. When people living harmoniously together find themselves among those using divisive language codes—whether beneath, above, or at the same level—they tend to fragment. This is significant information.

Even today, native English people in England lack this understanding. They live among those using feudal language, in a social environment fraught with great danger.

At the same time, another point arises. Even if disagreements or personal rivalries grow among the English, they rarely escalate beyond a certain intensity. However, among members of the same *Kshatriya* family, a disagreement can be understood as a lack of harmony.

When those who respectfully address each other as elder brother, elder sister, uncle, or aunt, and maintain subservience, fall out, their words can erupt explosively.

A single use of the pejorative *nee* (lowest you) is enough to erase respect. This unleashes a torrent of explosive terms like *poda* (keep away, idiot, male), *podu* (keep away, idiot, female), *eda* (pejorative you, male), *edu* (pejorative you, female), or even just the bare name. What follows is outright abuse. In Malabar, it might be 'poda, son of a dog,' while in Travancore, it could escalate to 'poda, son of a whore.'

37. Before Discussing the Nairs

I now intend to write about the *Nairs*. It is not yet clear which paths and sources of information this exploration will follow.

During the English administration in Malabar, the books written in this subcontinent—previously referenced multiple times in this writing—and my own private observations will likely be used to write about the *Nairs*.

The writing concerns the *Nair* communities in the regions of North Malabar, South Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore. It should be remembered that, in earlier times, these regions had little connection with one another. While travel by sea could reach coastal areas, journeys to inland regions were likely very challenging.

The video provided above confirms this point. Note that the video refers to the 1960s, whereas the period discussed in this writing is centuries earlier.

When it is said that Travancore has Tamil traditions, it seems likely that Tamils lived there, probably with dark skin. It is unclear what kind of reception people with fair skin from northern parts of South Asia received when they occasionally travelled to these Tamil regions.

However, based on ancient hearsay, the text *Keralolpathi* recounts a story of Parashurama arriving somewhere along these coastal regions. It is unclear whether the traditions compiled in *Keralolpathi* pertain to Travancore or Malabar. Nevertheless, it seems the text attempted to treat North Malabar, South Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore as a single region.

It must be clearly understood that there are differences between the various ethnic groups of Travancore and those of Malabar. Moreover, Travancore has Tamil traditions, while Malabar likely lacked Tamil traditions. It appears that Malabar's original traditional language was free from the influence of Tamil or Sanskrit.

It also seems that the scripts of Tamil and Sanskrit evolved from the same fundamental script. For example, consider the word for mother, amma. In Tamil and Sanskrit, it is written as a and mma (Tamil: அம்ம, Sanskrit: अम्मा).

In English, however, this word is written as a m m a. It appears there is no connection between the fundamental script of English and that of Tamil or Sanskrit.

At the same time, the linguistic ornamentation of Malayalam scripts in Malabar seems similar to that of Tamil and Sanskrit scripts. It is unclear whether the scripts came with the language or were later integrated into it.

For instance, it is known that Urdu is written in both Arabic and Devanagari scripts, suggesting that the script was adapted to the language.

Another point is that forms of address, reference, and respectful subservience in Malabar's Malayalam show similarities with Tamil. The Tamil term *annan* (elder brother) corresponds to the Malayalam *Chettan*. Though the words differ, their design and usage are similar.

This seems different from the Hindi *Ji* (जि), which carries a distinct connotation.

Today, in many South Asian languages, and among those in India who use a lower standard of English, a new term, *saar*, is used. Even if other words in the language remain unchanged, this new term finds a place in forms of address and respectful speech.

While there are similarities in address, reference, and respectful subservience, there are differences in other vocabulary between Tamil and Malabar's Malayalam. This is a profound indication, though it is not yet clear what it signifies.

It is said and believed that *Keralolpathi* was written relatively recently, so its authors likely lacked precise knowledge of ancient details.

Nevertheless, in **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 1 by Nagam Aiya, a sentence is quoted from that text:

These Nagas became the (Kiriathu) Nayars of later Malabar claiming superiority in rank and status over the rest of the Malayali Sudras of the west coast. END

From the information provided above, I plan to begin writing about the *Nairs*.

38: When the Weak Enter a Brutal Linguistic Social Environment

It seems that today's *Nairs* are not a distinct ethnic group. Long ago, they were likely a group appointed as overseers and subordinates under the *Namboodiris*.

Over time, some who migrated to Malabar and Travancore, were brought by force, or arrived due to unforeseen events like storms or other accidents, may have shown great subservience and obedience to Brahmins and demonstrated supervisory skills, thus joining the ranks of the *Nairs*.

According to Keralolpathi, as cited by V. Nagam Aiya, when Parashurama brought Brahmins to Malabar, they faced opposition from the fearsome Nagas, who practised serpent worship. Instead of clashing with them, Parashurama reportedly instructed the Brahmins to show tolerance and harmony with the Nagas' customs and worship, allowing them to live there.

It is unclear why Parashurama brought Brahmins to Malabar or where they came from. These Nagas, it is said, later became the *Kiriathu Nairs*, who claimed superiority over other Malayali *Shudras*. This raises a question: were there not other *Shudras* in Malabar alongside the Nagas?

It appears that Parashurama also brought non-Malayali *Shudras* from outside, whose roles were farming and serving Brahmins in various ways. The term 'Malayali *Shudras*' likely refers to Malabar, as its ancient name was Malayalam—not the modern Malayalam language formed by blending influences from Travancore.

As the Nagas became *Kiriathu Nairs* and other *Shudras* were integrated into their rank, they gradually sank to the *Shudra* level, losing their perceived superiority. When attached upward, one rises; when attached downward, one is crushed. Even today, in feudal languages, this is a cunning tactic used with a sly smile to suppress potential rivals socially.

The stories in Keralolpathi may have been drawn from myths preserved in the families of *Namboodiris*, *Ambalavasis*, or *Nairs* at the time the text was written.

How Brahmins disciplined and kept *Shudras* subservient is unknown, but feudal language could facilitate this. Without a rigid social framework, such control could not persist long-term. Being suppressed in a feudal linguistic environment feels like suffocation to those at the bottom.

Yet, even in this stifling state, what brings pleasure is the ability to oppress others below. A small supervisory role is a significant gain, fostering loyalty and attachment to the system.

In other words, some *Shudras* were elevated to *Nairs*, while others were kept suppressed in layers below them. This formed a robust framework. The plight of those at the very bottom was dire, with no room to move.

In a feudal linguistic environment, harsh tones and disrespectful words toward those below strengthen the social structure, like laying bricks and cementing a wall. The structure rises strong.

In such a social environment, anyone entering from outside—whether by accident or in a weakened state—is doomed. Each group eagerly seeks to subjugate those below them, dreaming of dominance. The outcome is unlike entering English-speaking regions.

These newcomers are quickly or cunningly pushed to lower rungs. They may become the downtrodden communities, and at the lowest level of feudal linguistic codes, a person is broken—face and expression crumpled and distorted.

In this environment, some likely existed solely to serve in Brahmin temples, possibly becoming *Ambalavasis*. Below them, *Nairs* were established in the third tier. Initially, they stood like soldiers, but as lower tiers filled with communities, they became overlords.

Books like **Travancore State Manual**, Malabar & Anjengo, **Malabar Manual**, and *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* refer to *Nairs* collectively as *Shudras*. The term '*Shudra*' seems to denote the lowest caste in Brahmin-dominated northern subcontinental societies.

In the Brahminical *chaturvarnya* system, people are divided into four tiers: Brahmins, *Kshatriyas*, Vaishyas, and *Shudras*. This is an

immovable social structure, like a rock. Individuals born into a caste cannot escape it, as if trapped in a web coated with superglue.

In the northern regions, if *Shudras* had no one below them, their status was the lowest, most degraded. Feudal linguistic codes crush individuals.

Yet, higher castes offer sweet songs and tales of joy—about moonlit nights, vermilion-tinted evenings, celestial maidens, divine cities, adorned maidens, golden palaces, and ambrosial vessels—sung and danced under starry skies, sparking peacock-like vibrancy in the mind.

This evokes a grand beauty, fragrance, and divine festivity, providing philosophical justification and blissful necessity for servitude.

Imagine a small group of young Englishmen arriving with their flag in such a social environment. There is no doubt that local groups would have tried to pin them to the bottom of the social framework using linguistic codes.

However, as the **Malabar Manual** suggests, English traders failed to learn the local brutal languages or distinguish their sharp, claw-like words from softer ones. Thus, no local group could subdue them through language, as it was like trying to grip an oiled body—it slips.

The **Malabar Manual** notes that, after some time, some Englishmen learned and spoke the local language, a significant achievement. By then, however, the English had grown into a formidable force.

39. The Origin of the Nairs

The focus now shifts to the *Nairs*, drawing primarily on three historical texts: **Malabar Manual**, **Malabar and Anjengo**, and **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2. Writing about the *Nairs* will likely be a lengthy endeavour, and I plan to approach it with the same deliberate pace used throughout this work.

First, a note on the sources. The **Malabar Manual** is attributed to William Logan, though it seems others contributed to sections credited to him. A similar impression applies to the other two texts. The need to specify **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 arises because it's unclear if V. Nagam Aiya, the author of Vol. 1, also wrote Vol. 2. Vol. 1 appears to reflect an English bias, while Vol. 2 seems to support Brahminical traditions and the caste system, though I have not thoroughly read Vol. 2.

All three texts often praise the *Nairs* highly, and relevant passages will be quoted as appropriate. In the **Malabar Manual**, there's a noticeable ambivalence. Sections likely written by Logan describe the *Nairs'* behaviours, particularly in dangerous situations, as revealing base traits and hesitant responses. Conversely, sections that seem less attributable to Logan portray *Nairs* as exceptionally brave, high-caste, militarily inclined, loyal to kings, controlling rulers, and enforcing discipline and law. These contradictions will be explored further later.

English administrators and authors of these texts likely struggled to understand the subcontinent's social realities, interpreting them through the lens of the English language, which limited their comprehension. Today, many view English colonial rule through Malayalam, Hindi, or other lenses, assuming hidden motives or grand conspiracies behind any positive actions, failing to grasp English thought patterns.

Those who see all humans (and even animals) simply as 'he' or 'she' cannot easily understand a world-view that categorises people hierarchically—using terms like *Addeham* (*saar*), *maadam*, *avar*, *saab*, *memsahib*, *ayaal*, *avan*, *aval*, *oruthar*, *oruthan*, *eda*, or *edi*—elevating, cutting, or flattening as needed. A 2-dimensional world-view cannot fully grasp a 3-dimensional one.

A cursory reading of the three texts reveals that *Nairs* in Malabar and Travancore were distinct groups, with significant internal variations in status and hierarchy. Differences also existed between North and South Malabar *Nairs*, marked by mutual disdain and distance. However, a common thread is their establishment as overseers under *Namboodiris*, either permanently or temporarily. This positioning is their clearest shared trait.

Various groups likely seized opportunities to assume the *Nair* title and clung to it. As mentioned earlier, some in South Malabar became *Kiriathu Nairs*. The English were keen to understand the communities they encountered in Malabar and South Asia, compiling and interpreting astonishing observations.

They noted similarities between the social and familial behaviours of Newar women in Tibet and Nepal and *Nair* women in Malabar and Travancore. Mr. Fergusson, in his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, remarks in the **Malabar Manual**:

'I cannot offer even a plausible conjecture how, or at what time, a connection existed between Nepal and Tibet, and Canara, but I cannot doubt that such was the case.'

'It is remarkable enough that the Newar women, like those among the Nayars, may, in fact, have as many husbands as they please, being at liberty to divorce them continually on the slightest pretence.'

'In fact, there are no two tribes in India, except the Nayars and Newars, who are known to have the same strange notions as to female chastity, and that coupled with the architecture and other peculiarities, seems to point to a similarity of race which is both curious and interesting.'

Fergusson connects Malabar to the Canara region, noting that *Nair* houses followed the same architectural style as those in Nepal. He also highlights that Newar and *Nair* women shared similar marital practices, including the ability to take multiple husbands and divorce them on minor grounds, reflecting unique notions of female chastity.

These practices, along with joint family systems, matrilineal inheritance (*marumakkathayam*), and *sambandham* relationships, likely astonished

early English observers. Lacking understanding of feudal language, they developed misconceptions. The ability of *Nair* women to change husbands was governed by collective family decisions involving elders, uncles, aunts, and brothers, underpinned by strict subservience to the *karanavar* (family head). The English likely missed these nuances.

Another intriguing detail comes from a brief reading of Social History of India. Its author, possibly of *Ezhava* descent and with some bias against *Nairs*, reportedly manipulated Logan's words to portray Malabar's **Thiyyas** as *Ezhavas*. This author recounts a story suggesting the *Nairs'* social elevation stemmed from a *Shudra* family offering five virgin girls to a high-ranking *Namboodiri* for sexual use, in exchange for a prominent supervisory role, thus becoming *Nairs*. This story, recalled from memory as the text is unavailable, comes from someone antagonistic toward *Nairs*, but it cannot be entirely dismissed. *Shudras* likely had little objection to offering daughters to *Namboodiris*, as the reward was significant social dominance.

At that time, the English and their language were likely absent from the subcontinent. If this story pertains to Travancore, it may not apply to Malabar.

It's conceivable that Newar groups from Tibet or Nepal arrived in Malabar, secured supervisory roles under *Namboodiris*, and established customs allowing their women *sambandham* with *Namboodiri* men, transforming into the *Nair* overseer class. The key is not *Namboodiri* blood mixing with theirs but their elevation to a respected position above lower groups via linguistic codes.

Such status instilled profound mental and physical superiority, reflected in their radiant appearance and noble qualities, as noted by the English. They attributed this to Aryan blood, but the reality lies in the elevated status granted by linguistic codes or, in cases like Tellicherry's **Thiyyas**, escaping local linguistic oppression through English, achieving mental and physical elevation without Aryan lineage.

Centuries ago, Newars may have paved the way for various *Shudras* to become *Nairs*, with Nagas becoming *Kiriathu Nairs*, as noted earlier. More significant than *Namboodiri* blood mixing through *Nair* women was the transmission of powerful social 'software' codes of superiority. This was often mistaken as sexual freedom, but such freedom applied only to interactions with *Namboodiris* or other elites.

Lower-caste men were barred from approaching *Nair* women by rigid social codes, termed 'atmospheric pollution' in English texts, where breaching a specified distance was believed to taint the air. This social distancing, far stronger than today's scientific concept, was driven by the spread of an invisible 'software virus' of feudal language, embedding subservience to elites and acceptance of sexual concessions in women's minds, while strictly prohibiting such interactions with lower castes.

40. Overseers, Enforcers of Law, and Warriors

Foreign travellers and English East India Company officials recognised that in Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore, certain groups worked under *Namboodiris* in Brahmin temples, while others served as overseers in society. They likely understood that temple workers were *Ambalavasis*, and those in supervisory roles were *Nairs*.

Distinguishing the precise roles of these groups today is challenging. However, comparing them to modern professions, *Ambalavasis* might resemble government clerks, while *Nairs* could be likened to police constables. Equating *Nairs* solely to constables is not entirely accurate, as they had the authority to physically confront or even kill lower castes. Thus, police constables are a closer analogy.

It would be misguided to compare *Nairs* to high-ranking positions like IPS officers, military commanders, CEOs, or IAS officials. Above *Nairs* were various groups: *Ambalavasis*, Malayali *Kshatriyas* (in Travancore), external rajas (in Malabar), *Samantan Nairs* claiming *Kshatriya* status, and Brahmins of varying ranks, including both ritual-performing and non-performing *Namboodiris*.

Many foreign scholars viewed *Nairs* as a distinct ethnic group and sought to trace their origins, missing the point that '*Nair*' was a social position. Diverse groups likely assumed this role over centuries, clinging to it tenaciously. This led to theories linking *Nairs*' origins to Tibet or Nepal, or suggesting Nagas became *Kiriathu Nairs*.

A common trait among *Nairs* historically was serpent worship (*nagaaradhana*). Even in the 1800s, Rev. Samuel Mateer noted that many *Nair* households revered cobras and their families as divine entities. Property transfer deeds often explicitly mentioned resident cobras. Many *Nair* ancestral homes (*tharavads*) had nearby serpent groves (*sarpakavu*), as previously discussed.

Native Life in Travancore references a Scythian invasion around 600 BCE, with serpents as their emblem, suggesting *Nairs* might be their descendants due to shared serpent worship and matrilineal (*marumakkathayam*) systems. However, it also notes that serpent worship is common across many global communities and subcontinental groups, not necessarily tied to Brahminical Hinduism.

Matrilineal systems existed among multiple groups in Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore, with unclear origins. Place names like Nagore, Nagapattinam, Nagercoil, and Nagpur (the latter linked to Scythians) reflect serpent-related nomenclature.

Examining *Nair* subgroups might reveal connections to various global communities, but those at similar social levels often share physical and intellectual traits due to the influence of their linguistic environment. In a pure English linguistic setting, any group can be elevated to a high mental plane. Conversely, in a feudal linguistic environment, people are slotted into hierarchical tiers, developing shared physical and mental characteristics based on their position.

Nairs generally held a position below *Namboodiris* and just under *Ambalavasis*, with distinct physical and mental traits historically. However, *Nairs* themselves had internal hierarchies, with elite *Nairs* avoiding association with lower *Nair* subgroups. Lower *Nairs* feared proximity to lower castes, clinging desperately to their *Nair* status to avoid social degradation, driven by the mechanics of feudal language, not mere racism.

In historical contexts, small regions felt vast to locals. Lower castes primarily encountered *Nairs*, who held significant authority locally but were subordinate to higher castes in the broader socio-political structure. Today, in rural areas, police stations wield similar authority, with constables appearing as significant figures to lower classes, capable of physical and verbal enforcement.

Historically, *Nairs* carried deadly knives (*kodum kathi*) and young *Nair* men practiced **kalaripayattu** (martial arts) daily in past centuries. If lower castes like *Pulayas* crossed their path, *Nairs* could cut them down with impunity, viewed with the same detachment as slaughtering an animal. English colonial records often described *Nairs* as hereditary warriors, even likening them to English barons due to difficulty defining

their role, though such comparisons across ethnic and linguistic boundaries are flawed.

'*Nair*' was a social position crafted by feudal languages like Malabari (original Malayalam), modern Malayalam, and Tamil. Comparing them to roles defined by English social structures fails to convey their true nature. While *Nairs* may have had responsibilities akin to modern soldiers or police, their role was distinct.

Today, India maintains a large military to counter perceived threats from distant regions like Pakistan, and a robust police force to manage internal conflicts among commoners, both requiring significant resources. Constables in these systems are the lowest tier, facing enemies or civilians directly. Historical *Nairs* likely had similar roles, protecting local communities who relied on them for safety against rival *Nairs* from neighbouring regions, who could attack, kill, exploit, or enslave.

41. The Nair Preference for a Lineage of Noble Descent

The **Travancore State Manual** contains the following passage:

From the prevalence to a large extent of serpent worship in Malabar, some writers identify the Nayars with some of the Naga tribes of Scythian origin. In support of this theory is mentioned the fact that the present Singhalese, who are supposed to be the descendants of Naga settlers, reckon kindred through females as do the Nayars and that the peculiar institutions regarding the union of the sexes and inheritance prevalent among the Nayars are supposed to be the vestige of the state of society in which their Scythian ancestors lived. END

This suggests that both the Sinhalese of Ceylon and the *Nairs* of South India may have descended from Naga tribes of Scythian origin. However, the author overlooks a detail noted in other texts: the *Ezhavas* of Travancore may also trace their origins to the Sinhalese. This raises the possibility of an *Ezhava* connection to the *Nairs* through a shared Scythian lineage, though such a link would be contentious.

The primary flaw in these ethnographic studies is the assumption that *Nairs* constitute a distinct ethnic group. As previously discussed, '*Nair*' is likely a social position, not a singular ethnic identity.

Nairs may not object to claiming descent from ritual-performing or non-performing *Namboodiris*, external Brahmins, *Kshatriyas*, *Samantans*, or *Ambalavasi* groups like Moothath, *Pushpakan*, or *Nambissan*. However, associating with *Ezhavas* would be problematic, as feudal linguistic codes deem such a connection a degrading (*pratiloma*) lineage, tainting their status.

Historical accounts by travelers through the subcontinent documented *Nairs* based on observations from specific regions and times. These records, while detailed, are limited by their narrow scope. Extrapolating them to broader social realities risks distortion, as feudal language shapes narratives, inflating or deflating status through word choices.

For instance, in the 1980s, a prominent Kerala English newspaper published excerpts from a thesis by American research students, claiming *Nairs* were Kerala’s *Kshatriyas*, a warrior caste just below Brahmins. This likely stemmed from interviews with Travancore *Nairs*, who emphasised their noble heritage. Such claims, possibly earning the authors doctorates, reflect a superficial understanding of feudal linguistic dynamics, where speakers filter information through indicant word codes, highlighting only prestigious associations.

For example, claiming proximity to a doctor elevates status, while admitting ties to a low-status worker diminishes it. Without awareness of this, researchers collecting oral accounts receive filtered narratives. The American students could have better understood *Nair* identity by reading the **Travancore State Manual** at the Public Library at Trivandrum, which classifies *Nairs* as *Shudras*—a label *Nairs* started resisting from the 1900s onward, asserting superiority over *Ezhavas*.

The true complexity, as noted earlier, lies in *Nairs* occupying a social position under *Namboodiris* across South Malabar, North Malabar, and Travancore, filled by diverse groups over centuries. The motivation to become a *Nair* mirrors a modern village auto driver’s aspiration to become a police constable, seeking elevated status.

Malabar and Anjengo notes:

Under the Native Rajas, Nayars thought nothing of cutting down on the spot a member of the lower castes who had approached within polluting distance of his person. END

This reflects how *Nairs* unhesitatingly killed lower-caste individuals breaching ayitham (pollution distance). For instance, lower castes were barred from crossing the long bridge over the Bharathapuzha (then Ponnani-puzha), forcing them to take circuitous routes (**Malabar and Anjengo**).

Another excerpt from **Malabar and Anjengo**:

It is noteworthy that neither Jews, Christians, nor Muhammadans are considered to convey this 'atmospheric pollution,' and this is true even of converts to the two latter religions from the lowest castes. It is evident what an immense inducement is thus afforded to the latter to raise themselves in the social scale and rid themselves of so many

vexations and degrading restrictions and disabilities by embracing Islam or Christianity. END

This highlights that Jews, Christians, and Muslims, including converts from lower castes, were exempt from causing ayitham, incentivising conversion to escape social restrictions. However, an even more ambitious strategy was to become a *Nair*, eliminating ayitham, relegating others to lower status, and securing a prestigious social position, likened to 'standing atop a tower adorned with sandalwood paste' (inspired by an old Malayalam film song).

Native Life in Travancore (1883) describes *Nair* subservience to *Namboodiris*:

Sudras meeting Brahmans adore them, folding both hands together; the Brahman, in return, confers his blessing by holding the left hand to the chest and closing the fingers. END

To Travancore *Nairs*, being called *Shudras* was intolerable, as they rejected any backward status. Meanwhile, *Ezhavas*, their social rivals, gained freedom post-Travancore's integration into India, asserting equality with *Nairs*, who countered that *Ezhavas* were inferior. This fueled *Nair-Ezhava* tensions, unlike in North Malabar, where matrilineal **Thiyyas** and *Nairs* lacked such hostility. In South Malabar, tensions between *makkathayam Thiyyas* and *Nairs* may have contributed to the Mappila riots.

Ezhavas likely disdained lower castes but harboured enmity, not disgust, toward *Nairs*. The roots of this rivalry require further exploration later. In North Malabar, **Thiyyas** in places like Tellicherry and Cannanore differed from inland counterparts, with elite *Thiyya* families distinct from agricultural labourers. Thus, generalisations about **Thiyyas** apply only to specific subgroups.

Malabar and Anjengo notes a *Thiyya* claim in North Malabar:

In North Malabar, for instance, the Tiyans claim to be a caste which does not convey distance pollution at all. END

This likely refers to elite *Thiyya* families. In 1980s Travancore, *Ezhavas* called the *Nairs* as '*Shudran*' or '*Shudrachi*,' expressing animosity, while *Nairs* mocked *Ezhavas* as '*Kotti*' or '*Chovvan*,' possibly referencing toddy-tapping. Travancore's dissolution and the removal of *Ezhava* social barriers likely hit *Nairs* hardest, fearing equivalence with *Ezhavas* would degrade their status. To counter this, *Nairs* often appended '(*Kshatriya*)' to their name, a sentiment echoed in the 1980s thesis.

42. The Possibility of a Lower-Caste Lineage Among Some Nairs

As previously discussed, *Nairs* likely stem from diverse ethnic origins, with various potential ancestries already mentioned.

Another relevant detail emerges from **Native Life in Travancore**.

When the British established British India and their systems influenced regions beyond, individuals began seeing opportunities to transcend their birth caste. A governance system that disregarded rigid caste definitions was likely a novel experience in the subcontinent.

Native Life in Travancore provides these insights:

Pretences are sometimes made by individuals to higher than their real caste.

During a festival at Trevandrum, several goldsmiths putting on the dress and ornaments of a superior caste, walked boldly into the temple.

We have known one or two apostates from Christianity, well educated in English, who assumed Sudra names, and passed in distant parts of the country as such.

(Note: Here, 'Sudra' refers to *Nairs*, and 'distant parts' likely means remote areas within Travancore. Or even in the neighbouring India (British-India). 'Christians' may imply lower-caste converts.)

But impostors are detected by very simple means.

A Shanar youth who took the high-caste seat at a public cook-shop was discovered by his mode of eating rice, picking it up with the fingers, while a Brahman scoops it up gently with the side of the hand lest he should tear with his nails the leaves which they are accustomed to use as plates.

Strangers at feasts are therefore closely scrutinised and watched.

Still, changes in caste do, in odd instances, succeed.

Eating together is one of the grand tests of identity of caste, and earnest discussions are often held as to what constitutes pollution in eating.

These passages suggest that even lower-caste individuals who converted to Christianity could adopt *Nair* identities, particularly in distant regions where their origins were harder to trace. However, such groups would not remain tied solely to lower-caste lineages like *Pulaya* or *Pariah* over generations.

The hallmark of the *Nair* (*Sudra*) community is the claim of *Namboodiri* blood, which they strive to acquire. Regardless of their original ethnicity, within decades, *Nair* families successfully incorporated Brahmin blood, often celebrating this as an elevation. Unlike modern perceptions of distress over women being used by higher-caste men, *Nair* men viewed this as an infusion of 'divine blood,' a source of pride driven by feudal linguistic codes that conferred immense social prestige.

However, the notion of 'pure' Brahmin blood is questionable. **Native Life in Travancore** cites Rev. Samuel Mateer:

... it is difficult to find pure Brahmans or Kshatriyas anywhere, more especially in the south of India, the popular traditions may embody some fragment of truth regarding the transformation of fishermen into Brahmans by Parasuraman investing them with the sacred thread.

Dr. W. W. Hunter, in Orissa (quoted in **Native Life in Travancore**), elaborates on *Namboodiri* origins:

Dr. W. W. Hunter remarks that the Brahmans throughout India are of two classes — more ancient settlers, and aboriginal superior natives raised, as tradition generally asserts, to this rank.

The Namburis, for example, are said to originate from fishermen: they follow different customs from the orthodox caste, allow only the eldest male to marry, practise polygamy, and their ideas of marriage closely resemble those of the aboriginal Nayars.

But in spite of their descent from a low caste fisher-tribe and semi-aboriginal customs, they make high claims, and despise other Brahmans.

Dr. W. W. Hunter, a key figure in the Imperial Civil Service and the Imperial Gazetteer of India, likely had a broader perspective due to his extensive study of the subcontinent. As a Celtic speaker (despite an English-sounding name), he may have better grasped South Asian social

dynamics. His observations suggest *Namboodiris*, like *Nairs*, may have humbler origins than claimed, with myths of elevation (e.g., fishermen becoming Brahmins) reflecting social mobility.

English governance enabled scrutiny of such claims, levelling traditional hierarchies through a neutral linguistic lens. However, English observers often missed the feudal mindset that obscured less prestigious origins. Ancient lineage claims may hold some truth, but undesirable connections were often concealed, a nuance English writers frequently overlooked, leading to contradictory accounts.

The relevance of these historical details today lies in their use to assert superiority or demean others, not in uplifting modern communities. Only pristine English, with its egalitarian coding, can elevate societal standards. Notably, Hunter's use of '*Namburi*' likely refers to '*Namboodiri*,' missing subtle distinctions between the terms.

43. The Social and Mental Pathology Propagated by Feudal Languages

Let us now examine the various subgroups among *Nairs*, drawing from the previously mentioned texts. These sources carry both potential inaccuracies and profound insights, which may reflect in the details presented here.

A key observation from these texts is the hierarchy among *Nairs* in North Malabar, South Malabar, and Travancore. North Malabar *Nairs* held a higher status, though the basis for this superiority is unclear. In South Malabar, *Nairs* were considered second-tier, a status that also impacted the *makkathayam Thiyyas* under them. North Malabar’s matrilineal **Thiyyas** were deemed superior to South Malabar’s *makkathayam Thiyyas*, with intermarriage often prohibited.

This reflects the pervasive coding of feudal language, where social status is rigidly defined by one’s position under another. Just as a worker under a powerful landlord differs in status from one under a small employer, feudal language enforces hierarchical distinctions.

A broader realisation is the mental, social, and self-respect differences between individuals in English systems and those in feudal linguistic environments. This topic, however, will not be explored now.

Differences also existed between Malabar and Travancore *Nairs*, and even within Travancore, between northern and southern *Nairs* in historical times. Within each region, *Nairs* were further divided into various status levels.

Native Life in Travancore mentions 'Malayalam *Sudras*' (*Nairs*) in Travancore, noting internal hierarchies where some subgroups distanced themselves from others.

In **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 (1906), Mr. Balakrishnan Nair, quoting the Quarterly Review (1902), states:

'...they (Nairs) either brought with them or adopted the Malayalam language, a language which is closely akin to if not perhaps originally identical with Tamil.' END

This suggests that *Sudras* (*Nairs*) may have migrated from Malabar to Travancore, bringing the old Malabar language (Malayalam). Historically, Malabar was called 'Malayalam,' while Travancore was a Tamil-speaking region. Did *Malayali Kshatriyas* and *Sudras* introduce this language to Travancore, where it blended with Tamil and Sanskrit to form modern Malayalam? This question cannot be pursued here, so we return to *Nairs*.

The 1906 **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 references a pre-1906 census reporting 130 *Nair* subgroups, though only a few were prominent. The drive to occupy the '*Nair*' social position, despite such diversity, likely stemmed from the elevated status and authority over lower castes that feudal language codes conferred.

Information about *Nairs* in these texts must be taken with a pinch of salt. Many accounts, especially in **Malabar Manual** and **Travancore State Manual**, likely include contributions or biases from *Nairs* collaborating with English authorities. In **Malabar Manual**, William Logan’s writings seem interspersed with additions by others, and in **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2, *Nair* perspectives appear integrated, as will be clarified later.

Consider a foreign visitor observing a rural police constable receiving deference and fear from locals, witnessing their ability to intimidate or discipline, and hearing complaints from ordinary people. Lacking context about broader governance, the visitor might conclude constables are local elites, akin to royalty, enforcing law single-handedly. Such misconceptions occurred when European travelers, as seen in a tourist spot incident, described *Nairs* as near-divine authorities based on isolated observations, a portrayal echoed in quoted texts. These accounts, however, often reflect limited encounters rather than comprehensive realities.

Feudal language confines individual identity and freedom within rigid boundaries. While **Malabar and Anjengo** portrays *Nairs* as martial traditionalists, it does not specify North Malabar subgroups, only generalising their warrior heritage. In South Malabar, specific *Nair* groups are named, with Kiriyaṭṭil (Kiryattil) *Nairs* as the highest, whose

cooked food was deemed unpolluting. These included local rulers (*naduvazhis*, *desavazhis*) with titles like *Muppil*, *Mootha*, or *Valiya* (e.g., Mannarghat *Muppil* Nayar), sometimes replaced by *Ilayath* (indicating a secondary status). Some were heads (*karanavars*) of *Nair tharavads* (e.g., Nedunganadpada Nayar). Palghat rajas used *Achan* as a title. Elite *Nair* women were called *Nettiyars*, and hereditary ceremonial names were common.

This focus on elite *Nairs* obscures the thousands of lower-status *Nairs* within these families, trapped in feudal language's grip. They could dominate lower castes but were subservient to their own family elders, requiring obedience and loyalty. Simultaneously, they demanded the same from their juniors, creating a complex web of subservience and authority.

These *Nairs* were compelled to participate in family or regional disputes, skirmishes, or raids, risking injury or death. They also had to uphold family prestige. Their displays of agility, martial prowess (**kalaripayattu**), and combat skills impressed foreign travelers, but these abilities often led to senseless violence, a point rarely emphasised.

At Tirunavaya's Mamankam, young *Nair* chaver warriors showcased their skills, knowing they might not return, as equally skilled opponents awaited to kill them. This human sacrifice likely stemmed from conflicts between Calicut and Valluvanad. In North Malabar's Kadathanad (near modern Badagara), ankam duels served similar purposes, with young *Nairs* fighting to preserve family honour, often dying in the process.

These practices exemplify the mental pathology induced by feudal language codes, fostering destructive behaviours. South Malabar's *Kiriyath Nairs*, deemed inferior to North Malabar *Nairs*, likely felt compelled to constantly suppress *makkathayam Thiyyas* and other lower castes to maintain their status, a relentless mental burden. Any sign of lower-caste assertiveness was likely crushed, possibly sparking joy among other subordinates, a common trait in feudal linguistic environments.

This mindset, provoked by feudal language, arguably contributed to the Mappila riots, a consequence of such oppressive social dynamics.

44. Kiriyaathil Nairs and Shudra Nairs

Continuing with the details about *Kiriyaathil* (Kiryattil) *Nairs* in South Malabar:

Ordinary members of this group typically used only '*Nair*' after their names. However, some among them adopted titles like Panikkar, Kurup, or *Nambiar*. According to **Malabar and Anjengo**, Kurup and *Nambiar* were less commonly used in South Malabar, which creates slight confusion since *Kiriyaathil Nairs* are specifically associated with this region. This discrepancy need not be explored further here.

The titles Panikkar and Kurup were linked to martial professions, with these individuals reportedly managing their own kalaris (martial training centres). If true, South Malabar likely had a significant kalari presence. While kalari is traditionally associated with Kadathanad (around Badagara), the young warriors clashing at Mamankam in South Malabar were almost certainly kalari practitioners.

Some individuals among Puratthu *Kiriyaathil Nairs*, Akathu *Kiriyaathil Nairs*, and *Shudra Nairs* used the title Menon. Originally, this title was conferred by local rulers, but over time, many *Nairs* adopted it without formal basis. Lower castes in South Malabar reportedly addressed *Kiriyaathil Nairs* as *Thampuram*.

Now, let’s discuss *Kiriyaathil Nairs*. The term appears in English as *Kiriyaathil* or Charnavar, and here it is written as *Kiriyaathil* or Charnavar (exact Malayalam pronunciation unclear). *Kiriyaathil Nairs* were divided into two groups: *Akathu Charnavar* (inner) and *Puratthu Charnavar* (outer). *Puratthu Charnavar* served as armed overseers, defenders, or attackers for landlords and rulers, while *Akathu Charnavar* performed household duties for these elites.

Even household workers in elite homes commanded subservience from lower castes, or they ensured it was imposed. This dynamic persists in modern Indian bureaucratic systems. An alternative view suggests *Akathu Charnavar* performed tasks inside Brahmin ritual spaces (*yagasala*), while *Puratthu Charnavar* guarded the exterior. Ritual work likely carried more prestige than household duties in feudal linguistic contexts, where job definitions significantly impact status. If a role’s prestige seemed lacking, it was redefined to avoid degradation in the feudal word-code hierarchy—a phenomenon absent in English.

Despite this, *Puratthu Charnavar* held higher social status than *Akathu Charnavar*. Both were collectively known as *Kiriyaathil Nairs*. **Malabar and Anjengo** claims Calicut’s royal family had around 10,000 *Puratthu Charnavar* as armed retainers or warriors, though the accuracy of this figure is uncertain. Similarly, **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 states:

So late as the end of the eighteenth century, Maharajah Rama Varma had 'a hundred thousand soldiers, Nairs and Chegos, armed with bows, spears, swords and battle axe.' END

However, when Hyder Ali (of Moroccan descent) and later his son Tipu Sultan invaded Malabar and Travancore, these *Nair* forces were either absent or unable to resist effectively.

Kiriyaathil Nair men in South Malabar formed *sambandham* unions within their own families, while their women cohabited with *Namboodiri* men or men from their own caste.

Now, about *Shudra Nairs*: Like *Kiriyaathil Nairs* serving royal or landlord families, *Shudra Nairs* were reportedly retainers of *Namboodiri* households. Disputes over whether *Kiriyaathil Nairs* or *Shudra Nairs* held higher status were common, reflecting their competitive roles as retainers. *Namboodiri* women required *Shudra Nair* women or girls as attendants when going out, and their presence was deemed essential in various ceremonies.

Outside South Malabar, two similar groups existed: Swaroopakkar (servants of royal families, akin to *Kiriyaathil Nairs*) and *Illakkar* (servants of *Namboodiris*, akin to *Shudra Nairs*). Both were *Nairs*, suggesting equivalence or similarity.

The meticulous documentation of these historical details counters modern academic historians who, in crafting grand narratives about British-colonized India, often erase the diverse ethnic identities of the

subcontinent's past. These scholars overlook the varied communities that once thrived in these now-flattened historical accounts.

45. The Possibility of a Lower-Caste Lineage Among Some Nairs

Observing *Nairs* is like watching a colony of ants. Each ant performs distinct tasks, but most view the colony as a single entity. A closer look reveals a complex social structure with hierarchies, roles of authority, subservience, servitude, and oppression, all encoded in precise communication systems visible to those who understand them.

Modern Indian academic historians often treat the subcontinent's pre-India inhabitants like this ant colony, lumping them under the term 'Indian' when describing the British era. For instance, a recent English newspaper article stated:

When history bends to the whims of those in power, beware. The British bent it to make them look like benefactors of India. END

This suggests the British fabricated history to portray themselves as India's saviours. In reality, the British often failed to grasp the subcontinent's intricate social dynamics.

Let's delve deeper into the *Nair* community's complex, interconnected subgroups, though the details may not be entirely clear or precise. Reading them, however, offers insight into the meticulous efforts of the English administration to understand and nurture the subcontinent.

Malabar and Anjengo mentions castes of likely foreign origin, referring to regions just outside Malabar, primarily modern Tamil Nadu. In Palghat and adjacent Valluvanad, Tamil influence and intermingling were evident, with migrations, including *Ezhavas*, from Travancore. Settling in Malabar offered new social opportunities.

The *Muttans*, a group at the *Nair* level, claimed Vaishya status, distancing themselves from *Ezhavas*, **Thiyyas**, or other *Nairs*, rejecting any lower-caste associations. They were not Brahmins, and their aversion to such labels likely arose as British rule exposed them to broader regional identities. Some adopted Gupta or Ezuthachan as surnames. In Palghat, some *Muttans* were called *Mannadiyars*, a title also used by some *Tharakans*, another group.

Muttans followed the *makkathayam* (patrilineal) system, with their women, called Chettichiyars, avoiding *sambandham* unions. Their *pula* (mourning period) lasted ten days, signalling high-caste status, as shorter periods indicated lower rank. Despite this, they consumed meat and alcohol. Their purification rituals were performed by *Chorttavanmars*, equivalent to *Kulangara Nairs*, not *Attikurissi Nairs*, who conducted rituals for *Namboodiris*, *Ambalavasis*, and other *Nairs*. This distinction in ritual performers highlights how even the status of service providers determined caste hierarchies.

Tharakans, another *Nair*-like group, were traders (*tharakan* meaning broker or middleman) in Palghat and Valluvanad. Some were wealthy and socially prominent. Those in Angadipuram (in modern Malappuram) claimed descent from Travancore's elite Ettuveetil Pillais (see Vol. 2, Chapter 40 for their tragic end). This claim may be true, but they could also be *Ezhavas* or others who fled Travancore. Social climbing was common when opportunities arose.

Angadipuram *Tharakans* could marry *Kiriyathil Nair* women, and their women sometimes entered *sambandham* with Samanthan royals. In contrast, Palghat *Tharakans* married only within their group, suggesting possible ethnic differences, perhaps from distinct migrations adopting the *tharakan* identity.

In North Malabar, further north, Vyaapari *Nairs* or Ravari *Nairs* were sometimes considered *Tharakans*, also hailing from Travancore. However, Palghat and Valluvanad *Tharakans* did not view them as equals. While many from Travancore adopted *Nair* status in Malabar, established Malabar *Nairs* often resisted recognising them. British Malabar's lack of legal penalties for caste mobility likely facilitated such transitions. In Travancore, however, such social leaps could lead to severe punishment, like execution.

Ravari Nair men married only within their group, but their women could form *sambandham* with *Kiriyathil Nair* men, allowing higher-caste blood to enter their lineage—a casual arrangement for *Kiriyathil* men, with little objection from either side.

This intricate social manoeuvring underscores the fluidity and rigidity of caste dynamics, shaped by opportunity and feudal language codes.

46. Subgroups among the Elite Nairs of North Malabar

In North Malabar, elite *Nair* subgroups maintained highly complex family systems with intricate social relationships, as detailed in **Malabar and Anjengo**.

These elite *Nairs* organised themselves into *kulams* (akin to *tharavads*), which were exogamous, meaning they married outside their group. However, within each kulam, smaller endogamous subgroups existed, marrying only within their specific unit. This structure is difficult to grasp, and even **Malabar and Anjengo** notes the challenge of understanding it. To clarify, the text focuses on a specific region: Payyanad, located between Kottapuzha and Porapuzha in Kurumbranad taluk, reportedly granted by a Kurumbranad king to an Ambadikoyilakam Thampuratti, the highest-ranking woman of Calicut’s **Zamorin** royal family.

In Payyanad, six sthanis (local rulers) governed on behalf of the king, overseen by four *Nair* groups exercising what **Malabar and Anjengo** calls 'constitutional control.' This term, likely adopted by local officials familiar with English governance, seems grandiose for the region’s semi-primitive social systems, but we won’t delve into that now.

Each *Nair* group had a hereditary president—a term that feels absurd in this context, though we’ll sidestep that critique. Seven kulam collectives existed in Payyanad. The highest comprised twelve *kulams*: Vengalatt, Pattillath, Viyyur, Nellyyott, Adunkudi, Amayangalatt, Nelliloli, Nilancheri, Randillath, Pulliyani, Orkkatteri, and Venmeri. Members of Pattillath and Randillath used *Adiyodi* as a title, while the last three used *Nambiar*, and others used *Nair*. Among the six sthanis, *Adiyodi* titleholders came from Vengalatt, and two presidents from Pattillath. Junior members of *sthani* families were called *Kidavu*.

Vengalatt women’s wedding processions involved Viyyur women carrying lamps and Nellyyott women carrying flowers, while Randillath Adiyodis served as Vengalatt’s cooks. Pattillath Adiyodis and Orkkatteri Nambiaris observed a twelve-day *pula* (mourning period), indicating higher status, while others observed fifteen days.

The second collective had six *kulams*: Iravattoor, Ara-Iravattoor, Attikodan, Thonderi *Kidavu*, Punnan *Nambiar*, and Menokki, all with a fifteen-day *pula*. The third collective included three *kulams*: Thacholi, Kotholi, and Kuruvattancheri, with the remaining three sthanis from Thacholi. All used *Nair* and observed a fifteen-day *pula*.

Peruvaniyans, likely another *Nair* group, were responsible for presenting oil during the Kurumbranad king’s coronation, their name meaning 'great oil providers.'

The fifth collective had three *kulams*: Mannangazhi, Paranchel, and Pallikkara, all with a fifteen-day *pula*. Mannangazhi *Nairs* provided and placed the avanappalaka (a turtle-shaped seat used by *Namboodiris* and high castes) during the king’s coronation, while Paranchel Nairs provided a cloth (*pudava*).

The sixth collective, called Ravari, included Padam, Thulu, Maanan, and Ottu. The seventh had six *kulams*: Kandon, Kannankodan, Kotta, Karumba, Kundakollavan, and Panakkadan, all with a fifteen-day *pula*. Women from these *kulams* performed roles in purification rituals for Vengalatt, Pattillath, and Orkkatteri women.

Beyond these seven collectives, other *Nair* groups without internal subgroups existed, such as Pappini Nairs, who substituted for Nambisan women in the *thali* tying ceremony for girls from the third collective, and Palattavan Nairs, who assisted in funeral rites instead of *Attikurissi Nairs*.

This intricate web of relationships in Payyanad, bound by feudal language codes, maintained rigid hierarchies. Altering these word-codes could disrupt the chain, potentially inverting roles. This mirrors dynamics in the Indian military or police, where outsiders see only uniforms, unaware of internal hierarchies, roles (e.g., cooks, barbers, officers), and coded communication revealing status. These groups may treat outsiders as subordinates, enforcing such perceptions through behaviour.

Nairs were subordinate to foreign Brahmins, orthodox and non-orthodox *Namboodiris*, foreign royals, and *Ambalavasis*. The English Company

encountered this complex, interconnected system of shared power and coded hierarchies, beneath which lay lower castes lacking mental resilience, social dignity, or self-respect in communication—much like today's marginalised workers in India, treated like cattle, toiling in harsh conditions.

Yet, Indian academic intellectuals reduce these diverse groups to 'Indians,' falsely claiming the British enslaved them all, a simplistic narrative peddled by overpaid scholars.

47. Middle-tier Nair Subgroups

From its early days, the English Company in Malabar worked toward social reform and establishing an honest administrative system. However, they were likely overwhelmed by the intricate, hidden codes of social obedience and invisible connections permeating every corner of Malabar society.

The previous section discussed elite *Nair* subgroups in Payyanad, Kurumbranad. Similar caste-based social structures existed in Kurumbranad’s Kadathanad and Payyormal regions, but with highly complex variations. Beyond Kurumbranad, social structures differed significantly. For instance, Chirakkal (Cannanore) and Kottayam (near Tellicherry), both in North Malabar, had distinct systems. Kottayam lies just north of Kurumbranad, with Chirakkal further north.

In Chirakkal and Kottayam, two major *Nair* collectives existed: *Akathu Charnavar* (inner) and *Puratthu Charnavar* (outer). South Malabar’s Puratthu *Kiriyathil Nairs* were mentioned earlier, but Chirakkal and Kottayam’s Charnavars claimed superiority, equating themselves with South Malabar’s elite *Kiriyathil Nairs*, positioning themselves above South Malabar’s *Puratthu Charnavars*. This reflects a historical superiority complex among North Malabar groups toward South Malabar, the reasons for which remain unexplored.

Chirakkal’s *Akathu Charnavars* had multiple subgroups, with eight in Chirakkal alone, each further divided into smaller units called *illams*. This illustrates the intricate social complexity within a small region (modern Cannanore district) in Malabar . Beneath this layered hierarchy lived numerous lower-caste groups.

Uplifting these lower castes was no simple task, as they exhibited deep loyalty, obligation, affection, subservience, obedience, and trust toward their oppressors. Their resentment and rivalry were not directed at their subjugators but toward peers or those below them in the social order, fostering competition and hostility.

This concludes the discussion on elite *Nair* subgroups. The details may not be entirely clear to readers, as even the writer struggles with their complexity, leaving the information somewhat muddled.

Now, let’s examine middle-tier *Nair* subgroups, who lacked significant ties to weapons or social authority. They likely acquired the *Nair* title through association with higher groups or by adopting it strategically, much like becoming a police constable today—a prestigious step.

(Note: English transliterations of caste names may not align perfectly with Malayalam pronunciation.)

Andurans (or Kushavan): Potters who made clay pots.

Ottatu *Nairs*: Tile makers.

Pallicchans (or Parappur *Nairs*): Palanquin bearers.

Uralis: Subgroups include Urali, Ezhuttan, Kolayan, Moovari, and Eruman. Mostly masons, they traditionally herded cattle and likely migrated from Tulu Nadu, adopting minor caste changes. English records note that Ezhuttan, Kolayan, Moovari, and Eruman were absent in South Malabar.

Chembottis: Coppersmiths who crafted copper roofs for temple sanctums (sreekovils). Originally lower-caste artisans, they gained social elevation after a legendary incident at Thaliparamba temple. During a grand purification ceremony attended by around 1,000 Brahmins, a Chembotti was seen exiting the sanctum after finishing work, disrupting the ritual. Brahmins, furious, feared restarting the costly ceremony, but a divine vision declared no impurity had occurred. Thereafter, Chembottis rose in status, free from untouchability and its restrictions.

Vattakadans (or Chakkingal *Nairs*): Oil pressers (chakk refers to oil-pressing machines), also called Vaniyans. Some used manual methods, others used bullocks, forming distinct subgroups. In some areas, they were divided into Vellutatu (light-skinned) and Karuttatu (dark-skinned) subgroups.

Attikurissi Nairs (also Chittigans): Conduct purification rituals for *Namboodiris*, *Ambalavasis*, and *Nairs* during cremations, linked to handling human bones (asti). Some were barbers. Notably, barber roles were performed by various castes, each serving specific caste levels.

Kulangara Nairs: Performed rituals at temples of deities like Bhagavathi, Ayyappan, Shasta, Vettakkorumakan, Ariyambi, and Andimahagalan. They also played key roles in purification ceremonies for *Tharakans* (mentioned earlier).

Kallattakurups: Another noted group, though specifics are unclear.

Edacheri *Nairs*: Cattle herders.

Most of these middle-tier *Nair* subgroups followed the *marumakkathayam* (matrilineal) system and married within their groups. Socially, they occupied an intermediate *Nair* status, their presence or touch not considered polluting to elite *Nairs*.

48. Lower Strata Among Nairs

Let us now consider the various communities among those claiming to be *Nairs* who occupy the lowest strata. Some of these may have been of high status long ago. However, upon migrating to Malabar or otherwise, they may have failed to secure or maintain the social status they desired. Alternatively, others may have deliberately relegated them to a lower status through feudal language codes.

Degrading a community through language codes is akin to a conspiratorial strategy. This is something South Asians have openly employed in England today, turning many local English people into *Pariahs* or those engaged in *Pariah* occupations. Strangely, it seems impossible to make the local English understand this phenomenon. I will discuss this matter further later.

It appears that many communities in Malabar likely attempted to claim the *Nair* title. They may have been willing to offer anything to the *Namboodiris* to achieve this. However, the communities firmly established in *Nair* positions would not grant them this opportunity.

Many of these groups might have found various justifications to claim *Nair* titles. Yet, those entrenched in *Nair* positions would neither acknowledge nor permit them to do so.

This is the context of the communities I am about to discuss.

First, I must mention the four groups of *Nairs* considered untouchable by the high-status *Nairs*.

1. Veluthedathu *Nair* (Veluthedan, Vannathan)
2. Vilakkithala *Nair* (Vilakkithalavan)
3. Kadupattan
4. Shaliya, Chaliya (Chaliyan)

1. Veluthedan: This term refers to those who 'create whiteness,' meaning washermen. They are also known as Vannathans, which means 'washerman.'

2. Vilakkithalavan: These are barbers.

3. Kadupattan: Another name for them is Ezhuthachan, meaning those who teach writing.

4. Chaliyan: Also called Theruvan, reportedly because they build homes in their own streets. They are weavers.

Although these four groups have the confidence to call themselves *Nairs*, it seems only some Veluthedans have the audacity and boldness to append the '*Nair*' title to their names. Others likely lacked the courage to do so.

1. Veluthedans: They follow the matrilineal system and strive to adhere to *Nair* customs as much as possible. However, high-status *Nairs*, such as *Attikurissi Nairs*, may not attend their cremation ceremonies. Therefore, a subgroup among them—called Pothuvan, Talikkundavar, or Kavuthiyan—conducts these rituals. These are barbers, whom Veluthedans themselves regard as their lower stratum.

In North Malabar, Vannathans reportedly had eight exogamous *illams* (clans): Kolankada, Malakulangara, Malot, Mundayad, Chelora, and Trichambaram are six of them.

In Ernad and other South Malabar regions, apart from the high-status Veluthedans, there were reportedly three other subgroups. The high-status Veluthedans are called 'Temple Veluthedans.' The other three groups are Vannathan, Mundapadan, and Irankolli. These are considered lower than the first group. The first group is endogamous, meaning they marry within their own caste.

2. Vilakkithalavans: They also strive to follow *Nair* lifestyles as much as possible. In North Malabar, they are divided into two distinct groups: Navithan (or Naviyan) and Valinchian.

In South Malabar, they follow the patrilineal system. However, in North Malabar, Navithans are patrilineal, while Valinchians are matrilineal. Navithans were reportedly divided into several exogamous *illams*, though the English administration could not ascertain their number. Meanwhile, Valinchians were divided into eight *illams* with the same names as those of the Vannathans.

3. Kadupattans: They claim to have been Brahmins from Kadu village in the past but were degraded for supporting Buddhism. They follow the patrilineal system.

4. Chaliyans: According to records in **Malabar and Anjengo**, they are certainly migrants from the eastern coasts of South Asia. The nature of their settlements seems to support this. They reportedly build homes on both sides of their own streets.

The lore associated with them is as follows:

They were reportedly of high caste in the past. A king of Calicut imported them to introduce the Ganapati worship tradition, for which they had an almost obsessive devotion. The king tasked a minister (Mangattachan) with arranging their living facilities. However, the minister grew resentful of their constant complaints about the poor quality of food provided. Secretly, he mixed fish into their food, which disrupted their high-caste status.

The right-hand and left-hand caste division, seen in Madras and other eastern regions of South Asia, is not commonly observed in Malabar. Among Chaliyans, however, this division is reportedly present. The **Travancore State Manual** mentions this right-hand and left-hand division, possibly indicating Travancore's Tamil connections and its lesser ties with Malabar.

Among Chaliyans, this division was reportedly rigid. If the left-hand group touched the right-hand group, the latter considered it a grave offence and defilement. They have a strong devotion to spiritual rituals like Theyyam, with some among them performing as Komarams (oracles). These rituals are conducted for Bhagavathi, Vettakkorumakan, and Gulikan. Their mourning period lasts ten days, akin to that of high castes. The purification rituals are performed by a subgroup among them called 'Thalikkunnavan,' who are considered their lower stratum.

These matters can be examined through the characteristics of feudal language codes.

a. Firstly, migrating to feudal language regions is not like migrating to English-speaking regions. In feudal language regions, one must possess knowledge, relationships, relational indicators, expertise in high-status matters, and a prestigious title in advance. Arriving with low-status relationships, indicators, skills in menial tasks, low-status tools, or an unremarkable title will expose one to the true nature of the much-vaunted Indian hospitality. Once degraded by language codes, it becomes nearly impossible to rise again.

When Jews and Syrian Christians migrated to Travancore, they shrewdly secured high social status through agreements with local petty kings. Thus, instead of becoming slaves, they lived as slave owners in Travancore.

b. Secondly, in feudal language societies, the 'you (highest) - you (lowest)' (**Ingal – Inhi verbal ladder**) dynamic, placing individuals at 180-degree opposite poles, is unavoidable in conversations and references. Consequently, even among communities considered low, they view their own members engaged in menial tasks with disdain and degradation, gradually turning them into a lower subgroup.

c. Thirdly, those who enter from outside and attempt to secure high status with the help of local elites may face betrayal. Feudal language psychology suggests identifying and relegating potential new overlords to the dustbin early on. Note what Mangattachan did.

d. Fourthly, the term '*illam*' was reportedly used by various castes, possibly to emulate *Namboodiris* or to proclaim Brahmin ancestry.

49. Yogi-Gurukkals and Wynadan Chettis

In North Malabar, there is mention of a community called *Yogi-Gurukkals*. Within the local social framework, such as the Ernipadi system, they are considered to be among the lowest strata. Strangely, however, they neither transmit nor carry distance pollution. This means they are permitted to approach high-caste individuals.

The reason for this is quite clear. They were renowned sorcerers, magicians, and exorcists. They perform Shakti worship within their own homes, and they do not grant outsiders access to these rituals. At the same time, they conduct these pujas for *Nairs* and *Tiyas* upon request.

A point to note here, slightly off-topic, is that this may support the claim that matrilineal *Tiyas* in North Malabar do not transmit distance pollution.

This is because if *Yogi-Gurukkals* performed puja ceremonies for a caste that transmits distance pollution, they might not subsequently gain access to *Nairs*.

It is also recorded that *Yogi-Gurukkals* were professionally schoolteachers. Before the English rule in Malabar, it seems unlikely that there were general schools in North Malabar. Therefore, their professional role as teachers likely pertains to the period of English rule.

Another intriguing detail is that, like ascetics, they bury their dead in a seated position, with legs crossed.

Another community in North Malabar is the *Wynadan Chettis*. They were reportedly a small group confined to Wynad. In appearance and customs, they are said to resemble *Nairs* closely, though it is not clearly stated which level of *Nairs* they are similar to or equal with.

All communities below *Nairs* were considered untouchable to them.

However, their matrimonial customs include not only Malabar coastal traditions but also those from the eastern coast of South Asia. How customs from the Madras coast reached these people in the heavily forested region of Wynad is a matter worth pondering.

They follow the matrilineal system. Additionally, they have a custom of tali-tying marriage. This is performed on the 10th day after a lowest-level girl becomes menstruating. Two talis are tied on the lowest-level girl: one by her mother's brother and the other by an elderly woman of the family.

In other words, the tali-tying marriage is not equivalent to what is understood as marriage today. Rather, it was likely a ceremony related to a lowest-level girl reaching puberty. This is not certain.

These Chettis were reportedly very bold hunters. One of their pastimes was hunting tigers (*nari*).

(The term '*nari*' seems to refer to a tiger in Malabari language. This word does not appear in modern Malayalam, it seems.)

This hunt was also reportedly linked to their spiritual customs.

They would confine the tiger within a net six feet high, gradually tightening the net. Then, they would stab the tiger to death with a spear. They did not skin the dead tiger's hide. Instead, they stretched the carcass on a pole and raised it. This was reportedly an offering to their deity.

The **Malabar Manual** mentions these *Wynadan Chettis* in connection with Pazhassi Raja.

In a letter dated 30th November 1805, T. H. Baber, Sub-Collector of the Northern Division of Malabar, wrote to the Principal Collector of Malabar Province about them. The reference paints a very negative opinion of them:

'... the most wealthy and numerous of whom were the Chetties and Goundas,— a vile servile race of mortals, who are strangers to every honest sentiment, and whom nothing but one uniform system of severity ever will prevent from the commission of every species of deceit and treachery.'

It is understood that *Wynadan Chettis* were supporters of Pazhassi Raja.

T. H. Baber also mentions the *Nairs* of Wynad in this letter:

'The Soodra (Sudra) or Nair (Nayar) part of the community were more to be depended upon; there was an honest frankness about them which you could not but admire, ...' END.

50. About the Nairs in Travancore

I must now discuss the *Nairs* in Travancore. For this, I am examining **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2.

Certain points are clearly evident in **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2.

Firstly, there is a new claim emerging subtly in this second volume that British-Malabar and Travancore are two parts of the same region.

Secondly, there is a baseless notion, along with efforts to justify it, that the communities in these two regions are mostly of the same kind.

Thirdly, there is great reverence for Hindu traditions, particularly Brahmin traditions, and attempts to glorify them.

Fourthly, various indications, gathered from here and there, are displayed to suggest that *Nairs* are a magnificent community.

For this reason, **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 feels very different from **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 1. However, V. Nagam Aiya is recorded as the author of both volumes.

Much of what is written about *Nairs* in **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 appears to be intertwined with details about *Nairs* in North Malabar and South Malabar. As a result, extracting specific information about Travancore *Nairs* from this volume presents some difficulty.

The volume clearly states that *Nairs* in North Malabar consider themselves superior to those in South Malabar.

QUOTE from **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2:

The Nayars of North Malabar consider themselves to be socially higher than those of South Malabar clan for clan. END.

There is no issue with this point being mentioned in the volume.

However, it could have indicated that Travancore *Nairs* are distinct from those in Malabar. Furthermore, there is no clear attempt to specify whether Travancore *Nairs* are equivalent to those in North Malabar or South Malabar, or who their equals are.

It need not be specifically stated that *Nairs* in English rule regions likely had more individuality than those in Travancore. This is because Travancore *Nairs* likely led their daily lives by constantly serving *Namboodiris* and royal families with deference and obeisance.

In contrast, under English rule, newer generations of Malabar *Nairs* likely lived with great pride and without significant servility.

Moreover, the necessity of providing household women for loose sexual relationships with *Namboodiris* would have diminished in Malabar. This is because English rule was conducted according to written laws, rendering sycophancy through offering women useless henceforth.

Furthermore, the influence of the so-called Vedic Indian culture, theorised to have existed somewhere in the northern regions of the subcontinent, and the spiritual manipulation used to subjugate communities, would have been fading in Malabar.

It need not be specifically stated that Travancore *Nairs* would have been eager to claim a connection with the proud *Nairs* of Malabar.

With the advent of English rule in Malabar and the establishment of new social norms defining family ties as 'wife-husband and their children,' significant changes likely occurred in the mindset of Travancore *Nairs* as well. This is likely true.

Consequently, there is a tendency in this volume to gradually erase from historical records the loose male-female relationships among *Nairs*, as well as the polyandry family systems that existed in some places among them.

What is observed is akin to the English expression 'cherry-picking.' That is, selectively gathering only the desired indications from historical records to re-present *Nairs* in a new manner.

Whatever new aspects English rule highlights in British-Malabar are presented in **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2 as if they were always part of *Nair* tradition, subtly woven into certain sections about *Nairs*.

In **Native Life in Travancore** by Rev. Samuel Mateer, *Nairs* are presented under a chapter titled 'Malayalam *Sudras*.' This volume also contains a rather shallow account of *Nairs*. There is no evidence that

either V. Nagam Aiya or Rev. Mateer resided in Malabar. This raises the question of how they could write about Malabar’s social matters with such authority.

Travancore State Manual Vol. 2 states that a recent Census identified around 130 subgroups among *Nairs*, but primarily mentions five distinct *Nair* communities.

Although the volume attempts to include Malabar *Nairs*, it seems to lack clear information about them.

The five *Nair* communities mentioned are:

1. *Kiriyathil* Nayars – It is said that these are primarily found in Cochin and British-Malabar.

It is unclear why they were included in a Travancore government publication. If the intent was to discuss all *Nairs*, the volume does not mention the many high-status *Nairs* in North Malabar.

QUOTE from **Travancore State Manual** Vol. 2:

Kiriyathil Nayars. These belong more to Cochin and British Malabar than to Travancore and are supposed to represent the highest class.
END

2. Illakkars – *These were reportedly the highest Nair community in Travancore. They earned this name due to their tradition of performing special religious and domestic services in Namboodiri illams.*

At the time of **Travancore State Manual**’s publication, *Nair* families serving in *illams* such as Azhvanchery, Pattazhi, Sripadam, Kumaranallur, Kollur, Neduvazhi, and Tennur reportedly existed. These services are referred to as 'special' in the volume. However, it can be understood that the term 'special' is used to shield these domestic services from the degrading terminology of feudal language.

This is because only *Nairs* had access to work in *Namboodiri illams* and residences.

It can be assumed they performed tasks such as cleaning rooms, grinding rice, washing dishes, sifting grains, winnowing, and washing clothes. However, due to the feudal language atmosphere and the emerging environment in nearby English rule regions where communities were breaking free from social constraints, the authors who contributed to this volume likely avoided explicitly mentioning these tasks.



Yet, it appears V. Nagam Aiya undermined this effort by including a photograph. This is the image provided above. I personally know that matrilineal *Thiyya* individuals in Tellicherry and surrounding areas, who thrived under the English rule environment, possessed tenfold more individuality than the individuals in this photograph.

What can be inferred from these matters is that while V. Nagam Aiya was writing these volumes, several other individuals intervened, inserting their own ideas and writings. During proofreading, they likely demanded the removal of information they found distasteful.

V. Nagam Aiya himself mentions those who assisted him in his efforts.

I have had that aid from all sides — officers of Government, retired public servants, vakils, journalists, private individuals, land-lords, planters, bankers, merchants, agriculturists, Vydyans, Mantravadis, Christian metrans, bishops and missionaries and numerous other correspondents of divers sorts. END

It can be assumed that most of these assistants were *Nairs* or from communities above them. It can be inferred that they desired to present only information that would impress British officials in nearby English rule regions.

This is similar to the case of Indians in England and America today. They have no interest in letting others know the true social conditions of India.

I have personally experienced that if it is mentioned there that the languages here are utterly base, it provokes intense personal animosity.

Instead, they present and introduce their South Asian homeland through the mesmerising visuals of Hindi films and the enchanting beauty of songs from old Malayalam films.

To be continued 👉

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Original writings

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