BECOMING CITIZENS

Transformations of State and Jati in Colonial Keralam

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P S MANOJ KUMAR

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P S Manoj kumar

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Glossary

Acharam	Customary Practices
Anacharam	Practices not found elsewhere, peculiar to Keralam
Antharjanam	Nampoothiri woman
Brahmaswom	Land possessed by Brahmins
Devaswom	Temple Property
Karanavars	Male head of household, who was in managerial capacity
Kovilakam	Household of Royal Family
Koyma	Suzerain
Makkathayam	Patriliny
Marumakkathayam	Matriliny
Parivedanam	Same caste marriage by Younger sons of a Namboothiri Family
Poorvacharams	Traditional customs
Sambandham	Connubial relationship between Nair women and Namboodiri, Ambalavasi or Nair males; Among Ambalavasis, relationship between women and Namboothiri
Sanketam	Temple territories controlled by Brahmins- considered as sacred
Smartavicharam	Trial by the Smartan under the orders of ruler

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Tarawad	Nair Household
Urala	Temple Trustee

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Abbreviations

EPW	Economic and Political Weekly
INC	Indian National Congress
LMS	London Missionary Society
OUP	Oxford University Press

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Introduction

Becoming citizens and acquiring the status of citizenship in Keralam was a laborious process. These were neither easy task, nor were they peacefully bloomed but were a result of a complex socio- political and cultural process which demanded the pains and lives of so many people. The socio- political and cultural situations during the period from the last decade of 18th c to the early decades of 20th c- the period of British colonialism in Keralam- witnessed these processes.

The history of the British colonialism in Keralam begins with the gaining of Malabar as the spoils of war by the English East India Company from the Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan through the Treaty of Srirangapattana in 1792. This marked the beginning not only of the colonial administration but of the series of socio- political and religious transitions in Keralam.

In the period from the last decade of 18th century to the early decades of 20th century, there were serious attempts on the part of the colonial administrators and the responding natives to confront the *jati* structure which existed in Keralam, which in its functional and epistemological dimensions maintained umbilical relationship with the traditional state structures. Thus in those days, any attempts to engage with the *jati* were in effect the engagements with the state structures.

The colonial administration had seriously engaged with the native administrative modalities and attempted to transform it thoroughly. The attempts to develop the colonial

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administrative modalities and to hegemonize the state functions in Keralam on the part of the British compelled the old state structure to transform. The engagements of the colonial state apparatus with the society of Keralam paved the way not only for the transformation of the traditional state structures but it in a way led to the collapse of the traditional jati structure which was prevalent. The social engagements and the emerging political trends carved out a sort of state structure, which relied upon the knowledge regarding the social components and processes in Keralam. This, informed state was an aberration from the traditional state structure and the governance associated with it.

The engagements with the jati structure and the guardian state was not that easy as there were tough resistances in *Keralam* from various *jati*s which enjoyed various rights and privileges for the reason that they were placed at the center of the jati system and as such functioned as the wielders of the state powers. But the historical situations provided by the domination of the British over the social and political domains and the movements which the intellectuals and people belonging to the lower castes launched which attacked the existing ideological and political domination of Brahmindom provided a socio- political setting which formed a firm base to attack and surpass the ideological and political masquerading of ritual and knowledge supremacy of the Brahmins and social reservations that the superior caste people claimed. Simultaneously, in these historical situations which provided the emergence of new state structure and the transformations of jati structure, the individualization and the processes for becoming the citizens were being materialized. Along with these certain concepts regarding the rights too were being taking shape.

In this study, attempts are made to comprehend four matters. (1) How the *jati*s functioned in the society and what the nature of relations between the State and *jati* was in the pre- British period. (2) What integral differences did the British bring into change the structure of the *jati* and what were the policies of the British which materialized this change.

(3) How did the traditional power elements (the dominant jatis) react to the British attitudes and how the British administrators handled the situation? (4) How did the interface between the traditional forces and the new situations emerge out of the policies and administration of the British which necessitated the formation of a new state structure? (5) The study will also focus on how the native intelligentsia challenged the traditional state systems normalized/ legitimized by the *jâti* system. In this category, the efforts of the administrators, socio- religious reformers, political intelligentsia etc. were focused.