

## ELEMENTS OF CASTE AND COMMUNAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE MALAYALI MEMORIAL OF MODERN TRAVANCORE (1891)

Article Particulars: Received: 13.03.2018 Accepted: 02.04.2018 Published: 28.04.2018

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### Abstract

*In 1891 there were 31,200 foreign Brahmins in Travancore, constituting 1.22% of the total population and 1.67% of the total Hindus.<sup>1</sup> They were a heterogeneous people consisting of Tamil Brahmins, Kanarese Brahmins, Telugu Brahmins and Maratha Brahmins. Of the different classes of population in Travancore, these foreign Brahmins were the first and foremost to avail themselves of the advantages of western education. The foreign Brahmins had their control over Travancore trade and commerce and many of them came as traders, grain merchants, cloth dealers, stockbrokers and moneylenders. When Dewan Munroe relinquished his Dewanship, a Telugu Brahmin was placed in that post and since then the authorities treated this post as one reserved for the Telugu Brahmins. The non-malayali Brahmins held the Dewanship continuously until 1877 and only one Travancore Nayar was ever to be Dewan again.<sup>2</sup>*

**Keywords:** *foreign Brahmins, western education, Telugu Brahmins, Travancore Nayar, Rao Dewans, communal consciousness*

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The so-called Rao Dewans filled many of the administrative positions in Travancore with their kith and kin as part of their caste and communal consciousness. Later when a few Travancore communities mobilised their community members against this foreign monopoly, it gave a universal character to the process of Communalism in Travancore. One of the major advantages of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Travancore non-Brahmins was their high percentage of literacy, which elevated their high ritual status. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century they became capable of controlling almost all sections of economy and social life of the state much more effectively than the Namboodiri Brahmins. A third of the merchants listed in the Travancore Almanac of 1881 and most of the moneylenders were non-malayali Brahmins.<sup>3</sup> The negative attitude of the native Nambudiri Brahmins towards Government jobs also proved to be an advantage of the foreign Brahmins. When the Partisan attitude and the nepotism of the Rao Dewans continued, the protest came from different directions. In 1845 the British Government asked Dewan Reddi Rao to dismiss some of his favourites who were placed in key positions in Travancore administration.<sup>4</sup> The Brahmin Dewans filled up all-important offices of the state by bringing Brahmins from outside the state. This tendency produced two effects; first it denied equal or just opportunities to the qualified subjects of the state and second it generated an irresponsible hatred towards the Brahmins, which became more and more pronounced in course of time. The Malayali Memorial was the natural culmination of this prolonged discontent. The non-malayali Brahmins who had only 25244 population occupied 45% of the Travancore Government employment. Among the jobs bearing the monthly salary of Rs.10, the natives got only 17% There were no Malayalis who had the salary about 500 rupees. But at the same time the foreign Brahmins monopolised all the posts having the monthly salaries of Rupees 2000, 1200, 1000, 700-800, 600-700 and 500-600. Even though there were sufficient qualified persons from the Nayar community, they were overpowered by the foreign Brahmins.<sup>5</sup> In the Travancore Almanac, it was shown that the Travancore Public Service contained 3,407 officers drawing a salary of Rs.10/- and above per month. Among them 1650 were Malayali Hindus, 1440 were foreign Hindus and 272 were Christians.<sup>6</sup> The table (2.4) clearly show the position enjoyed by the non-malayali Brahmins and other savarnas in the Travancore Civil Service. The foreign Brahmins possessed mounting influence not only in the field of government

employment but also in other walks of life. The Orthodox piety of a long line of Travancore kings made the position of the non-malayali Brahmins safe in the society. The complete exemption from capital punishments and the free feeding offered by the state served as added advantages to this class of people. They had their virtual monopoly in trade and education. In the 1880's Travancore had about 500 non-malayali Brahmin traders. A third of the Thiruvananthapuram merchants listed in the Travancore Almanac for 1881 were non-malayali Brahmins who dealt primarily in rice, cloth and tobacco.<sup>7</sup> High social position and economic independence offered the non-malayali Brahmins freedom from life bondage and provided constant leisure time for cultural exercise. They started several cultural associations and clubs in different places of the state.<sup>8</sup> Generally the Travancore Government showed interest in appointing the non-malayali Brahmins in important departments, especially in courts, revenue, health, public works and education. Among the graduates who passed out from Maharaja College, Thiruvananthapuram, the majority of them were non-malayali Brahmins. Like the other parts of South India, which were the fertile grounds for anti-Brahmin movements, signs of discontent against the non-malayali Brahmin domination heard in Travancore also.<sup>9</sup> In Maharashtra the non-Brahmin movement found expression through Satya Sodhak Samaj and in Tamil Nadu the Dravidian movements directed against the Brahmins.<sup>10</sup> But in Travancore this movement started not as anti-Brahmanism but as protest at outsider domination.

In the Pre-British times the number of men absorbed by the administrative service and professions were relatively insignificant. The modernisation of the administration and the introduction of English as the language in the administrative circles created a growing demand for qualified men. Middle class families of the Tamil Brahmins, Nairs and Syrian Christians were among the earliest in Travancore to take advantage in the increasing numbers of new openings offered by the introduction of Western education.<sup>11</sup> The new developments affected the Nair community more seriously than any others. It seriously weakened the Nair joint family and loosened their hold on the land. To them landed property proved to be a burden rather than an asset. As a result of their attachment to unproductive jobs, the Nairs had shown only little aptitude for industry and trade and these areas were under the control of the Tamil Brahmins and the Syrian Christians. Aspirations for positions in administrative departments developed among the new elites of the Nair community. During that time certain administrative posts were considered as dignified not only to the person who possessed it but also to the entire community to which he belonged. They considered the Government jobs safe and stable. The Western education and western culture influenced the Nair community in two directions. Firstly as part of adjusting with the new atmosphere the educated Nairs began to question the foreign Brahmin domination over the government service and secondly they tried to reform the outdated taravadu system and March forward through community-oriented works. The Nairs quickly responded to the new educational opportunities and there by continued their overwhelming numerical control of the sirkar service.<sup>12</sup> in 1861 there were 269 schools functioned in Travancore. Its number grew to 517 in 1862. In these schools there were 171 Nairs, 123 Brahmins and 119 Tamil Sudras. Padmanabha Pillai, who was instructed in Madras at Travancore Government expense, became the first Travancore Nair to take a B.A. Degree and was immediately taken into government service. In Travancore service in 1869 there were nine-degree holders. Among the early 14 graduates of Travancore, 10 were foreign Brahmins, 3 Nairs and 1 Syrian christian.<sup>13</sup> Thus the Nairs had gained extensive employment in government service. But they saw their way to the top being blocked by non-malayali Brahmins. They were forced to react against the non-malayali Brahmin monopoly to make their forward march safe and for achieving the same they needed the support of other communities including numerically important low caste Hindus like the Ezhavas. The Christians and the Ezhavas who already had their grievances against the existing system and who needed recognition in the society had no other option than to ally with the Nairs.<sup>14</sup> In Travancore the claim of the "sons of the soil" and

communal alliance began with the Malayali Memorial of 1891 and directed against the non-malayali Brahmins. Under this background regionalism, factionalism, sectarianism and casteism gained momentum with the intention of obtaining economic upliftment, social elevation and political privileges to each caste group.<sup>15</sup>

The Malayali Memorial of 1891 was known thus not because it was submitted by the Malayalis or it represented the Malayalis, but because it was the initiative of Malayali Sabha, an organisation of the Travancore Nairs. During this period the Nairs used the term 'Malayali' to denote Nair community alone as against the foreigners. The justification for the use of this term was that the foreign Brahmins spoke languages other than Malayalam and the majority of other Keralites were lower castes.<sup>16</sup> To begin with a few English educated Nair young men led by P.Thanu Pillai started a cultural association in 1877 called Malayali Social Union.<sup>17</sup> Thanu Pillai was supported in his venture by C.V.Raman Pillai, P.A.Ayyappan Pillai and V.I.Kesava Pillai. The association received a set back when in 1883 Thanu Pillai was transferred from Thiruvananthapuram to Kollam. However it was revived by C.Krishna Pillai when he took its charge in 1884. He was assisted by T. Kunjuraman Nair, T.R.Narayana Pillai, Kunchu Variyar and M.Govinda Pillai.<sup>18</sup> In 1886 the name of Malayali Social Union was changed as Malayali Sabha. In Travancore the earliest chapter of the organised community works began with Malayali Sabha.<sup>19</sup> This organisation aimed at cultural and social activities. The leaders include T.R.Narayana Pillai, T.Kunjuraman Nair, Govinda Pillai, C.V.Raman Pillai, Nanu Pillai, P.Thanu Pillai, Kavalam Narayana Pillai, Ayyappan Pillai, Achuthan Thampi, Sivan Pillai, Kochukunju Pillai etc. In the beginning the Travancore royal family patronised it and Travancore Maharaja became the patron while a few members of the royal family functioned as vice patrons. By 1887 it had 900 members, 14 branches and 25 schools. The organisation sponsored a few Nairs for taking degrees and started technical institutions like that of the Industrial Institutes at Nemam. Even though a few non-nairs including non-malayali Brahmins became its members, the social aim of the Malayali Sabha were centred on Nair community.<sup>20</sup> When Krishna Pillai was transferred to Mavelikkara, C.V.Raman Pillai became the secretary. In 1886 a newspaper called *Malayali* was started with E.Raman Pillai as editor. But later C.V. Raman Pillai assumed this charge. Very soon the Malayali Sabha started taking an active part in the political affairs of the state and criticised the Dewan and other officials for their pro-non-malayali Brahmin attitude. Very soon the centre of attack on the administration of Travancore became Madras where Malayali Sabha had its own friends. G.Parameswaran Pillai was prominent among them.<sup>21</sup> When he was a student of the Maharajas College he wrote in the *Cochin Argus* and *Madras Standard* articles attacking the unpopular policy of Travancore Dewan Vembakam Ramayankar, using a pseudonym 'Pro Patria' (A Lover of His Country).<sup>21</sup> He also wrote through the columns of *Western Star*, a fortnightly paper edited by Melvill Walker and published from Cochin. So he was expelled from the Maharajas College along with his two friends, E.N.Raman Pillai, son of Dewan Nanu Pillai and R.Ranga Rao, son of R.Raghunath Rao, a retired Dewan Peshkar. After his expulsion G.P continued his study in the Presidency College, Madras. Perhaps his expulsion marked the beginning of political agitation in Travancore.<sup>22</sup> He has been rightly called the "Father of Political Agitation in Travancore." In his writings G.P vehemently criticised the nepotism of the Travancore Rao Dewans. In one of his writings in Athenaeum newspaper he wrote, "In a country which is already flooded with Raos, many of whom are his own relations and friends, a country where the Dewan, the Chief Justice, two of the four Dewan Peshkars, the Director of Vernacular Instruction, the Head of the Peravagay Department, the Sheristadar of the Devaswom Department, the Head of the Elephant Department, the Superintendent of the Mint, two of the three Supervisors and two Superintendents of the Salt Department, two Munsiffs and three Tahsildars and a host of minor officials are Raos, fresh Raos are being raised to high and responsible officers..."<sup>23</sup> In 1887 when the Governor of Madras Lord Cannamera declared his intention to visit Travancore, G.P.Pillai wrote, "An open letter to Lord Cannamera" in which he

criticised the Travancore Maharaja, the Resident and chief Secretary to the Government of Travancore.<sup>24</sup> When G.P.Pillai became the editor of *Madras Standard* in 1892 he started a special column for attacking the Travancore Dewan and his favourites. He did not hesitate to attack even the Maharaja and the royal favourite Saravani. G.P. did not find any difficulty in getting data about Travancore political developments because the members of Malayali Sabha provided information to him. The general complaint was that the Nair section of the population was being subjected to humiliation, the state tightening cord around the neck of its members by denying them proper remuneration and keeping them from a “proportionate share” in the administration of the state.<sup>25</sup> Parameswaran and other leaders of the Malayali Sabha like Ayyappan Pillai, C.V.Raman Pillai and P.Thanu Pillai used their talents through these writings and speeches to reinstate the lost virtues of the Nair community. C.V.Raman Pillai's writings were very noteworthy in this respect.<sup>26</sup> *The Madras Standard* criticised not only the Dewan Rama Rao's partially for Brahmins, but also to his friendly relations with Christians. Here again was the implication that the only real Malayalis were Nairs.<sup>27</sup> In 1870 G.P.Pillai wrote and published a pamphlet “Travancore for Travancoreans” which was an assertion of the sons of the soil concept. The Malayali Memorial of 1891 was a modified form of the pamphlet “Travancore for Travancoreans”. It was launched by the middle class of Travancore under the leadership of the Nairs. The leaders of Malayali Sabha and the middle class of other communities raised serious apprehension against the monopoly of Brahmins in the newly constituted Legislative Council. When the new council was created in 1888, of the nine members the Dewan who acted as the President was a Tamil Brahmin. Except one European Christian and three Nairs, all the others were Brahmins.<sup>28</sup> The publication of ‘A summary of return of the public servants in the state’ by Dewan Rama Rao (1887-92) first disclosed to the public the unjust distribution of Government appointments among the different classes of His Highness' subjects.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Malayali Memorial- 1891**

The leaders of Malayali Sabha decided to prepare a memorial and submit it to the Travancore Maharaja. The idea of the memorial and its necessary homework were done at Madras by the English educated middle class Nair leaders-G.Parameswaran Pillai, C.V.Raman Pillai, N.Raman Pillai and K.P.Sankara Menon. An eminent advocate Norton helped them. After preparing the preliminary draft the leaders reached Travancore early in 1890 for giving popularity to their efforts. K.P.Sankara Menon and G.P.Pillai took the leadership. Leaders like C.Krishna Pillai, C.V.Raman Pillai, P.S.Sivan Pillai and Kavalam Neelakanda Pillai being government officials, worked behind the curtain only. The petition was circulated in February 1890 and by June 10,000 people have signed it. The Nair leaders never forgot to get the support of other Malayalm speaking communities. It gave a practical application to regionalism or the sons of the soil concept.<sup>30</sup> With their support the idea of 'Travancorean' received wide currency. The middle class leaders of other communities were also willing to co-operate with the new initiative because official circles had ignored their sentiments as well. As early as in 1873 the Syrian Christians wrote articles in the newspaper *Paschima Tharaka* against the foreign Brahmin domination. They had the feeling that educationally they were at par with the Nairs and they should have a legitimate share in government jobs. The Ezhava leaders were for minimum social justice.<sup>31</sup> The decision to submit the Memorial was taken at a public meeting convened at Kottayam on the initiative of persons like Kandathil Varghese Mappilai and G.P.Pillai.<sup>32</sup> P.Sivan Pillai worked at Nagercoil and Kavalam Neelakanda Pillai concentrated in central Travancore for popularising signature campaign. Financial aspects were delt by C.V.Raman Pillai.<sup>33</sup> The Malayali Memorial was submitted by K.P.Sankara Menon by personally visiting the royal palace to the Maharaja Sri Moolam Thirunal on 11 January 1891 which carried the signatures of 10038 people belonging to various castes and

occupations. This petition was also known as Travancore Memorial was the expression of first organised community based movement in Travancore.

The Malayali Memorial of 1891 pleaded for the first time in Travancore the need for job reservation for the qualified persons at par with the numerical strength of the communities. The same demand was later on raised, but not initiated by the leaders of Malayali Memorial. For the sake of community interests the community leaders later included a few other additions to their demands.<sup>34</sup>The Malayali Memorial was a petition of the Malayali Sabha, an organisation of the Nairs so also the term 'Malayali' in the Memorial mainly meant the Nairs. But when the interests of the Nair community leaders allied with the interests of a few other communities, they also joined with the Nairs. But once the communities joined together and started their campaign, their movement attained the character of the first organised political movement of Travancore. It was their community interests and caste consciousness that directed them against the foreign Brahmins. The protested communities considered their movements against Brahmin monopoly as reflections of national feeling, placing Travancore as nation. These community leaders were also concerned about the growth of population in Travancore. From 1875 to 1891 the Travancore population increased by 10%.<sup>35</sup> But the one community, except non-malayali Brahmins who were educationally fit for entering in the political and administrative fields in Travancore in 1891 was the Nair community. In that sense the so-called national feeling meant nothing but the feeling of Nair community. It was because of this factor that towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Travancore national consciousness gained the character of a communal consciousness. The communal renaissance and the Travancore national renaissance were closely related together and developed with intimate relations.<sup>36</sup> To put in other sense in the early period, the national movement had not made its impact in Travancore. But at the same time organisations capable of questioning the actions of the Dewan and officials developed in Travancore. Malayali Sabha was a notable example.<sup>37</sup>The Nair leaders of Malayali Sabha took the initiative for Malayali Memorial because of their sectarian interests.<sup>38</sup>In the Malayali Memorial the first signatory was K.P.Sankara Menon. Dr.Palpu was the third signatory of the Memorial. Other leading signatories include P.Velayudhan, John Nidhiri and C.V.Raman Pillai.<sup>39</sup> Only the names and the occupations of the first 250 signatories were printed in the Memorial though it claimed to express the grievances of all Malayalis. The memorial did not treat all the Malayalis together. In the statistics of the memorial Sudras, Ezhavas and Christians were treated separately. Communities like Muslims, Pulayas, Parayas, Mukkuvas, Kuravans etc. were not considered in the Memorial, even though they also represented the Malayali communities.<sup>40</sup>While addressing the grievances of the natives, the primarily focus was always on the Nairs, the Memorial reiterated their prestigious yester years and lamented their sorry plight primary due to the intervention of the non- Malayali Brahmins.<sup>41</sup>The Memorial was conspicuously silent over the position of native Brahmins. The Memorial excluded the Europeans, Jews and Muslims from consideration, the latter being dismissed with the remark that among them "education was at a very low ebb."<sup>42</sup>Among the 250 signatories, landlords were 132 (About 90 Nairs), 63 employed or retired (about 55 Nayars) and 27 Vakils and Pleaders (about 23 Nayars).<sup>43</sup> In Travancore regionalism and communalism was inaugurated by the Malayali Memorial of 1891. More over the Memorial projected the interests of only the educated middle class and not the Travancore masses. This was the first instance when people of different communities and religions combined for the realisation of a common cause. One intriguing question here is why the elite of these major communities joined together while what was natural was the clash of their interests.<sup>44</sup> One explanatory answer is that even though the participant communities of the memorial faced different and conflicting problems, they all treated the foreign Hindus as their common rivals. For popularising the movements the leaders of the Memorial used in its fullest advantage the regional and communal sentiments of the people. It set the pace for united action and resulted into the subsequent communal politics of this state.

The memorialists treated the non-malayali Brahmins as the foreigners even if they settled and commingled with the natives from very early times. But such a treatment was later questioned when the non-malayali Brahmins submitted a counter memorial. The memorial of 1891 alleged that the non-malayali Brahmins had no legitimate right to live as natives enjoying the fruits of Travancore. The memorial said, "Travancore certainly cannot with any amount of truth be said to have been conquered by the foreign Brahmins and they are in no way entitled to play the Englishman in this state. They live and thrive here comfortably owing to the numerous state charities offered to them and the enormous state patronage to which they have not a particle of right in preference to natives..."<sup>45</sup>The Memorial further argued that the foreign Brahmins not only did enjoy the benefits of Travancore but also drained the resources of the state when said, "During the past seventy years, Travancore has been continuously drained of its resources by a number of foreign officials established therefore temporary purpose only, who have drawn considerable sums of money in the shape of salaries, pensions, gratuities etc. The wealth that they have carried and are still carrying out of the country is immense; and it has not been possible for the people to replace it in any way."<sup>46</sup> According to the memorialists foreign men employed in a foreign soil are merely birds of passage and their accumulated earnings would only go to swell the resources of a foreign land.<sup>47</sup>The memorial ventilated the grievances of the Ezhava community and pointed out that the Ezhavas did not hold even a single appointment in the higher services of the state. It said, "Worse than all, there is not a single representative of the Tiyya community holding any government appointment on Rs.5 or upwards a month in the state, though intelligent and educated men are not wanting among them..."<sup>48</sup>The grievances of the Syrian Christians were also treated in the memorial. But due to stress has been given to the interests of the Nair community.<sup>49</sup>Towards the concluding remarks of the memorial the Christians and Ezhavas did not figure at all when it said, "As the Malayali Sudras are the most loyal portion of your Highness' subjects, as they are in point of intelligence, general culture and attainments not behind any other class in the country, as they were from the earliest times till within the last few years the ruling race in the land, and as it is that they mainly contribute to the resources of the state... their claim on your Highness' government are far stronger than those of any other class in the country."<sup>50</sup>Except the Nair community none of the component communities of the Memorial had such past glory as to cherish for its return.<sup>51</sup>

The memorialists wanted the government to define and distinguish between 'Natives' and 'Foreigners' in Travancore. Their demand was to define the term "Native of Travancore" in which the same term as "Native of India" is defined in British law and restrict the appointments as much as possible to none but 'natives' irrespective of class, caste or creed. Among the signatories of the memorial there were land lords, merchants and officials.<sup>52</sup>The organisers succeeded in eliciting the public opinion to a certain extent by kindling their communal spirit and regional sentiments. People who signed the Memorial also signed it first as Nairs, Ezhavas and Christians and Travancore sentiments came only next.<sup>53</sup>After submitting the Memorial the leaders gave wide publicity through meetings and press reports. The Malayali Memorial received the support of the press in Travancore and outside. The leading newspaper *Malayala Manorama* published an editorial on 24 January 1891 praising the Malayali Memorial agitation in which it argued, "As per the 1889 Travancore almanac there were 3407 jobs in Travancore carrying the monthly emolument of Rs.10/- and more. The persons who possessed these jobs were: Malayali Sudras-1875, Nanchinad Sudras-75, Nazranis-76, Ezhavas-0 and other castes-0. Among 1144 jobs enjoyed by the foreign Hindus, the Brahmins possessed 1000. The editorial warned that it is likely that irremediable losses might happen to the states out of the internal dissensions gradually if the various communities in the state were not given due share in the service proportionate to the population."<sup>54</sup>Through another editorial the paper expressed full satisfaction for the submission of the memorial. It pointed out that the persons drawing the monthly salary of more than 15 rupees; the Nairs outnumbered the foreign Brahmins.<sup>55</sup>The Hindu wrote that such a largely signed Memorial was an unmistakable indication of a long standing and wide spread discontents which it was not wise to disregard.

The government responded to the Memorial very slowly. In April 1891 the Dewan Rama Rao sent an endorsement to K.P. Sankara Menon in which the government tried to reject the grievances raised in the Memorial. The Dewan justified the employment policies of the government. He also pointed out that it was difficult to draw a demarcation line between the native Hindus and foreign Hindus because for generations the latter had adopted Travancore as their home and hence entitled its considerations and protections as natives. However at the command of the Maharaja he agreed to meet “a small deputation from the petitioners not exceeding six in number and hear and discuss them any plan they may have to lay before the government.”<sup>56</sup>This gave sufficient time to the non-Malayali Brahmins who were already watching the move of the Nair leaders to prepare and submit a Counter Memorial to neutralise the impact of the Malayali Memorial.<sup>57</sup>They organised themselves under the leadership of E.Ramier and R.Ramanatha Rao and submitted a Counter Memorial to the government on 3 June 1891. Malayala Manorama through an editorial criticised the Counter Memorial and pointed out that most of their allegations grew out of their jealousy. For giving a national character the counter memorialists also enrolled the Muslims, Christians, Nambudiris, Vellalas, Ezhavas and even some Nairs. Both the groups held meetings in different places of Travancore. The Memorial faction was defended by persons like G.P.Pillai, K.C.Kesava Pillai, K.Narayanan Thampi, Sivan Pillai, Marthomas Athanasius, Neelakanda Pillai and others while the Counter Memorialists had such leaders as Mar Gregorius, Jacobite Bishop, Muslim and Nambudiri speakers.<sup>58</sup> The memorialists criticised that those who crossed the Western Ghats to Kerala “for free meals or for a job as cook were influencing the decision making process at the highest level”, while the anti memorialists retaliated that “the intellectual and moral works and professional attainments alone should be the criteria for government employment.”<sup>59</sup> On 2 July 1891 both the groups met the Dewan in his chamber for discussion. The deputation of the Malayali Memorial consisted of Sankara Menon, G.P.Pillai, Kavalam Neelakanda Pillai, P.Sivan Pillai, Sirciac Nidhiry and P.K.Padmanabha Pillai.<sup>60</sup>The counter memorial delegation was headed by E.Ramier. Even though the meeting with the Dewan Rama Rao ended smoothly, it proved useless to the Malayali Memorialists. Not only that during his period, Rama Rao disfavoured the leaders of Malayali Sabha. But when the new Dewan Sankara Subbayer took charge he followed favouritism towards the eaders of Malayali Sabha and he succeeded in reaching a tacit understanding with the official Nairs. As a result all the major Nair leaders who signed in the Malayali Memorial got very attractive lucrative jobs. C.V.Raman Pillai became the High court Manager. V.I.Kesava Pillai was appointed as the First Class Magistrate who later became the Dewan Peishkar. P.Ayyappan Pillai became the School Inspector and later Educational Secretary. While C.M.Madhavan Pillai was appointed as Huzur Deputy Peishkar, K.P.Sankara Narayana Menon became District Judge. All these placements were made before 1900.<sup>61</sup> It was due to his commitment that C.V.Raman Pillai when wrote a work “Videseeya Medhavithvam” in 1920 praised Sankara Subbayer and the Travancore Government.<sup>62</sup>

Even though the Malayali Memorial was the first organised political movement of Travancore for social justice, only the Nair community leaders emerged the immediate beneficiaries.<sup>63</sup>The Government considered the Ezhava leaders as a group who were imported into the memorial. When a police Superintendent tried to recruit a few Ezhavas into the Police Force, Dewan Sankara Subbier refused permission.<sup>64</sup>Once the official Nairs got promotions and placements they lent scant attention to the activities of the Malayali Sabha. Thus the Malayali Memorial agitation bore fruit to the extent that the Nair community now came to be recruited in good numbers in Government Service. Since then, the Nairs had politically a monopoly of Government service.<sup>65</sup> The Nair community leaders who sought the help of other communities for the Malayali Memorial, did not take much pain to enquire into the benefits acquired by these communities. They considered that once the Nair leaders got promotions and placements, the problems of the entire Malayalees get solved.<sup>66</sup>It was this attitude which induced other communities like the Ezhavas and

Christians to appeal for the redressal of their grievances separately. The new middle class of these communities started complaining against the near monopolistic position of the Nayers in government services and the legislatures. Each group altered its community in order to win its cause, by adducing a communal colouring to the movement of others.<sup>67</sup>The divide and rule policy of the Travancore government by patronising the official Nairs made some other communities bitter enemies of the Nairs. But through these policies the Government succeeded in preventing a popular movement like that of the Malayali Memorial until the Civic Rights Movement of 1919.<sup>68</sup>In short the Malayali Memorial was in a sense the expression of the assertion of Nayar community in order to maintain their statusquo in the society.

#### References

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2. N.Nanu Pillai (1877-80) was the only Travancore Nair to hold the Dewanship as a permanent appointment after 1817; Robin Jeffry, *op.cit*, n.49, p.6. Col.Monroe functioned as Dewan from 3-6-1811 to 12-5-1814. After him for a short period one Dewan Padmanabhan assumed charge ie., from 24-6-1814 to 8-12-1814. He was followed by Sankara Narayana Ayyan or Sanku Annavi who functioned from 28-12-1814 to 13-11-1815. He was succeeded by Narayanan Raman or Raman Menon from 5-12-1815 to 7-2-1817. After him till Nanu Pillai who assumed charge on 17-8-1877,foreign Brahmins continuously functioned as Travancore Dewans; *Travancore Directory 1938*;S.Ramanatha Ayyar, *op.cit.*, pp .160-170.
3. K.M.Bahauddin, *Kerala Muslims,the Long struggle*, Kottayam, S.P.C.S,1992, p.139.
4. T.K.Velu Pillai, *op.cit*, no.21, p.698; P.K.Parameswaran Nair (ed.), *N.S.S.Chritram*, Changanassery, NSS Publications, 1972, p.93.
5. K.K.Kusuman, *The Anti-Brahmin Movement in Travancore*, *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Vol.IV, Part II,III, June-September,1977, p.459.
6. *Ibid*, N.S.S.Charitram, p.96; J.Reghu, *op.cit*, n.82, p.26; In 1890, the non-malayali Brahmins occupied 3 out of 4 Dewn Peshkars, 10 out of 18 Zilla and High Court Judges, 10 out of 20 Supervisors, 145 out of 231 Licensed Vakils and Pleaders, 15 out of 29 Tahsildars and 17 out of 30 Headmasters; *Travancore Almanac 1891* quoted by Jeffry, *op.cit.*, n.97, p.111; K.M. Bahauddin, *op.cit*, p.140.
7. *Travancore Almanac*, Trivandrum, 1889, p.13.
8. P.S.Velayudhan, S.N.D.P.Yogacharitam (mal.), Kollam, S.N.D.P.Yogam, 1978, p.24. This table is also reproduced with minor modifications by George Mathew, *Communal Road to Secular Kerala*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1989, p.42.
9. Robin Jeffry, *op.cit.*, p.8.
10. *Ibid*, p.111.
11. Robin Jeffry writes,"The Shanmady Vilas Sabha founded in 1882 in Thiruvananthapuram as cultural association was exclusively Brahmin. Its membership included numbers of smartha, desastha and vaishnavite officials. The Fort Reading Club founded in 1885 was patronised by Visakhom Tirunal and the large majority of its members were non-Malayali Brahmin officials; *Ibid*, p.115.
12. One of the reasons for the non-Brahmin movements in South India was that the Brahmins took more advantage of modern educational and employment opportunities than the upper non-Brahmin castes, secured government jobs and thus tried to maintain Brahmin predominance in government service. Generally the non-Brahmin movement played a catalytic role in developing anti-caste or anti-Hinduism. Non-Brahmin movement was started firstly in Maharashtra represented by Jyothiba Phule(1827-1890) who started Satya Sodhak Samaj. Later the non-Brahmins were patronised by R.P.Paranjape. For details about the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra, see S.N.Singh, *Reservation Policy for Backward Classes*, Jaipur, Rewat Publications, 1996, p.37.
13. In addition to Maharashtra anti-Brahmin movements started in Tamil Nadu,Karnataka and Kerala. In the early 20th century a strong Dravidian movement developed in TamilNadu.The early anti-Brahmin parties included the Justice Party founded in 1916, the Self Respect Movement founded in 1925 and the Dravida Kazhakam founded in 1944;Pauline Kolendra, *Caste in Contemporary India: Beyond Organic Solidarity*, Jaipur, Rewat Publications, 1986, pp.119-120.
14. The Unemployment Enquiry Committee of 1928 observed, "In view of their past traditions and recent history, it is not a matter of surprise that middle class families among Tamil Brahmins,Nairs and among Syrian Christians, almost automatically sent their children to school or college with a view to qualify



- them for government service even as a petty official; Report of the Unemployment Enquiry Committee, Thiruvananthapuram, 1928, Chapter 3, p.23.
15. Robin Jeffry, op.cit, n.107, pp.70-71; S.N.Sadasivan, Administration and Social Development in Kerala, New Delhi, Indian Institute of Public Administration, 1988, p.60
  16. P.Bhaskaranunni, op.cit., p.1072.
  17. R.Ramalingom, A Decade of Memorials (art.), Aspects of South Indian History: A Felicitation volume in honour of Prof. K.Rajayagam, Nagercoil, Rajesh Publications, 2000, p.191.
  18. J.W. Gladstone, op.cit, p.224. The names like Malayali Social Union, Malayali Sabha, Malayali Memorial, Malayali etc. are significant in this context.
  19. P.Thanu Pillai was a Lecturer in Maharajas College, Thiruvananthapuram in the 1870's. In 1879 he was promoted to be Manager of the Dewan's office by the Nayar Dewan, N.Nanu Pillai. In 1880, at the age of 26 he became the first Malayali to take M.A.Degree. He was loved and adored by his students; Robin Jeffry, op.cit., n.111, p.157; P.K.Parameswaran Nair, C.V.Raman Pillai (mal.), Kottayam, N.B.S, 1959, p.86; V. Balakrishnan & R.Leela Devi, Mannathu Padmanabhan and the Revival of Nairs in Kerala, New Delhi, Vikas Publications, 1982, p.17; Pattom G.Ramachandran, Nair Samudayathinte Ithihasam (mal.), Thiruvananthapuram, Sahitya Vedi, 2005, p.105.
  20. P.K.Parameswaran Nair, op.cit., p.87.
  21. Ibid, p.86.
  22. Madras Standard, 23 September 1887, p.2; N.K. Jose, Malayali Memorial (mal.), Vaikom, Hobby Publications, 1991, p.4; P.K. Parameswaran Nair, Ibid, p.88; Pattom G.Ramachandran, op.cit., p.100; Sureshkumar, Political Evolution in Kerala: Travancore 1859-1938, New Delhi, Phoenix Publishing House, p.60.
  23. G.Parameswaran Pillai, commonly known as G.P was a journalist, politician, social activist and a philanthropist. He was born on 26 February 1864 at Pallipuram, Thiruvananthapuram. He studied at Maharajas College, Thiruvananthapuram and Presidency College, Madras. Later he took his Barrister degree from England. He became the editor of Madras Standard in 1892. He functioned as the secretary of INC in 1894 and 1898. He visited England, France and Italy. He was one of the founders of Madras Social Reform Association and functioned as a leader of Indian Temperance Association. His works include *Representative Indians*, *Representative South Indians*, *London and Paris through Indian Spectacles* and *Indian Congress Men*. He died at the age of 39 on 21 May 1903; G.P.Sekhar (ed.), G.P.Pillai, Select Writings and Speeches, Thiruvananthapuram, Radh-Ind Publications, 1964; K.P.Sankara Menon, Adhunik Thiruvithamkurile Adyathe Viplavakari (art.), Deenabandhu (mal.), Onam Sree Narayana Jayanti Special, 1962; Velayudhan Panikasser, Barrister G.P.Pillai (art.), Vivekodayam, Book 1, Vol. 8, August 1967; Puthuppalli Raghavan, Barrister G.P.Pillai (art.), S.N.D.P.Yogam Platinum Jubilee Souvenir, Kollam, 1978, pp. 413-25.
  24. Indian Express, 23 January 1949; Paravur K.Gopala Pillai, G.P.Pillai (art.), Deepam, An Illustrated Journal, Vol.1, No.6, Ernakulam, 1930, p.218.
  25. Resident's letter to Dewan dated 10 July 1863 citing the writings of G.P in Athenaeum Newspaper, quoted by M.J. Koshy, Genesis of Political Consciousness in Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala Historical Society, 1972, p.67.
  26. P.K.K.Menon, The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala, Vol.II, Thiruvananthapuram, Government Press, 1972, pp.5-6; G.Parameswaran Pillai, Keraliyen: The Father of Political Agitation in Travancore, Thiruvananthapuram, 1948.
  27. Ibid, p.6.
  28. C.V.Raman Pillai wrote his historical novel Marthanda Varma in which the real hero was the brave and faithful Nair youth Anantha Padmanabhan; V. Balakrishnan and R.Leela Devi, op.cit., p.17-18.
  29. Robin Jeffry, op.cit., p.164.
  30. R. Ramakrishnan Nair, Constitutional Experiments in Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, The Kerala Academy of Political Science, 1964, p.3.
  31. Western Star, Kochi, 17 January 1891 quoted by K.Reghu, Abstention Movement: A Study, Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Thiruvananthapuram, University of Kerala, 2003, p.47.
  32. The claim of the 'Travancorean' continued even after the Malayali Memorial. For instance in the 17th Session of SMPA in 1920, one Mr.K. Krishnan Madhavan pleaded for the appointment of the natives in the Travancore service avoiding the non-Malayalis; SMPA Proceedings, 17th Session, 1920.
  33. K.M.Bahauddin, op.cit., n.99, p.140; J.W. Gladstone, op.cit., p.228.

34. A.Sreedhara Menon, A Concise Political History of Modern Kerala (1885-1957), Madras, Viswanathan Publishers, 1987, p.6.
35. Pattom G.Ramachandran, op.cit, p.104.
36. It was from the Malayali Memorial Agitation that the people began to demand community reservation and for this purpose they allied communally. The same tendency repeated even after the formation of the Kerala State. Now the Nair community is demanding economic reservation instead of community reservation raised during the Malayali Memorial Agitation. It is interesting to note that even though there were economically sound persons who lived during the period of Malayali Memorial Agitation, nobody has demanded to exclude them from representation; Kerala Kaumudi, 19 January 1972. Robin Jeffry, op.cit, p.104.
37. J.Reghu, op.cit, p.28.
38. Pattom G.Ramachandran, op.cit, , p.103.
39. T.K.Madhavan, Dr.Palpu (Biography), Alleppey, 1969, p.73.
40. P.K.Parameswaran Nair, op.cit, p.96.
41. N.K.Jose, op.cit., p.11
42. The memorial pointed out, "Regularly and systematically these Dewans without exception not only introduced their relatives, caste men and friends in to the state but tried best to oust the Nairs and prevent them from filling any of the higher appointments"; The Malayali Memorial, Madras Memorial Press, 1891 quoted in Archives Treasury, KSA, Nalanda, Thiruvananthapuram, 1994.
43. Robin Jeffry, op.cit., p.169.
44. Ibid, p.168.
45. R. Ramakrishnan Nair, Social Structure and Political Development in Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, The Kerala Academy of Political Science, 1976, p.22.
46. The Malayali Memorial, 1891.
47. Ibid.
48. M.J.Koshy, Opcit, p.35.
49. Malayali Memorial, 1891.
50. Although the Malayali Memorial and similar other memorandums contained the seeds of full scale anti-Brahmin movement, they couldn't arrive at this logical culmination because of the fractured nature of the society. The Nairs considered themselves more eligible than the Ezhavas and others for job reservations; T.G.Jacob, Reflections on the Caste Question: An Overview of TamilNadu, Karnataka and Kerala, Bangalore, 2000, p.102.
51. Ibid.
52. K.K. Kusuman, The Abstention Movement, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala Historical Society, 1976, p.6.
53. The Malayali Memorial, 1891.
54. M.J.Koshy, Costitutionalism in Travancore and Cochin, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala Historical Society, 1972, p.6.
55. George Mathew, op.cit., p.49.
56. For details about the opinions of the newspapers see M.J.Koshy, op.cit, pp. 97-174.
57. Malayala Manorama, 24 January 1891; Kerala Navodhanam: Kandathil Varghese Mappilayude Mukha Prasangal(mal.), Kottayam, Malayala Manorama, 1997.
58. Malayala Manorama, 16 May 1891.
59. The Hindu, 20 January 1891.
60. Cover File No.1744/1891, English Records, quoted by N.K.Bhaskaran, Democratic Movement in Travancore, Unpublished P.hD Thesis, Thiruvananthapuram, University of Kerala, 1983, p.114; Malayala Manorama Diamond Jubilee Souvenir, Kottayam, 1950, p.428; Keralathile Vyavasaya Purigati (art.), G.Priyadarsan(ed.), S.N.D.P.Yogam Platinum Jubilee Souvenir, Kollam, 1978, p.189.
61. Even before the submission of Malayali Memorial, the foreign Brahmins criticised the leaders of Malayali Sabha. On the contrary leaders of Malayali Sabha attacked the non malayali Brahmins by alleging that they were disloyal to the state even after receiving all the benefits; P.K.Parameswaran Nair, op.cit, p.91.
62. Malayala Manorama, 30 May 1891.
63. The following persons campaigned for Malayali Memorial:  
Thiruvananthapuram- T.F.Lloyd  
Kottayam - Mar Athanesius

Parur - T.C.Hilarion

Alleppey - K.M.Neelakandan Nambuthiri

Nagercoil - Sivan Pillai

Kollam - Kavalam Neelakanda Pillai

64. K.M. Bahauddin, op.cit, p.141.

65. P.S. Sivan Pillai was a leader of Malayali Sabha. He functioned as a member of Legislative Council during the periods 1888-91.Kavalam Neelakanda Pillai served as a member of Legislative Council during the periods 1888-91.

66. N.K.Jose, op.cit, p.21.

67. P.K.Parameswaran Nair, op.cit, p.501.

68. In the Malayali Memorial the Nair interests predominated to the public interests. Consequently they emerged the major beneficiaries. This victory induced them to start similar agitations in future.In 1920's the Nair leaders tried to terminate the Regency rule of Rani Lakshmi Bai and enthrone Chitira Tirunal. They considered that if they get placements in return to their services to the new king it would be advantageous to the Nair interests. Consequently signatures were collected for a memorial and send it to the Viceroy; C.Narayana Pillai, Thiruvithamcore Swathanthrya Samara Charitram(mal.), Thiruvananthapuram, Narayana Pillai Foundation, 2004, pp.14-15.