

**The Identity Question of Malankara Nazaranies;
A Study Based on 'Niranam Grandhavari'
1708 –1815**

Thesis submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University
in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Social Sciences

By
M. Kurian Thomas

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
MAHATMA GANDHI UNIVERSITY
KOTTAYAM**

2005

05.07.2008

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled "**The Identity Question of Malankara Nazaranes; A Study Based on 'Niranam Grandhavari' 1708 –1815**" has been submitted by **M. Kurian Thomas** in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Sciences. It has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other University. This is his own work and he had carried out this work under my supervision.



Dr. Rajan Gurukkal
Director
School of Social Sciences
Mahatma Gandhi University
Kottayam




Dr. M. R. Raghava Varier
Research Supervisor
School of Social Sciences
Mahatma Gandhi University
Kottayam

Kottayam
06/06/2005

DECLARATION

I hereby affirm that the research for the thesis entitled "**The Identity Question of Malankara Nazaranies; A Study Based on 'Niranam Grandhavari' 1708 – 1815**" being submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Sciences was carried out entirely by me.



M. Kurian Thomas
School of Social Sciences
Mahatma Gandhi University
Kottayam

Kottayam
06/06/2005

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the authorities of the Malankara Orthodox Church Archives at Catholicate Palace, Kottayam, Mar Geevarghese Dionysius Archives at Old Seminary, Kottayam, Konat Library at Pampakkuda and the Library of the Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, Vadavathoor, Kottayam for their goodwill in helping me for the collection of data for this thesis.

I wish to acknowledge the service of Fr. Dr. Johns Abraham Konat, Fr. Dr. Thomas Koonammakkel and Dn. Dr. K. A. George for their translation from Syriac.

May I place on record my sincere thanks to Varghis John Thottappuzha, Prof. Alex Mathew and Prof. Mammen George for their valuable critical comments and suggestions.

I am indebted to Dr. Rajan Gurukkal, Director, School of Social Sciences for timely help and goodwill.

I am grateful to Dr. M. R. Raghava Variar for his able guidance, without which this thesis would not have been possible

I would like to thank the staff of 5M Communications, Kottayam for their technical assistance in materialising this thesis.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank my family for bearing with me during the whole period of my research.

I dedicate this thesis to all my well wishers.

Contents

Chapter I	INTRODUCTION	01 - 33
	<i>Nazranis: Etymological Considerations and</i>	
	Questions of Identity	01
	The Altered Situation and Challenges	04
	Significance of the Study	09
	Area of the Study	10
	Hypothesis of the Study	10
	Method of Approach	10
	Limitations of the Study	12
	Niranam Grandhavari -The Source Material	12
	<i>The Kanianthra Manuscript</i>	14
	<i>Other Copies of Niranam Grandhavari</i>	16
	Copy of C. Curian Akkara	16
	Copy of Mar Mathews Athanasios	16
	Copy of Chitramezhuthu K. M. Varghese	16
	Copy of Fr. M. C. Kuriakose Remban	17
	The Chronicle of Mar Simon Dionysius	18
	Explaining the Similarities and Variations	19
	The Period of Writing	20
	Writings of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah	22
	Other Themes in the Kanianthra manuscript	26
	The Author	27
	Publication	30
	Chapter Division	33
Chapter – II	ORIGIN OF THE NAZRANIS	34 – 92
	The Saint Thomas Tradition	34
	<i>The Acta Thoma</i>	36
	The Christians of Saint Thomas	37
	<i>Maargam Kali Pattu</i>	39
	Pseudo Traditions	39
	Early References	41

The Tomb of Saint Thomas	42
<i>Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum</i>	44
The <i>Maargam</i>	45
The <i>Muthappen</i> Concept	46
The Migration Tradition	46
Persian Migration of AD 345	47
The Northists and Southists	50
The Armenians	56
Mar Thomas Around AD 800	58
The Migration of Maruvan Sabrison	60
Later Migrations	61
Migration From the East Coast	61
Thiruvankodu Christians	61
Nilakkal Community	64
The Mylapore Migration	66
The Impact of Migrations	67
The Later Evangelisation Tradition	68
The Nazranis in History	69
Early Testimonials	69
Sangam Literature	70
Theophilus the Indian	70
Cosmos Indicopleustes	72
The Syriac Documents	73
Gundert's Description	73
Later Testimonials	75
Syriac Document of AD 1301	75
John of Montecorvino	76
Friar Jordan of Toulouse	76
Blessed Oderic of Pordenone	77
Ibn Battuta	78
John de Marignolli	78
Ma-huan	80
Later Developments	81
The Conversion of Cheraman Perumal	81

	Conversion of Nairs	84
	Fall of Nazranis to Saivism	84
	Restoration of the Nazranis	87
	Persian Missionaries	89
	Conclusions	91
Chapter – III	THE PRE- COLONIAL NAZRANI COMMUNITY	93 -163
	Early Settlements	93
	Expansion of Settlements	94
	<i>Thazhakkatupally</i> Stone Inscription	94
	Trade Routes and Expansion	95
	Politics and Settlements	96
	<i>Kudikal</i>	98
	The Nazranis and the <i>Jathy</i> System	99
	The Nazrani <i>Jathy</i>	99
	The Brahmanic Religion	100
	The Formation of <i>Jathy</i> System in Kerala	101
	Accepting Others into Brahmanic Religion	101
	The <i>Vysyas</i>	102
	The Nazranis in the <i>Jathy</i> System	104
	<i>Kuladhrma</i>	107
	Positioning Saints with gods	108
	Positioning of god(s)	109
	The Nazranis and the Brahmanic Customs	110
	The Local Customs	110
	<i>Samskaras</i>	111
	Respect to <i>Agni</i>	115
	<i>Ashrams</i>	115
	Rituals for the Dead	116
	Purity Consciousness	117
	Untouchability	117

Superstitions	118
Local Festivals	119
Concept of Sacredness	120
Social Status	120
Depending <i>Jathys</i>	120
Grievances of Nazrani <i>Jathy</i>	121
The Copper Plates and Privileges	122
Iravi Korthen Chepped	123
Knai Thomman Chepped	124
Tharissappally Cheppeds	124
Manigramam	125
Irinjalakkuda Temple Inscription	125
The result of Cheppeds	126
Kodungallor and Kollam Nazranis	127
Social Customs	128
Settlements and Demography	128
Language	130
Education	131
Military Training	132
Art and Architecture	133
Women	137
Inheritance	138
Dress and Appearance	141
Food	141
Alcoholism	142
Medicine and Healthcare	143
Civil Administration	144
Christian Dynasty	144
Self Government	146
The Administration of Justice	147
Punishments	148
Occupation	151
Trade	151

	Dimension of the Trade	152
	The <i>Tharissa</i> Network	153
	The Decay of Nazrani Trade	155
	Agriculture	155
	Money Lending	156
	Military Service	157
	The Collapse of Maritime Trade	158
	The Rise of Calicut	158
	The Collapse of Kodungallor	160
	Conclusion	162
Chapter – IV	CHRISTIANITY OF THE PRE-COLONIAL NAZRANIS	164-218
	Religion of the Nazranis	164
	Religious Affiliation	164
	The Roman Claims	166
	The Sacraments	167
	Baptism	168
	Confirmation	171
	Holy Eucharist	172
	Confession and Penance	174
	Marriage	176
	Polygamy and Polyandry	178
	Extreme Unction	180
	Burial	180
	The East Syrian Heritage	182
	The Christian Life	183
	Feasts and Lents	186
	Celebration of the Feasts	187
	The Organization	191
	Basic Structure	191
	Authority and Responsibility	193

	Higher Authorities	194
	Hierarchy	195
	Early Period	195
	The Catholicos	196
	The Indian Hierarchy	198
	The Bishops	198
	Archdeacon	202
	The Priests	209
	Selection, Training and Ordination	213
	Income	215
	Secular Life	216
	Conclusions	217
Chapter – V	THE WAY OF THOMAS Vs. PETER	219-276
	The Portuguese and the Nazranis	219
	The Portuguese Colonial Intensions	219
	The Portuguese Connection	220
	The Trade Relations	223
	The Impact on Social Customs	226
	Double Standards	227
	Calendar	227
	Language	229
	Art and Architecture	231
	Justice and Punishments	232
	Women's Share	233
	Settlements	233
	The Impact on the Jathy Structure	234
	<i>Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum</i>	237
	<i>Keppayude Maargam</i>	238
	The Coonen Cross Oath	241
	The Impact on Ecclesial Structure	242
	The Bishops and the Archdeacon	245
	The Impact in Authority Structure	246

	The Indian Hierarchy	248
	Validity of Consecration	250
	Successors of Mar Thoma I	252
	Dissident Lineage	253
	Significance of the Indian Hierarchy	255
	The West Syrian Prelates	256
	The Priests	261
	The <i>Yogam</i>	264
	The Relation with the Local Chieftains	266
	The Impact on the Sacraments	267
	Burial	272
	Feasts and Festivals	273
	Observation of the Lent	273
	Conclusions	275
Chapter VI	THE NAZRANIS: AD 1708 – 1815	277- 405
	Mar Gabriel – The Beginning of Confusion	277
	Personal Conflicts	280
	Unification of Nazranis	282
	Division	286
	The Saint Thomas Consciousness	287
	The Mar Thoma Bishops	287
	The Throne of Saint Thomas	289
	The Nazranis and the Society	290
	Appellations	290
	Settlements and Demography	293
	The Social Status	294
	Dress and Appearance	297
	Language	298
	Education	299
	Art and Architecture	301
	Calendars and Almanacs	303
	Women's Share	306

Political Condition	307
Political Status of the Nazranis	307
The British Colonialism and the Seminary	315
The Nazranis and the British Advancements	316
Occupation	317
Civil Administration	317
Military Service	318
Agriculture	319
Trade and Commerce	320
The Ecclesial Administration	323
The Administration of Local Churches	323
The Administration of the Malankara Church	327
The Priests	328
The Dress and Tonsure	330
Marriage of the Priests	330
Priestly Duties	332
The Bishops of the Nazranis	333
The Catholicos	334
Tool of Subjugation	338
The Patriarch	339
The West Syrian Bishops	341
Parallel Administration	350
The Pakalomattom Lineage	354
The Title of the Bishops	359
Validity of Consecration	361
The Income of the Hierarchy	368
The Income of the Local Churches	368
Income of the Priests	372
Income of the Bishops	373
Formation of the Canonical Framework	374
Canons Regarding Theology	374
Canons Regarding Sacraments	375
Canons Regarding Secular Life	376
The <i>Kandanadu Padiyola</i>	378

	The Religious Life	380
	The Christian Consciousness	380
	Influence in Daily Life	384
	Feasts	385
	The Sacraments	386
	Baptism	389
	Confirmation	389
	Holy Eucharist	390
	Marriage	392
	Confession	394
	Extreme Unction	395
	Burial	395
	Change of the Liturgical Tradition	396
	Pontifical Vestments	397
	Vestments of the Priests.	397
	The Vestments of the Deacons	398
	East Syrian Liturgy	398
	The Introduction of West Syrian Liturgy	400
	The <i>Putiacavu Padiyola</i>	402
	Later Developments	403
	Tools of Implementation	404
	The Seminary	405
Chapter VII	CONCLUSIONS	406-413
	Bibliography	i - ix

Chapter I INTRODUCTION

The Malankara Nazranis of Kerala, usually referred to as Syrian Christians,¹ are the oldest Christian denomination in India. This Church is believed to be founded by Saint Thomas, one among the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ, in AD 52. The Nazranis are of pre-colonial origin and free from any western influence till the arrival of the Portuguese.² Their status as a flourishing community, busily engaged in trade in the Pre-Portuguese period is well attested by archaeology and literature. As for the identity of the community, its self-image at present is that of a privileged section endowed with several special honours in lieu of certain distinguished functions they have been performing in the past. The large body of the native Christians divided in to numerous denominations may broadly be classified into two—the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic, besides the presence of the Chaldean and Protestant factions. Though referred to as the Syrian Christians at present, they were known as the *Malankara Nazranis* for centuries.³

Nazranis: Etymological Considerations and Questions of Identity

Those who accepted the Christian faith are called Christians throughout the world. The Christians of Kerala are known among westerners as *Mar Thoma Christhyanikal* that is the Christians of Saint Thomas. This longstanding tradition regarding the name of the community is made to account for the apostolic origin and which incidentally forms the bedrock of their community consciousness. The expressions *Nazrani* seem to have been derived from *Nazra* evenly used in the Semitic languages, Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic to denote Christians. This in turn is borne out of the expression *Jesus of Nazareth* from whom the religion originated.⁴ Interaction with the people of the Semitic world, stretching over several centuries, is presumed to be the reason for the native Christians of

¹ The term 'Syrian Christians' derived from their liturgical language, Syriac. When the Europeans started converting others into Christianity, the civil authorities wanted to distinguish the old and the neo Christians. They identify them according to their liturgical languages, Syriac and Latin. There is no Syrian ethnically in this term. For more details: see the title 'Appellations' in Chapter VI

² For more details see Chapters II, III and IV

³ *Malankara* is Malabar. *Nazrani* is the term used for Christians in Persian Empire. This was the official name of Syrian Christians till recently. The old land deeds identifying a Syrian Christian as *Nazrani* 'NN'. For more details about this appellation see Chapters III and V

⁴ The Bible experts suggest that the Jewish Christians were known as *Nazaraei* in early centuries of Christian era. (Buttrick, George Arthur (Ed.), *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. III, New York, Abingdom Press, 1962, Pp 523 – 4)

Kerala to have been accorded their name, *Nazranis*. In general, they were known as *Nazrani Jathy* (the Nazrani caste) and the individuals were known as *Nazrani Mappilai* in government records till the mid nineteenth century. The mass conversions of the low caste Keralites into Christianity by the western missionaries in the sixteenth century made the Nazranis give more emphasis to the term Nazranis. It became necessary to discriminate themselves from the neo converts to retain their caste dignity in the society.

The persistence with the use of the expression *Nazrani* to denote the native Christians is noticeable even in the documents of the Synod of Udayamperoor. It is presumed that this insistence has been effected in the post sixteenth century period with a view to distinguishing the early Christians from the neo-converts and to ascribing an inbuilt pre-eminence to the former. More over it had been foundational for retaining their inevitable caste dignity in the socio cultural milieu.

There is some kind of unanimity among the various historians that the Nazranis were an undivided lot till the colonial period, though they were devoid of an Episcopal hierarchy understood in the Greco-Roman sense of the term. It is further contented that they retained their congregational status and meticulously followed their indigenous practices till the interference of the westerners. Historians point out that Nazranis functioned as a *Varna* in the Brahmin-centred ideological system of Kerala, yet maintained their Christian faith. The survival of Nazranis against the tide of the invasion of Brahmanic religion to Kerala, that swept out all other religions like Buddhism and Jainism, is worthy of study.

The Nazranis are found to have maintained relations with the Persian or East Syrian Church as early as the first century AD. We have ample evidence of the native Church growing through doctrinal support and migrations from the Middle East reaching a crucial stage in the early ninth century of the Christian era. These include the migration of some families of Christians under Knai Thomman in AD 345 or the ninth century of Christian era,⁵ Mar Sabor and Mar Afrot with the merchant Sabrison in AD 825, Raban, Younan and Maruvan (Mar Abo) with Mar Denha in AD 905 etc. The present day Nazrani community seems to have been formed from the merging of those immigrants and the native

⁵ For details about the perplexity of the migrations: see Chapter II

Christians. Whatever be the apostolic tradition, the Kerala Christianity started following the faith of the Church of the East after the Persian migrations. The vast body of contemporary Syriac documents would lead us to the contention that the Catholicos of Baghdad was the spiritual head of Nazranis after the migrations.

According to the traditions, the emigrants from Persia to the Kerala coast were Christians by faith and merchants by profession. This would account for the traditional occupation of the newly formed community of Native Christians called Nazranis. Sources available from the Semitic world affirm that the East Syrian Christians of the first millennium of Christian era were the owners of a wide maritime trade network ranging from the Middle East to the Far East. The ideology of the East Syrian Christianity and the Syriac sacraments acted as strong binding factors of this network.⁶ Through this network, the Nazranis of Kerala too became a part of the international maritime trade. This relation between the trade networking and religious observances made their permanent marks on the destiny of the Nazranis of the Malabar coast. There been a two-fold advantage with this Nazrani association. In the first place, it provided a religious/ideological resistance to the upsurge of the Brahmin-centred ideology and religion. Secondly the elevated position of the Nazranis as a powerful commercial class made them inevitable for the sustenance of the socio-economic order. In other words the strong theological base supplied by the East Syrian missionaries kept them in good stead against the Brahmanic religion and the economic influence of the international trade network to which Nazranis was linked prevented the Brahmins from their elimination. Inscriptions such as the Tharisappally copper plates, Iravi Kortan copperplate and the Thazhakkattu Pally stone inscription seem to suggest that various types of rulers and local chieftains of Kerala who have already been part of the *Chathurvarna* system had to lean on taxes from the Nazrani trade.

The situation seems to have necessitated the accommodation of the Nazranis as *Vysyas* in their *Chathurvarna* scheme of things and allowed them to retain their Christian faith. This ensured their protection under the norm of *Kuladharmā* to remain as merchants. This protection of *Kuladharmā* provided the monopoly in trade by preventing the entry of others into this profession. But at the

⁶ For more details see: Chapter III and IV

same time, the same *Kuladharna* prohibited Nazranis from entering into any profession other than trade and commerce. The economic prosperity provided to the local kings and chieftains through the taxes and duties from the Nazrani trade forced the former to grant royal privileges and copper plates to Nazranis.⁷

This seems to have brought about the accommodation of the Nazranis in the *Chathurvarna* pattern of society. In other words *Chathurvarna* system became the life style of Nazranis also. The *Samskaras* of the Brahmanic religion were practised by Nazranis either as Christian sacraments or as direct adaptation of the Brahmanic counter part. They developed a Christianity of their own with East Syrian ecclesiology, East Syrian sacraments, Indian rituals and Brahmanic *Samskaras*. Their claim of Saint Thomas origin added with this Christianity and developed a term *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* (the way and lineage of Saint Thomas) as their identity.

The Altered Situation and Challenges

However, a series of developments in the first half of the second millennium of the Christian era led to the collapse of Nazrani monopoly over trade and commerce. The rapid growth of Islam in Persia and in the Middle East destroyed the international trade network of the East Syrian Christians to which Nazranis were a part. The Muslims control of the Arabian sea trade is seen to have boosted this collapse. In the home front, the port of Kodungallor, the chief trading centre of Nazranis in the maritime trade, was gravely destroyed in the fourteenth century by natural calamities.

Even at this stage, the domestic distribution and procurement network of the Nazranis remained intact. This reduced the adverse impact of the change in the world order. But the rise of Calicut as the maritime trade centre of the West coast of India and the emergence of the *Zamora-Arab-native Muslim* axis in the Indian ocean trade realignments reduced the prospects of Nazrani trading activities. The reverses engendered by Kochi, the habitual protectors of the Nazranis, to Zamora forced the Nazranis to lean on the Muslims of Calicut for their export.⁸ This is particular context in which the Nazranis had to encounter the Portuguese, who arrived in India in AD 1498.

⁷ For more details see: Chapter III

⁸ For more details: see Chapter III

Indigenous source materials tend to suggest that the Nazranis found a new ally in the Portuguese who were their co-religionists. They also sought to cash on the latter's control over maritime trade and military strength for improving their trade prospects. A close scrutiny of the traditional texts such as the *Kerala Pazhama* besides circumstantial evidences would suggest that the Nazranis expected to establish a Kochi based maritime trade network with the Portuguese countering the Calicut based Native-Arab-native Muslim axis. But the Portuguese interests went far beyond the making of a trade network. Recent historiographical representations have tried to look at the Portuguese designs as a ploy to establish a world order to strengthen the Portuguese empire. It has further been presumed that the strength of the Portuguese empire lies in the making of a monoculture throughout the world considered it imperative to spread the Roman Catholic Christianity as part of the above scheme.⁹

Mass conversion into the Roman Catholic Church had been envisaged as a means of achieving this goal. They also encouraged intermarriages to create a monoculture society. Beyond all these, they are argued to have superimposed their culture on the new society. This culture includes the Latin rite of sacraments and rituals also. The Portuguese believed that Nazranis, who were already Christians, would be a good stepping-stone for the establishment of the Portuguese empire in India.

However, those activities of the Portuguese to establish their empire are viewed here in the present study as a chain acts of highly resentful to the Nazranis. For them, the Portuguese had already been stamped as betrayers in the trade and efforts of the Portuguese towards the creation of a monoculture society were viewed with suspicion as fear as they would eventually be detrimental to the dignity of the Nazranis. This stands confirmed in the acts of conversions and advances for intermarriages that seriously challenged the position of the Nazranis in the *Chaturvarna* scheme. The adoption of the culture put forward by the Portuguese would be suicidal since it would eradicate their culture that was tuned to fit the Brahmanic religion. The change of lifestyle would certainly expel the Nazranis from their surroundings that they declined to accept. On the other hand, the Portuguese wished to welcome such an expulsion since it

⁹ For more details: see Chapter IV

would lead the Nazranis to depend the Portuguese entirely that would ultimately create total loyalty.

In the mean time, the Roman Catholic missionaries who arrived with the Portuguese were trying to convert the Nazranis into the Roman Catholic faith. They found that the Nazrani's adherence to the Catholicos of Baghdad and to the Syriac language along with their caste consciousness in the *Chaturvarna* system are the main obstacles in their Romanization procedure.

Another constraint in the Romanization process of the Nazranis was the difference in the administrative system. For the Roman Catholics, the Church administration is vested in the episcopacy consisting of the Pope of Rome, bishops and the priests. For Nazranis, their administration developed from the hierarchy of the East Syrian Church and the local *Yogams*. The authority of the East Syrian bishops appointed by the Catholicos of the East was limited strictly to the spiritual affairs. The real administration of Nazranis, spiritual and temporal was vested with the Archdeacon appointed from the *Pakalomattom* family. However, the real authority in spiritual, temporal and civil matters of the Nazranis was vested in the hands of the *Malankara Pally Yogam* constituted by the priests and laymen representatives of all local Parishes.

In the case of the local parishes, the authority was vested with the parish assembly named *Pally Yogam*. The *Pally Yogams* selected their priests and the bishop ordained them with the consent of the Archdeacon. The Roman Catholics found the existence of the Archdeacon and the *Yogams* and the presence of the East Syrian bishops are the obstacles in achieving their goal. It was easy to eliminate the East Syrian bishops since the Portuguese had total control over the Arabian sea. They effectively prevented the arrival of the East Syrian bishops from the late sixteenth century. However, it was difficult to eradicate the Archdeacon and the *Yogams* since the Nazranis declined to abandon their traditional offices and its rights.

As the crown of all Romanization efforts of the sixteenth century, Alaxis De Manazis, the Archbishop of Goa called a *Malankara Pally Yogam* at Udayamperoor in AD 1599. This *Yogam*, known among westerners as the synod of Diamper, was forcefully held with the help of the Portuguese military and the bribed king of Kochi after the demise of the last East Syrian bishop, Mar Jacob, in AD 1598 to make the Nazranis accept the Roman Catholic Church. The Nazranis

were forced to accept the pre-written canons that made them change their East Syrian Christianity and Liturgy into the Latin one. It also made them accept the western customs and the Greco-Roman Church administrative system. This hierarchy entrusted the entire government of the Church to the bishop appointed by the Pope of Rome and the priests appointed as vicars by the bishop. Every attempt was made to force the Nazranis out from the social system of Kerala by denouncing their local practices as heresies and imposed heavy punishment for practising them. Even though the office of the Archdeacon and the *Yogams* were not abolished, they were not provided with any authority.

Even though the Synod of Udayamperoor granted concessions like the use of Syriac language to the Nazranis, the Roman Catholics thought that eventually the Nazranis would become fully Latinised since the total authority was given to the Latin bishop appointed over them. But the Nazranis were totally dissatisfied under the Latin bishops appointed for them. Even though the brutal force was used over them, they practiced the least possible changes prescribed by the synod of Udayamperoor. The Archdeacon won back his lost authority within a short span of time. However, the most dissatisfied segment was the priests who were made salaried employees of the bishops. Nazranis were also forced to protect their caste dignity by disobeying the synod of Udayamperoor. They always wanted to restore their pre-colonial Christianity.

An important premise of the present study is that the Roman Catholic missionaries had been striving hard to effect a shift in the caste identity of Nazranis by replacing it with a religious identity. This is being viewed as a strategy of the missionaries to make the Nazranis true and loyal subjects of the Roman Catholic Church and the Portuguese Empire by erasing their caste identity. Reaction to the Portuguese ploy came from the Nazranis in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who highlighted their identity as *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* as distinct from the Portuguese projection of the religious identity. They classified the entire changes suggested by the westerners as *Keppayude Maargam*, a term derived from the founder of the Roman Church, Saint Peter as explicated in the Synod of Udayamperoor. They declared that the *Keppayude Maargam* was applicable only for the Europeans and the Nazranis had nothing to do with it. They were eagerly waiting for an escape from the Roman Catholic rule. The situation was even more

aggravated with the alleged assassination of the Syrian Bishop Mar Ahatallah by the Portuguese. A showdown of Nazranj protest to the Portuguese attempt to overshadow them manifested itself in the form of the *Coonen Cross* oath in January 3, AD 1653. This revolution was total and the Nazranis consecrated their Archdeacon as Bishop Mar Thoma, even though in an improper way, since there was no East Syrian bishop available to consecrate.

However, the Roman Catholic propaganda against the validity of the consecration of bishop Mar Thoma bore some result. The consecration of Parambil Chandy, a cousin of Mar Thoma, as a decedent bishop under the Roman Catholic Church, was a success since it made half of the Nazranis come under the Roman Catholic rule again. They were called Romo-Syrians.

Even under brutal persecution, the remaining Nazranis declined to surrender to the Roman Catholic Church. Even before the *Coonen-Cross* revolution, the Nazranis started to get Eastern bishops. After the expulsion of the Portuguese by the Dutch from Kochi in AD 1663, Mar Gregorios Abdul Jaleed, the West Syrian Patriarch of Jerusalem, arrived in AD 1665 and regularised the consecration of Mar Thoma I. It made the division of Nazranis a certainty.

Even though the Portuguese were expelled from Kerala by the Dutch in 1663, the former were able to recapture almost half of the Nazranis back to the Roman Catholic fold by then. This made the first division among Nazranis. In the beginning there was no apparent difference between both the factions except that the independent Nazranis did not accept the supremacy of Rome or its rule. However, the independents were forced to associate with the West Syrian Church after the *Coonen Cross* oath for consecration, theology and liturgy. The gap between both the factions was widened through the eighteenth century while they were polarised to each theology. In other words, the religion overrides the caste consciousness of Nazranis in their identity question.¹⁰

After a gap of two centuries, Mar Gabriel, an East Syrian bishop with true Nestorian faith, arrived in the beginning of the eighteenth century. His entry into Nazrani activities in AD 1708 sparked a series of theological disputes, which spread to numerous other issues such as those relating to the authority and validity of the consecration of the Mar Thoma bishop.

¹⁰ For more details about the Nazrani intercourse with the Portuguese: see Chapter V

The theological disputes raised by Mar Gabriel and his faction forced the Nazranis to depend on the Patriarch of Antioch for ideological support. The Patriarch in turn, used this invitation to extend his dominion by sending bishops to govern the Nazranis. The struggle for power between Mar Thoma bishops and the West Syrian prelates existed throughout the eighteenth century.

The West Syrians went to propagate their traditions to replace the existing one of the Nazranis. Hence the uniformity of the liturgical traditions was lost in the eighteenth century. Ultimately, the liturgical tradition of Nazranis was changed from East Syrian to West Syrian through several stages in the eighteenth century. The establishment of the Seminary in AD 1815 completed this process.

Some of the important political changes which made serious impacts on the question of Nazrani identity are the emergence of the Dutch and still later the British colonial powers, the rise of the princely state of Travancore, the Mysore invasions and the Velu Thampi revolt. The political changes of the eighteenth century listed above, brought about rapid occupational shift among the Nazranis. These changes demolished the bounds of *Kuladhama* and enabled the Nazranis to enter into any profession of their liking.

The eighteenth century also witnessed the attempts of the Nazranis to create a canonical framework of their own incorporating the different customs, traditions and ecclesiology which have been introduced hitherto. This had been the context for the Nazranis to frame their own code of canons in AD 1809.

The changing nature of the society and the ideology made the Nazranis lose their religious and ritualistic uniformity in the eighteenth century. A seminary was founded in AD 1815 with the intention of bringing about uniformity on the above.¹¹ This study, 'The identity question of Malankara Nazranis: A study based on *Niranam Grandhavari*, AD 1708-1815', is very important since the period concerned is very crucial in the social, political, economical and ecclesial affairs of the Nazranis.

Significance of the Study

No comprehensive study has been initiated so far on the above theme. Partial studies on select themes made from diverse standpoints are however

¹¹ These questions are discussed in detail in Chapter VI

available. These studies comprise representations on liturgy, theology, sacraments, religious practices, anthropology and so on.

There were several detailed studies conducted about Malankara Nazranis of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. But, the eighteenth century was relatively unstudied or rather treated as uneventful. For Example, Z. M. Paret, in his history of Nazranis in 7,000 pages -ten volumes- named *Malankara Nazranikal*, used merely 147 pages to cover the period from AD 1675 to 1817. Out of that, sixty one pages were used for the events from AD 1808 to 1817. Considering the series of changes in the Nazrani social system mentioned above that raise several questions about the identity of Nazranis, this period needs a detailed study to evaluate the process of such changes.

Area of the Study

Though the main focus is the period between AD 1708 –1815, the period preceding the above time-span have been provided as the necessary background material and historical context. This study is a serious endeavour to bring out the process of ecclesial, political, economical, liturgical and occupational change of the Nazranis in the given period.

Hypothesis of the Study

The Nazranis in the beginning of the eighteenth century retain an identity that was derived from their pre-colonial life system and the colonial infiltrations. The arrival of Mar Gabriel triggered the identity question in the ecclesiology of the Nazranis. This, along with the change in the political environment of Kerala made disorders in several aspects of Nazrani identity. By AD 1815, their identity questions were resolved. But this was accomplished by reconstituting their self image and by contextualising their occupational and ecclesiastical positions.

Method of Approach

The method of approach for the present study may now be elaborated. The study seeks to proceed by discerning the various strands of historiographical representations on the complex questions of religious identity and culture of the native Christians. It has been observed that opinions and conclusions have varied in the basis of the historians' notions regarding the administrative, ecclesiastical and spiritual headquarters of Churches. This makes it necessary to make a broad classification of the secondary materials into two-those works, which seek to find the subordination of the native Church to Churches in the west

and those, which seek the autonomy of the native Church. There can also be found subdivisions in the former category depending upon the writer's commitment to Roman, Protestant and West Syrian ideology. Yet another classification that is possible in the given case is writers from abroad and indigenous writers who have been influenced by the above. Merit of the data drawn from the various writers had been gauged on the basis of the agenda of each of the authors.

As different from the approaches discerned above, the present study intends to examine questions relating to identity and culture by placing them in their full historical context, incorporating scholarly opinions rooted in liturgy, theology, sacraments, religious practices, anthropology, ethnography and so on. Further it is from the reference point of the indigenous Christians that the above themes have been reviewed.

A wide variety of well classifiable source materials have been selectively made use of in the endeavour. In certain cases these have been used for invalidating existing data and in certain other cases they have been made use of explaining and elucidating certain phenomena, which form part of the project. There are also cases wherein unearthing of fresh materials have been undertaken as serious endeavours in themselves. The various types of sources may be classified as follows.

- (a) **Primary Sources.** These are chiefly the various versions of the Grandhavaris, royal decrees, Episcopal bulls, treaties between the prelates, representations and petitions of various factions of the Nazranis, resolutions and minutes of the *Malankara Pally Yogam*, code of canons – available in various languages such as Malayalam, English, Latin, Syriac (East and West), Court orders, Royal proclamations and Inscriptions.
- (b) **Secondary Sources.** These include all the materials published so far.
- (c) **Fresh data.** By this is meant the source materials discovered through exhaustive field surveys, ethnographic information, empirical data on art and architecture, almanacs, genealogical tables.

The criteria used for accepting and rejecting of the data from the various sources and so too the extend to which these materials have been stretched for the present study may now may now be laid down. Those source materials which fail to stand the test of both internal and external criticism have been set aside. Information supplied by materials such as rituals, local customs and traditions that are bound by narrow spatio-temporal specificities have been put to exhaustive analysis for addressing the crucial questions of Nazrani identity. Above all the study also seek to evaluate the dynamics of colonialism as a major determinant that had been able to upset the pattern of vertical and horizontal segmentation of the Kerala society during the period under study for which the norm of *Kuladharmā* had been foundational.

Limitations of the Study

The term *Nazrani* denotes a large segment of native Christians. However for the present study, only those Nazranis who lie outside the control of the Roman Catholic Church have been included. Nevertheless there are certain complex and multiple layers of concomitant spaces for the two types of Nazranis which had to be included. The omission as noted above is mainly due to the fact that there are several studies on the theme dealing with the Nazranis falling within the Roman Catholic fold, particularly for the period of our study.

***Niranam Grandhavari* -The Source Material**

Even though a lot of primary and secondary sources are used, this study is chiefly based on *Niranam Grandhavari*.¹² Until AD 2000, it was an unpublished manuscript written on palm leaves. The original is in the possession of Kianianthra family of Mepral near Thiruvalla. This manuscript has 179 leaves with writing on both sides. It was transcribed at Oriental Manuscript Library, Thiruvananthapuram in 1988.¹³

Some believed that the *Niranam Grandhavari* was written by Mar Dionysius I, Malankara Metropolitan (AD1765-1808). There was a strong legend that an uninterrupted chronicle was kept by the Archdeacons until AD 1653.¹⁴ Dr. P. J. Thomas states that there exists a Church history written by Mar Dionysius I

¹² = The Niranam Chronicles

¹³ Prof. Joseph K. Alexander, a senior member of the Kianianthra family, organized this process. The paper transcript has 384 foolscap pages.

¹⁴ Thomas, Dr. P.J., *Malayala Sahithyavum Christhianikalum*, D.C.Books, Kottayam, 1989, P148

(Mar Thoma VI),¹⁵ based on the chronicles of the Archdeacons.¹⁶ In 1939, he stated that copies of this history were kept in several old families in the southern part of Nazrani settlements.¹⁷ Saint Mar Gregorios of Parumala, then Metropolitan of Niranam, had given a sworn deposition at Alleppey district court on *Thulam* 5, 1059 ME that he had seen a history *grantham* written in Malayalam on palm leaves but did not remember its author or authors.¹⁸ C. M. Agur states in his 'Church History of Travancore' that the Syrians have a brief history of their own composed by Mar Dionysius I. He said this history is "legendary and fabulous stories mixed with some historical stories."¹⁹ One of the two manuscripts examined by T. K. Joseph at Karuthadathu family at Mavalikkara in 1930 is identified as a copy of the *Niranam Grandhavari*.²⁰

This makes it imperative for us to provide the circumstances under which the *Niranam Grandhavari* had been given its present name. K. J. Ninan of Kianthra family showed the Kianthra manuscript to Edamaruku Joseph for taking notes for the Kianthra family history. Later Edamaruku Joseph used Kianthra manuscript for writing his book *Kerala Samskaram*, first published in 1971. Even though this manuscript does not contain any name in particular, Edamaruku gave the name *Niranam Grandhavari*.²¹ This palm-leaf volume is referred to as *Kianthra Manuscript* in this chapter.

Z. M. Paret, the author of the ten volume Church history '*Malankara Nazranikal*', quoted five lengthy pages of an old manuscript kept by Fr. Thomas Kottathuvila.²² This part is almost a replica of the details in *Niranam Grandhavari*. Upon the personal inquiry by the present author in 1997 at his residence at Chennithala, Alappuzha District, Fr. Thomas Kottathuvila, then aged 92, stated that he indeed had such a book and it was borrowed by someone but not

¹⁵ Mar Thoma VI Episcopa was enthroned as Metropolitan Dionysius I in AD 1771. He is known in both the names.

¹⁶ There is a hint about such a chronicle of Archdeacons in *Niranam Grandhavari*. According to *Niranam Grandhavari*, white ants ate out that at Niranam church. (Thomas, M. Kurian, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Kottayam, Sophia Books, 2000, P 127)

¹⁷ Old Nazrani settlements were from Kunnankulam in Trissur district to Chathannoor in Kollam district

¹⁸ *The Seminary Case Book Vol. I*, Case No. III of 1061, The Travancore Royal Court, P 438

¹⁹ Agur, C.M., *Church History of Travancore*, Madras, 1903, Pp 1056-7

²⁰ The State Editor, Kerala Gazetteers, *Kerala Society Papers Vol. I & II*, Trivandrum, Gazetteers Department, 1997, P 255

²¹ Joseph T.C., Edamaruku, *Kerala Samskaram*, Kottayam, Vidyarthi Mithram, 1995, Pp 508 - 9

²² Paret, Z. M., *Malankara Nazranikal Vol. III*, Kottayam, Jacob Mathews Chemmarppally (Pub.), 1967, Pp 69-74

returned. The aged priest did not remember who borrowed it. This copy remains untraceable now.

The *Kanianthra Manuscript*

The present *Kanianthra Manuscript* seems to be a copy compiled between 1824 and AD 1829 probably at Niranam.²³ The *Kanianthra Manuscript*, which is now known as *Niranam Grandhavari*, is not a single text. It is a collection of different texts in an assorted form. It seems like someone gathered a set of different palm-leaves texts as one book without any logic of subject or editing. The contents are classified by the present author and given appropriate titles. The content of *Kanianthra Manuscript* can be classified as follows.

1. History of Jews till Jesus Christ²⁴
2. History of Christianity
 - a. The history of Jesus Christ
 - b. About twelve Apostles
 - c. Universal Church history²⁵
3. Malankara Church history
 - a. From AD 825 -1653
 - b. From AD 1653 - 1728
 - c. From AD 1728 - 1808
 - d. From AD 1808 - 1829
4. Malankara Church history - II
 - a. Legend of Mar Abo and *Kadamattathu Kathanar*
 - b. Pakalomattom lineage²⁶
 - c. Later bishops²⁷
5. Article about faith and heresies²⁸

²³ Prof. Joseph K. Alexander came to this conclusion. For more details see: Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 238 - 9

²⁴ In general, it is a condensed version of Old Testament. But it also depends upon some sources other than Bible. According to the scholars like Fr. Dr. John Panikker, this part is an independent adaptation of the Church history written by Mar Mikhail Rabo, Patriarch of Antioch, in Syriac.

²⁵ Up to this part, the history is an adaptation of the church history of Mar Mikhail Rabo. The author of Malayalam text adds some points from the history of Nazranis.

²⁶ The Pakalomattom family history states that the last Mar Thoma bishops were from the Kadamattom branch of that family. (Emmanuel Vettuvazhiyil, Fr., *Saint Thomasum Pakalomattom Kudumbavum (Kurichithanam)*) The Kollam Panchayath judgment of April 4, AD 1840, well after the end of the Pakalomattom lineage, confirms that the Mar Thoma bishops had properties at Kadamattom. (Parat, Z. M., *Malankara Nazranikal Vol. II*, Pp 204-5) This part of *Niranam Grandhavari* proves that connection.

²⁷ The Pakalomattom lineage was over by the de-robbing of Mar Thoma IX, (*Ipe Metran*) in AD 1814 by Mar Dionysius II. This part of the document is the history of the later bishops until Mar Dionysius IV. This also includes the chronology of Thoziyoor bishops till AD 1829 who consecrated Mar Dionysius II, III & IV as bishops.

6. Essays of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah.²⁹
 - a. Catholic Church vs. Roman Church
 - b. Leavened Vs. un- Leavened bread for Holy Eucharist
 - c. Against idols
 - d. Marriage of the priests
 - e. Importance of right hand side
 - f. The time of day-beginnings
7. Arrival of Saint Thomas and a legend about Kodungallor temple
8. Miscellaneous subjects
 - a. Sins against the holy Sprit
 - b. Proverbs of King Solomon
 - c. New Science
 - d. The poem about the books in Bible
 - e. The rights of clerical orders
 - f. Assorted subjects about Jesus Christ
 - g. Route from Malankara to Antioch³⁰
 - h. A parable
 - i. Those of Human
 - j. Portion of *Paal pusthakam*
 - k. A mathematical parable
 - l. Table
9. Identification of precious stones
10. Portion of a letter
11. Poems of Mar Ivanios

In the first 82 leaves, the history of the church is found described. Most of this is the chronicle of the times of Mar Thoma VI. The internal evidences show that the author was contemporary to Mar Thoma VI. A very detailed which is

²⁸ This part also an independent adaptation of the Church history written by Mar Mikhail Rabo. Here also, some points from the history of Nazranis were added.

²⁹ The articles in this section establishing that six Roman Catholic teachings are wrong and its Orthodox counterparts are true. This has to be taken seriously since that period was in close contest with Roman Catholics. These were written according to the theology of the West Syrian Church, which was officially accepted by the Nazranis in AD 1686 and spread gradually.

³⁰ Even though the first sentence says so, it is the route from Kochi to Jerusalem only. It is descriptive including the fare, duration etc. The mistakes in the route description prove that one who never traveled in that route wrote it.

found nowhere else information is available in this. No study on this manuscript was ever held. This manuscript covers most of the present study period.

Other Copies of *Niranam Grandhavari*

Even though the name *Niranam Grandhavari* was not used, this manuscript attracted the attention of many people in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Several fruitless attempts were made to publish it. In the present author's enquiry, the following are traced out as the copies of the *Niranam Grandhavari*.

Copy of C. Curian Akkara

The oldest available copy of the *Niranam Grandhavari* is a copy preserved by Mr. C. Cherian at Akkara family in Kottayam. This was copied for his great grand father C. Curian (AD 1826 -1886). It had gone to the hands of Archdeacon Koshy, a notable Malayalam writer, during the lifetime of C. Curian itself. This copy was forgotten after the demise of both of them. Edamaruku Joseph received this copy from the grandson of Archdeacon Koshy in the 1960's. He handed it over to C. Cherian. Edamaruku and Kiliroor Radhakrishnan made a copy of the same. That too was kept with C. Cherian. The original manuscript is identical to the *Kanianthra manuscript* except for a few copying errors. This copy has only the first four chapters of the *Kanianthra manuscript*, which is the Church history.

Copy of Mar Mathews Athanasios

A copy of the *Niranam Grandhavari* was in the possession of Mar Mathews Athanasios Metropolitan (later Moran Mar Baselius Mar Thoma Mathews I, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan). It is written on a notebook of the late 1950's. No name or titles is given for this 130 pages manuscript. However, in some other handwriting, a note is seen as pasted on its front cover as *Grandhavari-Malankara Sabaha Naalagamam – Manuscript*. This copy carries the identical text of the first four chapters of the *Kanianthra manuscript*. This manuscript is in the possession of the present author.

Copy of Chitramezhuthu K. M. Varghese

Chitramezhuthu K. M. Varghese (AD 1888 –1962), painter and historian, had a copy of *Grandhavari*. It was in the possession of his grandfather at his family house (Pawathikunnel, Mavalikkara). He referred to it as the *Diary of Mar*

Dionysius the Great.³¹ Most of his works on church history are based on this manuscript and he quoted long paragraphs from this manuscript in his articles.³²

Chitramezhuthu Varghese made his corrections and footnotes after comparing his copy with some other copies of the same. He stated it as ready for publication around AD 1952, but vanished afterwards. His son, George Varghese, traced this copy to N. M. Abraham, Naalathra (AD 1905-1980), editor of 'The Church weekly' then, who bought it for publication from Chitramezhuthu Varghese in 1959. But it was never published and that copy vanished.³³

In 1997, the present author tried to find it at the residence of late Mr. N. M. Abraham at Olassa, Kottayam. But no such papers were present in his neatly kept library. His family members have no idea about the whereabouts of this manuscript. The complete text of Chitramezhuthu Varghese has yet to be found out.

Copy of Fr. M. C. Kuriakose Remban

In 1998, a manuscript was found along with the papers of late Fr. M. C. Kuriakose Remban (AD 1901-1958) at his residence in Mar Sleeba Church, Pathamuttom, Kottayam by Fr. Dr. Jacob Kurian. The present author identified it as a copy of the *Niranam Grandhavari*. This copy is in the handwriting of Chitramezhuthu Varghese and with some footnotes made by him. On the first page, Chitramezhuthu Varghese stated as copied on *Edavom* 6, 1101 ME (AD 1927).

This was indeed not the copy given to N.M. Abraham since the latter bought it in 1959 and Fr. Kuriakose Remban expired in 1958. Only forty foolscap pages are in this copy. No page is missing from this since the fortieth page is written on the backside of the first page. This is an incomplete copy ending in the middle of a word. It carries the events only up to the invasion of Kerala by Tippu Sultan.

There is only one reasonable explanation for the existence of this copy. Fr. M. C. Kuriakose Remban was the chief editor of the Church publication titled

³¹ Varghese, Chitramazhuthu K. M., *Ancham Marthommayude Peedayum Dutchukarude Pantheerayiravum*, Kottayam, MOC Publications, 1987, P 44 -7

³² Varghese, Chitramezhuthu K.M., "Malankara Sabha Viswasm" (Art.), *Malankara Sabha Magazine*, *Kumbham*, *Meenom* & *Medom* issues of 1124 ME.

³³ George Varghese Madras, son of Chitramezhuthu K. M. Varghese, in the introduction of his book titled *Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church History Part II*, gives a detailed account of the efforts of Chitramezhuthu on *Niranam Grandhavari*. (Varghese, George, *Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church History Part II*, Kottayam, 1993)

Malankara Sabha in which Chitramezhuthu Varghese published most of his articles. This copy may have been sent to Fr. Kuriakose Remban either for reference or as a sample for publication. From the nature of the copy, the chances are for the latter since Chitramezhuthu Varghese was searching for a publisher. It is also possible that this is a copy of the *Grandhavari* preserved at Pawathikunnel family, which Chithramezhuthu mentioned as incomplete. This manuscript is now preserved at the Orthodox Theological Seminary Archives, Kottayam.

The Chronicle of Mar Simon Dionysius

A replica of the *Niranam Grandhavari* is found as the first part of the 1577 page manuscript written by Mar Simon Dionysius.³⁴ This manuscript bears no name. However the present author has given a title for the same as *Mar Simon Deevanyosinte Naalagamam*, which means the Chronicle of Mar Simon Dionysius. This manuscript is referred to as *Naalagamam* in this study. Both *Niranam Grandhavari* and *Naalagamam* are identical in the treatment of universal Church history and the history of Nazranis. This structure and content prove that both are of the same origin. However, there are some differences in the details. The following are some major differences of the *Niranam Grandhavari* and the *Naalagamam*.

1. *Niranam Grandhavari* begins with the history from Genesis that is from the period of Adam and Eve, whereas *Naalagamam* begins from the period after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
2. The *Acta Thoma*³⁵ is described briefly in *Naalagamam*. No mention about the same is found in *Niranam Grandhavari*.
3. The pre-Portuguese history is limited to two pages in *Niranam Grandhavari*, whereas it is very detailed in *Naalagamam*.
4. The list of Pre-Portuguese East Syrian bishops given in *Niranam Grandhavari* is not available in *Naalagamam*.

³⁴ Mar Simon Dionysius (1823 - October 2, 1886) was a native of Kandanadu, Ernakulam district, Kerala. He was consecrated as the Metropolitan of Kochi by Mar Patros III, Patriarch of Antioch in 1877. He wrote a lengthy and detailed Church history. This 1577 page manuscript is now kept at St. Peter & St. Paul's church, Kadungamangalam, Ernakulam District, where he buried. The structure of this book indicates that he wrote it with the intention of publishing. This is a well-documented source material at least for his period. Copies of the same are in the possession of the present author and Thomas Mar Athanasios, Metropolitan of Chengannur.

³⁵ For more details about *Acta Thoma*, see Chapter II of this study

5. The detailed description of the construction of Puthencavu church in *Niranam Grandhavari* is not found in *Naalagamam*.
6. The persecution of Mar Dionysius I, by Thachil Mathu Tharakan is elaborate in *Niranam Grandhavari* It is very brief in *Naalagamam*.
7. *Niranam Grandhavari* describes some events during the period of Mar Dionysius I in detail. In some other points, like the history of bishop Kaniyavally, *Naalagamam* is more elaborate.
8. The description of events in *Niranam Grandhavari* is too brief from the demise of Mar Dionysius I till its conclusion in AD 1829. But it is elaborate in *Naalagamam*.
9. It is evident from *Naalagamam* that its author is pro-West Syrian. The omission of any description about Mar Ivanios the iconoclast and of Mar Diascoros, the West Syrian bishops, who made trouble to Nazranis and deported for the same, is an indication of his attitude. Considering the fact that Mar Simon Dionysius was consecrated by Mar Patros III, the Patriarch of Antioch, such an attitude is explainable, whereas in *Niranam Grandhavari*, the author is lenient to no invaders but to the Mar Thoma Metrans.

Explaining the Similarities and Variations

The comparative study of *Niranam Grandhavari* and *Naalagamam*³⁶ proves that both have a common book as their basic source material. The internal evidences also show that none of them was copied from the other.³⁷ It is also clear that the contents of both the texts are essentially the same, but there exist the differences in the matter of abbreviations made. It seems that the two versions have been prepared by the selective or partial use of the materials provided in the original manuscript. This will lead to the presumption that the two versions of the book had a common source book to draw from.

³⁶ *Niranam Grandhavari* was written or copied at Niranam, in the southern part of Nazrani settlement, whereas *Naalagamam* was written at Kandanadu, which is in the northern part.

³⁷ The *Naalagamam* was written in the end of the nineteenth century. The author must have copied the discussed part from another source and continued his work in the same fashion. If *Naalagamam* was copied from *Kanianthra manuscript*, it is impossible to give the details like *Kandanadu Padiyola*, history of Kaniyavalli Ivanios etc., which are not found in the *Kanianthra manuscript* of *Niranam Grandhavari*. Whereas, the description of the construction of Puthencavu church, details of the persecution of Mar Dionysius I etc., are seen in *Niranam Grandhavari* but not available in *Naalagamam*. Hence, it is clear that both are abbreviated from a common source, which is yet to found.

It is stated in the *Naalagamam* that the grandfather of Mar Simon Dionysius, Karottuveetil Ipora Tharakan, received a Church history written by Mar Dionysius I. This was gifted to him by Mar Dionysius I himself as a token of recognition of his valuable services to the Church. It is stated that that was in palm leaves and in the handwriting of Mar Dionysius I himself and preserved in Kandanadu church.³⁸ Due to the present legal situation of that church, the present author's attempt to trace that copy failed.

The said history, written by Mar Dionysius I is indeed not the original of *Niranam Grandhavari* and *Naalagamam*, for two reasons: (i) In both, the period of history is extended beyond the demise of Mar Dionysius I, and (ii) Mar Dionysius I is always referred to as a third person in both. Besides, *Niranam Grandhavari* indicates that it was written as per the orders of his successor Mar Thoma VII. Hence, it leads to a conclusion that the author of the original text is not Mar Dionysius I but somebody else³⁹.

The Period of Writing

The concluding sentence of the fourth chapter of *Niranam Grandhavari* regarding the Bible translation of Benjamin Bailey in present tense gives an impression that it was written between AD 1824 and 1829.⁴⁰ But *Niranam Grandhavari* states that its writing was started in 1808.⁴¹ The 1824-29 period may be the period of copying or compilation of the *Kanianthra manuscript*⁴².

Even though it is stated that its writing was started in AD 1808, several events prior to that are mentioned in the present tense in the *Kanianthra manuscript*. The madness of Bishop Paulose Pandari is stated in present tense⁴³. This is in 1802-03. Further, an event occurred between AD 1770-1773 is

³⁸ Mar Simon Dionysius, Karottuveetil, *Mar Seemon Dionysiusinte Naalagamam (Chronicle of Mar Simon Dionysius)*, MSS, Pp 275-92

³⁹ It is possible that the Universal Church history of *Niranam Grandhavari* was translated and retold by Mar Dionysius I. *Niranam Grandhavari* states that he studied West Syrian traditions from Mar Ivanios Yoohanon. The said part was written according to that tradition. Perhaps it was gifted to Ipora Tharakan.

⁴⁰ Benjamin Bailey completed the printing of his Malayalam Bible between AD 1824 - 1829 (Rayar, Samuel, 'Bible'(Art.), in *Viswa Vijnanakosam Vol. I X*, Kottayam, S.P.C.S., 1972, Pp 194)

⁴¹ "Then in the month of *Medom*, *Cheriyachan* [Mar Thoma VII], went to *Niranam* and took over the administration of the Church and the supervision of writing. In the eighty first year (981 ME, AD 1806), while at *Kadamttom*, [he] ordered to write the present affairs and the history of his predecessor demised at *Niranam* [Mar Dionysius I]. Thus, it was written." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 119)

⁴² The last event stated in Chapter III of *Niranam Grandhavari* is of 1004 ME. (AD 1829) Chapter IV also went up to that period. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 124, 127)

⁴³ This event mentioned in *Niranam Grandhavari* happened between AD 1802 - 03 (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 107) since Bishop Paulose Pandari lost the office in AD 1802. In the previous sentence, the resignation of Kattakkyathil Abraham Kathanar from the post of Governor of Romo-Syrians stated in past tense. This was happened in AD 1801. (Alanchery, Fr. Bernard, *Marthoma Christianikal*, Second Edition, Kottayam, CMI Publications Department, 1992, P 639)

mentioned in the present tense.⁴⁴ These contemporary statements cannot be treated just as grammatical errors. It is possible that the copiers of *Niranam Grandhavari* and *Naalagamam* failed to be cautious with the tense factor while copying it from a manuscript articulated in present tense.

While analysing the content of *Niranam Grandhavari*, detailed descriptions of events are available at least from AD 1748 to 1808. It is impossible to write such details of about sixty years without written reference later. This fact supports the statement of Dr. P. J. Thomas that an uninterrupted diary of events was kept by Mar Thoma Bishops.⁴⁵ *Niranam Grandhavari* also confirms the existence of such a chronicle from the time of the Archdeacons.⁴⁶ Chitramazhuthu Varghese also refers to his copy of *Niranam Grandhavari* as the 'Diary of Mar Dionysius I'. This is true at least from the period of Mar Thoma V. Although it was not the 'Diary of Mar Dionysius I', the actual authors of the original manuscript of *Niranam Grandhavari* and *Naalagamam* might have incorporated diaries of Mar Thoma V, VI and VII in their work.

As indicated earlier, up to the fourth chapter of *Niranam Grandhavari* is history. Through the first and second chapters, Universal Church history from Adam and Eve till the council of Chalcedon is described. Next two chapters deal with the history of Nazranis. All the copies of *Niranam Grandhavari* mentioned above, have these chapters. Hence, it can be taken as the main body of the *Niranam Grandhavari*. The rest of the chapters deal with various subjects not directly related to history. They are exclusives in the *Kanianthra manuscript*. Hence, it is assumed that they are gathered together with the main body of the *Niranam Grandhavari* by one who compiled the present volume.

One chapter in the *Kanianthra Manuscript* of *Niranam Grandhavari* is narrates a legend linking Saint Thomas and the goddess of Kodungalloor.⁴⁷ The absorbing nature of the Malayalee community succeeded in respecting, accepting and dignifying all religions and faiths. Making legends linking different religious beliefs and gods, prevented religious fights and promoted brotherly affection among the Kerala society. Brotherly relationships among gods were

⁴⁴ "...Mar Gregarious Metropolitan and Mar Ivanios Episcopa and Mar Dionysius Metropolitan are remaining in same faith" (*Naalagamam MSS*, P 141). Mar Thoma VI Episcopa was consecrated as Mar Dionysius Metropolitan on *Mithunam* 29, 945 ME. (AD 1770). Mar Gregorios expired on *Mithunam* 27, AD 1773.

⁴⁵ Thomas, *Christhiyenikalum...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 148

⁴⁶ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 127

⁴⁷ Chapter VII in the *Niranam Grandhavari*

also popularly spread in Kerala society.⁴⁸ Connection between the Nazranis and Kodungalloor is very old. It is believed that *Mahodayapuram* of Kodungalloor is built for the Christians during the time of *Kanai Thomman* (AD 345). In this context, one can assume that there are some intentions behind that story.

Writings of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah

The most important additions in the *Kanianthra Manuscript* beyond the history of Nazranis are a declaration of faith, six essays and thirty five poems. There is no mention about the author of them. However, there are justifiable reasons to believe that these are the writings of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah who was a West Syrian bishop, who came to Kerala along with Mafrian Mar Baselius Yeldo in AD 1685.⁴⁹

Mar Ivanios was a Syriac scholar, poet and theologian. The Roman Catholics of that period also testify to it.⁵⁰ The author of *Niranam Grandhavari* had seen him as a saint.⁵¹ He spread the Alexandrian theology of the West Syrian Church among the Malankara Nazranis. *Niranam Grandhavari* points out that Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah changed the Roman Catholic teachings about Church, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Holy Qurbana, and the Lent, and then introduced the West Syrian creed about those subjects.⁵²

Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah was here only for nine years. Therefore, it is difficult to believe that he wrote in Malayalam language. Even today, it is difficult to find appropriate words in Malayalam for core theological terms. Hence, it is reasonable to believe that he wrote in Syriac language. He has contributed three chapters in the *Kanianthra Manuscript* entitled *Churukkattil Viswasa Karyangal* (Declaration of Faith), *Mar Ivaniositre Prabandangal* (Essays of Mar Ivanios) and *Mar Ivaniositre Memrakal* (Poems of Mar Ivanios).

The chapter entitled *Churukkattil Viswasa Karyangal* is an explanation of the West Syrian creed. First, the author describes the history of creation up to Jesus Christ. Through this, his intension was to prove that the promise of God to Abraham is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Then the incarnation of Jesus Christ is mentioned briefly. Acts of the apostles and the growth of the early Church are

⁴⁸ For more details see the topic 'Positioning of god(s)' in Chapter III

⁴⁹ For more details: see Chapter V

⁵⁰ Barthelemeo O. C. D., Fr. Paulinus, *Pauresthya Bharathathile Christhu Matham*, (Translation of *India Orientalis Christiana*), Kalamassery, Jyothir Bhavan Publications, 1988, P 113

⁵¹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 85

⁵² For more details: see Chapter V

also mentioned briefly. The author emphasises that the promise of God to the Jews is fulfilled through the Christian Church.

Again, he writes about the heresies in the early Church and how true faith was formulated and established through the three Ecumenical synods. He affirms that the West Syrian Church is still following that apostolic tradition. The author writes about the theological differences of opinion of the West Syrian Church with the other ancient churches like the Greek, Roman and Nestorian in very important subjects like Holy Trinity, the person of the Son of God and the Virgin Mary, the mother of God.

Fr. Dr. John Panicker, who made a detailed study about this chapter,⁵³ points out that only a person who has deep knowledge in theology and West Syrian tradition can write this portion. It is clear from the evidences from the article, that, a person who belongs to that Church wrote this declaration of the West Syrian creed.

This is not an academic article to show the theological scholarship, or a creation to narrate the theological history of the West Syrian Church. The names of important persons who played significant roles in formulating the West Syrian theology like Mar Coorilos of Alexandria, Mar Athanasios, Patriarch Mar Savarios of Antioch and Mar Jacob Burdhana are omitted. Hence, it is clear that it was written for a specific purpose with essentials only.

In AD 1653, the Nazranis gave up the Roman relationship and in AD 1665, they accepted the Episcopal consecration from the West Syrian Church. Still the Nazranis followed the pre-*Coonen Cross* tradition. Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah held a *Malankara Pally Yogam* at Chengannur in AD 1686, after the sudden demise of Mar Thoma II, without a successor. Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah was able to persuade that *Malankara Pally Yogam* to accept five basic elements of the West Syrian theology.

At that period, Roman Catholics were fighting against the Nazranis not only materially, socially and politically but also intellectually. In more accurate terms, then the intellectual warfare was much active than the rest. In this particular situation, those Nazranis who embraced the new West Syrian tradition needed a strong theological foundation to withstand. Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah

⁵³ His study is included as appendix -3 in the of *Niranam Grandhavari* under the title *Suriyani Sabha Viswasm Niranam Gmadhavariyil* (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 250)

probably wrote these articles for the purpose of fulfilling this need. Some people indicate that Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah sent a very lengthy bull about matters of faith in AD 1886 from Chengannur.⁵⁴ This article included a summary of that bull.

The Chapter entitled *Mar Ivaniosinte Prabhandangal* comprises six essays. All six essays under this heading⁵⁵ must be read according to the same criteria as above. All of them justify the argument of the West Syrian church in their difference with the Roman Church. The subjects of the essays of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah are as follows:

- 1) The Roman Catholic Church is not the Universal Church.
- 2) It is wrong to use unleavened bread for the Holy Qurbana as practised by the Roman Catholic Church.
- 3) Use of idols in the churches is wrong.
- 4) Marriage of priests is not wrong.
- 5) The bride should stand at the right side of the groom during the wedding ceremony.
- 6) Evening to evening must be considered as a day.⁵⁶

The Chapter entitled *Mar Ivaniosinte Memraka*⁵⁷ is a collection of 35 poems in the *Kaniantira manuscript*.⁵⁸ Contemporary writings confirm that Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah was a poet.⁵⁹ He wrote an excommunication bull to a Roman Catholic priest named *Parajallah* (Fr. Barthelemeo Hannah) as a *Memra* in Syriac.⁶⁰

Internal evidences of these poems also indicate Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah as the author. In a poem titled *Sabha Charithram*,⁶¹ the date of arrival of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah, the fact that he was the disciple of Mafrian Mar Baselius Yeldo and the consecration of Mar Thoma IV by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah at Paraur were mentioned. In the stanza beginning 'Out of those two, my teacher

⁵⁴ The present author found out a copy of the said bull in Syriac language from Konat library (Konat MSS No. 154), got translated into Malayalam by Fr. Dr. Johns Abraham Konat, and published with the present author's notes. See Fr. Dr. Johns Abraham Konat and M. Kurian Thomas, " *Mar Ivanios Hidaythullayude Kalppana*," (Art.), *Mar Koorilos Souvenir Second Edition*, Mulamthuruthy, 2002, Part 6, Pp 4 -7

⁵⁵ Chapter VI of the *Niranam Grandhavari* titled *Mar Ivaniosinte Prabhandangal*

⁵⁶ All the above six are against the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. The Nazranis were fighting for the restoration of their pre-colonial practices as prescribed here even from the time of the synod of Udayamperor. For more details see: Chapters V and VI

⁵⁷ = Poems (in Syriac)

⁵⁸ They were found in most assorted form in the *Kaniyathara manuscript*. The present author sorted it in to order, classified subject wise and titled. Some of them are incomplete.

⁵⁹ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 114

⁶⁰ *Naalagamam MSS*, P 132

⁶¹ Poem No. 32 in *Niranam Grandhavari*

the Catholicos...’ the author is the first person narrator and he requests to accept him as a Nazrani. This clarifies that the author is a foreigner.⁶² This description confirms the authorship of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah also.⁶³

In a way, the basic ideas of these poems are from the articles mentioned above. Even some wordings of the poems and the prose are identical. In addition to that, some stories from Greek philosophy⁶⁴ and the feelings of a ship passenger⁶⁵ are also recorded. It is most unlikely that a Malayalee wrote such things in those days.

It is certain that this *Memras* were not written abroad in Syriac in an early date since some of the analogies used clearly show their Kerala origin.⁶⁶ Probably some of these *Memras* were not written by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah at all. There is a possibility that some others borrowed the ideas and style of him and wrote some poems later. The usage of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah as a second person in some poems is an evidence of this.

In this group of poems, a particular calendar is seen as distinguishable. It is different from the rest of them.⁶⁷ It is found as a mixture of the West Syrian calendar, propagated among the Nazranis in the eighteenth century, along with a few East Syrian and Roman Catholic feasts. Some local feasts are also found in it. This was the general nature of the Church almanacs in the late eighteenth century.⁶⁸ It is certain that the author of this poem is not Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah since it is unrealistic to think that a conservative orthodox like him did include Roman and East Syrian feasts in his Church calendar.

In general, it may be concluded that some of the poems are of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah and some others are written by somebody else according to his ideas. It is also evident that Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah did not write in Malayalam. It is evident from the other testimonials mentioned above, that his medium was Syriac. Hence, there must have been a translator. But there is no existing record

⁶² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 188

⁶³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari Op. Cit.*, P 89. See also Thomas, M. Kurian, "Sathya Viswasa Punasthapakanaya Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah", (Art.), *Mar Koorilos Souvenir Second Edition*, Mulamthuruthy, 2002, Part 6, Pp 8 -15

⁶⁴ Poem No. 24 in *Niranam Grandhavari*

⁶⁵ Poem No. 28 (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 185, 186)

⁶⁶ For more details see: the Article of Prof. Mary Mathew as the appendix -7 of the 2000 edition of *Niranam Grandhavari* (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 270-3)

⁶⁷ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 189-92

⁶⁸ For more details see 'Calendars and Almanacs' in Chapter VI

about the translator. On the basis of the following facts, it could be confirmed that Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah is the author of these parts.

The present author, through the following points, came to the conclusion that Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah is the author of this part.

- 1) It is very clear from the writings that the author is a West Syrian scholar.
- 2) The importance of the See of Antioch is highlighted even at irrelevant places in the poems.
- 3) Considering the work as one of great theological and doctrinal depth, it has to be contented that only a great scholar can write these articles.
- 4) Contemporary historians had described no other West Syrian Bishops who came to India between AD 1665 and 1800 as a 'scholar'.
- 5) Contemporary local Nazranis had neither the knowledge nor the relevant materials to write articles of the quality mentioned above.
- 6) No other period like that of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah needed such articles providing explanations for the acute theological controversies existing then.
- 7) Statements are found from the period of Mar Thoma IV (AD 1688-1728) onwards on this basis.
- 8) The Roman Catholics of those days complained that Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah wrote articles in Syriac and Arabic in order to argue with them in matters of faith.⁶⁹

Hence, from all the above, it is very clear that the author of these articles is Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah.

Other Themes in the *Kanianthra manuscript*

There is an incomplete letter of AD 1827 found in the *Kanianthra* manuscript. This personal letter may have been deliberately or accidentally included in that while compiling *Niranam Grandhavari*, for which there is no proof. The sender and receiver of this letter are unknown and it has no relation with the main body of the *Niranam Grandhavari*.⁷⁰

This letter is historically and linguistically very important. The Bible quotations in it, which are plenty, prove that the author is well versed in it. The standard of the letter is also worthy to note. It seems that a senior member of a

⁶⁹ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, *Christiana*, P 114

⁷⁰ Chapter X of *Niranam Grandhavari* titled *Oru Ezhuthu*

family wrote it as an advice with the intention to cease the quarrel between some family members. The linguistic experts should evaluate its language, standard and style.⁷¹

Another notable portion of *Niranam Grandhavari* is *Vajralakshanam*, which means the identification of precious stones.⁷² This incomplete portion does nothing with religion or history of Nazranis. The available portion deals with methods of identifying diamonds and its characteristics. These poems have not yet come to the attention of literary historians. It is important in language aspect and as a document of Kerala's mercantile history. It needs to be further studied.

The rest of the *Kanianthra manuscript* is a collection of assorted subjects. None of them are the original work of the one who gathered it in the present form. For example, the part titled *Manushyarkkullathu* (for humans) deals with the various parts of human body, different types of illness, and many Indian sciences. This portion also includes mathematics and astrology. The author seems to have collected them from Indian, Syriac and Roman traditions.⁷³

While considering the relevance of these assorted subjects in *Niranam Grandhavari*, it is worth noting the comment of Dr. M. R. Raghava Varrior. According to him "in *Niranam Grandhavari* we see the beginning of a new historical trend of collecting, recording and keeping different information." Probably the influence of the renaissance after AD 1815 led the Nazranis into such a state.

The Author

Even though the original manuscript was called the 'Diary of Mar Dionysius I', it was not written by him beyond doubts for the reasons stated above. But the nature of the description indicates that it was written by persons closely associated with Mar Thoma Metrans.⁷⁴ The author of the third chapter states that he was writing it as per the order of Mar Thoma VII given in 981 ME at Kadamattam. He also states that Mar Thoma VII supervised the writing at

⁷¹ For more details see the article of Fr. John Thomas Karingattil as Appendix VI in *Niranam Grandhavari* titled *Oru Ezhuthu, Oru Mukhavara*

⁷² Chapter IX of *Niranam Grandhavari* titled *Vajralakshanam*

⁷³ For More details see the article of Dr. M. N. Sasidharan as Appendix V in *Niranam Grandhavari* titled *Manushyarkkullathu – Oru Padhanam*

⁷⁴ In an instant in 973 ME (AD 1798), the author of *Niranam Grandhavari* stating that "by the grace of God, there is no end for our efforts" while describing the defense of Mar Dionysius I against the efforts of Thachil Mathew Tharakan to convert him as a Roman Catholic.

Niranam.⁷⁵ But it is certain that the author referred to some diary and wrote periodically. The minute details of earlier events seen in *Niranam Grandhavari* are impossible to be stated accurately without such a written reference.

The supervision of Mar Thoma VII and the close association of the author of *Niranam Grandhavari* to the Mar Thoma Metrans are quite obvious from the style of writing. In the third chapter, Mar Dionysius I is referred to always as *Achen* and Mar Thoma VII as *Cheriyachen*. The descriptions after the demise of Mar Thoma VII were very brief till AD 1829. No such intimacy like calling *Achen* and *Cheriyachen* is found in the later part even in the case of Pakalomattom bishops. Perhaps the later bishops are not so close with the author like Mar Dionysius I and Mar Thoma VII⁷⁶ and hence he lost the interest in the later bishops. However, it is not practical to write such an eyewitness account by a single person for a period of sixty years (AD 1748-1808). Thus it can be concluded that as Dr. P. J. Thomas stated, a diary was kept by the appointment of Mar Thoma Metrans and it was written by some of their close associates. One of the close companions of Mar Dionysius I and Mar Thoma VII used those diaries to write the original of *Niranam Grandhavari* and *Naalagamam* as per the instructions of Mar Thoma VII around AD 1808 –09. Some other hands added the history up to 1829.⁷⁷ From the hint about the 'Chronicles of Archdeacons' in *Niranam Grandhavari*, it is possible that the original was kept at Niranam.⁷⁸

Kianianthra Nina Kathanar (AD 1842-1917) who was the vicar of Niranam church brought the *Kianianthra manuscript*, presently known as *Niranam Grandhavari* to Kianianthra family. Prof. Joseph K. Alexander has hinted that he received it from his predecessor Kianianthra Tommy Chandy Kathanar (AD 1787-1847), who was also the Vicar of Niranam church from AD 1808 till his death in 1847.⁷⁹ *Niranam Grandhavari* states about his ordination by Mar Dionysius I on *Meenam* 1, AD 1808 in the third person.⁸⁰ This proves that he was not the author.

⁷⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 119

⁷⁶ For example, it is true in case of Kayamkulam Philipose Remban. For more details see: Chapter VII

⁷⁷ A sudden change of attitude is found at this point. The author of the *Niranam Grandhavari*, till then favoring the Pakalomattom bishops and favouring their stands, turned here onwards to neutral or even became a little opposing.

⁷⁸ "...But when the box in which the papers containing the details of the Pakalomattom archdeacons and the bishops along with the *Grandhavari* was kept, was destroyed by white ants at Niranam church..." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 127)

⁷⁹ See his article *Kianianthra Thaliyola Grandham* as Appendix I of *Niranam Grandhavari*. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 238 –45)

⁸⁰ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 117

He may, during the period of his office as the vicar of Niranam church, have taken a copy of the original text which was then available at Niranam and added other miscellaneous subjects now seen as the part of *Niranam Grandhavari* in the his copy.

In some poems, the name of a disciple who wrote those poems is mentioned as Alexander.⁸¹ The nature of some of those poems is phrased in the form of clarification of doubts by a teacher to his disciple. Therefore, there are two assumptions.

- 1) These poems were written by Alexander, one direct student of Mar Ivanios.
- 2) In some later period Alexander wrote these, based on the teachings of Mar Ivanios, whom he considered as his teacher.

Here the possibility is that Kianantha Thommy Chandy Kathanar, who compiled the *Kianantha Manuscript of Niranam Grandhavari*, is the translator. No other evidence is available to prove this except the name Chandy of Thommy Chandy Kathanar and the name Alexander in some poems.⁸² The Kianantha family has no knowledge that Thommy Chandy Kathanar was a poet,⁸³ and the existence of any other poet named Chandy in their family is not known to it.

Because of the similarities of the wordings, one can argue that all the works of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah were translated by the same person. But this argument is weak since at least some of them were later works. Perhaps, the translation of the original works and the additions were made in the same period. It is also possible that the translator made his own contributions while translating.

The first two chapters of the historical part, namely, history of the Jews till Jesus Christ and the history of Christianity, may have been written only by a person who is well-versed in the West Syrian ecclesial history. It is obvious that the translator possessed proficiency in both Malayalam and Syriac languages. Such a person with poetic skill alone can easily translate the works of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah.

At the end of the eighteenth century, a person with all the above-mentioned qualifications existed. Kayamkulam Philipose Remban (- AD 1812),

⁸¹ For example, No. 10 (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., Pp 180-1)

⁸² Nazranis using *Chandy* as a dialectal form of Alexander.

⁸³ Alexander, Dr. J., *Kianantha Kudumbam*, Thirvananthapuram, Kianantha Kudumba Yogam, 1991, Pp 207 -11

who translated the Bible into Malayalam for the first time was an expert in the West Syrian tradition. He was the best student and companion of the West Syrian bishop Mar Ivanios Yoohanoan.⁸⁴ His mastery in Malayalam and Syriac languages need no further proof except his Bible translation.⁸⁵ His Syriac poems, found out by the present author, prove his poetic talents.⁸⁶ These poems also prove his expertise in West Syrian Theology. *Niranam Grandhavari* also proves that he was the confidant and companion of Mar Dionysius I and Mar Thoma VII.

Considering all the above facts along with personal presence found in the descriptions during the period of Mar Dionysius I and of Mar Thoma VII and the order of Mar Thoma VII to write *Niranam Grandhavari*, it is possible to place Philipose Remban as the author. Perhaps somebody else continued the later history after his demise, as in the case of *Naalagamam*, which continued till the end of the nineteenth century. But the prominence of Philipose Remban found in the third chapter stands against this argument. Even if the history of Nazranis (Chapter III and IV) was written by somebody else, the highest possibilities are there for the authorship of Philipose Remban for chapters I and II and for the translation of the works of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah.

Publication

Beyond the efforts of N. M. Abraham, K. C. Mammen Mappilai, the then chief editor of Malayala Manorama, took initiative to publish the *Kanianthra Manuscript* of the *Niranam Grandhavari*.⁸⁷ But somehow it never took place. In early 1970's, Edamaruku Joseph declared that he was going to publish the *Akkara manuscript* of the *Niranam Grandhavari* with his footnotes. He added *Niranam Grandhavari* as one of his published books in his another book. However, he never published it. Some portions of the *Niranam Grandhavari* were published in *Malankara Sabha Magazine* (once in 1960's and again in 1998-99) and in *Malankara Orthodox Herald* (1991). Earlier, T. K. Joseph tried to publish the *Karuthadathu* copy in 1930's with his notes, but failed.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 98

⁸⁵ Dr. Buchanan printed the four Gospels translated by him from Syriac by from Bombay in AD 1811.

⁸⁶ The present author found out some of his Syriac poems at Konat library (*Konat MSS* No. 154) in 2000 AD. They are written in the style of Mar Aprem and deals with theological subjects deals in Chapter V of *Niranam Grandhavari* titled *Churukkathil Viswasa Karyangal*

⁸⁷ Varghese, *Malankara Orthodox ...*, *Op. Cit.*, (preface)

⁸⁸ *Kerala Society Papers, Part I, Op., Cit.*, P 223

In November AD 2000, the present author edited and published the *Niranam Grandhavari* for the first time with an introduction of Dr. M. R. Raghava Varrior. The full text of the *Kanianthra manuscript* is included in this book titled *Niranam Grandhavari*. Even though the transcript from Oriental Manuscript Library was taken as the base, the original palm leaves were referred to as missing and as doubtful parts. Other manuscript copies mentioned above also were consulted for cross-references. This volume contains a detailed study and footnotes of the present author. It also contains the comments about the subjects dealt with in *Niranam Grandhavari* as appendix. In this study, this edition published by Sophia Books, Kottayam, in AD 2000, is referred to as *Niranam Grandhavari*.

The original text had no chapter division and few sub-titles. The present author divided it into eleven subject wise chapters and gave titles and sub titles accordingly. The few titles existed in the original text are retained and marked separately in the published book. No tampering is made on the text and hence taken as authentic as original. Throughout this study, this edition of the *Niranam Grandhavari* is referred to.

The *Niranam Grandhavari* is historically very important since it is a contemporary record of the course of Nazranis between AD 1750 and 1829. It is also written in the form of history with the intention to keep a written record. Most of the events described in it are verifiable and tally with other sources.⁸⁹ Apart from the importance as the history of Nazranis, *Niranam Grandhavari* is a valuable document in the study of the Kerala history also. Even though it is focused on the events related to Nazranis, major events in the history of Travancore also appear in this. As the only known unofficial history of that period with contemporary origin, *Niranam Grandhavari* is a fine tool to verify the authenticity of the events described elsewhere.

Another Character of the *Niranam Grandhavari* is also important. It keeps the view of the Nazranis without any material or intellectual dominance of foreign powers. Historically such a view is important in the period of western colonialism of India. In fact, this period is stormed with the resistance against the foreign,

⁸⁹ For more details see the present author's introduction of *Niranam Grandhavari* (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., Pp 16 –62)

ideological rather than material, dominance. In that way, this history favours the views of the nationalists and its leaders.

The *Niranam Grandhavari* is the first written history in Malayalam language also. The first known history in Malayalam, written in the form of history, is *Vellayude Charithram* written in AD 1781⁹⁰. That describes the history from AD 1755 to 1780 including an eyewitness account of the Malabar invasion of Hyder Ali of Mysore⁹¹. Some portions of the *Niranam Grandhavari* were written at least ten years earlier than *Vellayude Charithram*⁹² and hence the *Niranam Grandhavari* is the oldest history in the Malayalam language.

The *Niranam Grandhavari* is free from any European influence. The Nazranis had no relations with the European missionaries while writing the *Niranam Grandhavari*.⁹³ *Niranam Grandhavari* is a fine specimen to study the Malayalam prose before the advent of the British missionaries. It may even be a specimen to study the Malayalam prose without any European influence during the colonial period.⁹⁴ It uses an amazing Malayalam vocabulary to express even the complicated explanations of the Holy Trinity effectively. However, Fr. Dr. Johns Abraham Konat, a noted Syriac scholar, traced out the influence of Syriac grammar in Chapter V and in the writings of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah. Hence, the other parts of the *Niranam Grandhavari* also need linguistic studies as a sample of the pre-missionary Malayalam prose.

The *Niranam Grandhavari* unveils, the history of the Nazranis of a very complicated period. It was a period with different creeds of faith, foreign connections, malignant internal and political problems. *Niranam Grandhavari* gives a pictorial sketch of the Nazrani's growth towards an identity of their own with the West Syrian liturgical tradition and ecclesiology along with Alexandrian Creed, in this very complex atmosphere. It was a period that needed the incorporation of the existing administrative and occupational structure into the

⁹⁰ Nampoothiri, Dr. N. M., *Vellayude Charithram*, Sukapuram, Vallathol Vidyapeedom, 1998, P 10

⁹¹ Nampoothiri, Dr. N.M., *Saamuthiri Charithrathile Kaanappurangal*, Sukapuram, 1987, P.121-33

⁹² See the title 'The period writing' in this Chapter.

⁹³ The Nazranis cut their relations with the Roman Catholic Missionaries in AD 1653. The Protestant missionaries, whose contributions to Malayalam prose are innumerable, had in touch with Nazranis after AD 1815 only.

⁹⁴ The canons of the Synod of Udayamperor, of AD 1599 as well as the statutes of bishop Francis Roz of AD 1602, written under the auspicious of the Portuguese Roman Catholic Missionaries. The *Varthanmanappusthakam*, the late eighteenth century travelogue of Parammekkal Thomman Kathanar, is heavily accented with European words and phrases.

new trends and challenges that appeared, in that period, to create a new life system for the Nazranis and hence to redefine their identity.

Chapter Division

This study is divided into seven chapters. The introductory chapter deals with the organization of the study and the survey of source material. The second chapter - 'The Origin of the Nazranis'- discusses the various theories about the origin of Nazranis and so too the testimonials about them.

The third chapter -'The Pre-Colonial Nazrani Community' - deals with the formation of Nazrani *Jathy*, their early settlements, social status, social customs occupation etc. during the pre-colonial period. Another major topic discussed in this chapter is the adaptation of Nazranis into the Brahmanic religion and the *Chathurvarna* system. The fourth chapter -'The Christianity of pre-colonial Nazranis'- deals with the questions of religion, religious affiliations, religious organisation, hierarchy and the religious life of the pre-colonial Nazranis.

The fifth chapter -'The Way of Thomas Vs. Peter'- deals with the problems of entry of the Portuguese colonialism into the Nazrani life-system. The colonial impact in the social customs, caste, ecclesial, authority structures, Sacraments, relation with the local chieftains of the Nazranis till the end of the seventeenth century and the *Coonen* - Cross oath are also discussed in this chapter. This chapter focuses on the religious, social and political identity pattern of the Nazranis in the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The sixth chapter -'The Nazranis: AD 1708 – 1815'- takes up themes such as the social status, political condition, occupation and the 'Saint Thomas consciousness' of the eighteenth century Nazranis are discussed in the first part of this chapter. Aspects of ecclesial administration, formation of the canonical framework, religious life and the change of the liturgical tradition of the eighteenth century Nazranis are also discussed. All these topics explain the different ways in which the various elements and events affected the Nazrani identity between AD 1708 and 1815. Chapter seven is the conclusions of this study.

Chapter - II ORIGIN OF THE NAZRANIS

There are several theories about the origin of the Nazranis. The three major ones among them are summarized as follows: -

1. The Saint Thomas tradition: - That Saint Thomas introduced Christianity to Kerala.
2. The Migration tradition: - That the Nazranis are the descendents of the immigrants from other parts of India and abroad.
3. Later evangelisation tradition: - That the church is an offspring of later evangelisation of some missionaries.

The Saint Thomas Tradition

The oral tradition regarding the origin of the Nazranis dates back to the first century AD. According to this tradition, Saint Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ founded the church in Kerala. Legend has it that he landed at Kodungallor in AD 52, preached the word of God, founded seven churches and gave priestly ordination to four families. He was martyred at Mylapore near Madras in AD 72 and was buried there.¹ There are several versions for this legend with slight differences in some details. However, the basic structure remains the same in all. Dr. Hermann Gundert, who collected the legend of the Nazranis under the title *Nazranikalude Pazhama*, accepts this legend.²

German historian LaCroze in AD 1723 first challenged this legend. Some historians like Sir. William Hunter rejected the possibility of the visit of Saint Thomas to India for lack of contemporary evidence. However, T. K. Velu Pillai comments on the absence of such records as follows:

It is not reasonable to hope that the visit of Saint Thomas could be proved by certified records in the archives of government; nor is it right to think that the transactions should, if true, be recorded in stone or copper. Saint Thomas came to India to preach Christianity, not to create historical evidences.³

¹ Paret, Z. M., *Malankara Nazranikal Vol. I*, Kottayam, Jacob Mathews Chemmarppally (Pub.), 1965, Pp. 172-5

² Gundert, Dr. Hermann, *Keralolppathiyum Mattum*, Kottayam, D. C. Books, 1992, P 337

³ Velu Pillai, Sadasyatilaka T. K., *The Travancore State Manual, Vol. I*, Trivandrum, Travancore Government, 1940, Pp. 653- 4

The historians like James Hough state that the visit of Saint Thomas to India is improbable.⁴ According to Gundert, "Romans and Greeks came regularly here by ship from Egypt for trade."⁵ Kerala had maritime relations with Egypt and the Middle East at least from the tenth century BC⁶. This trade was flourishing in the first century AD. The discovery of trade winds in AD 45 made the maritime relations much easier. According to Velu Pillai, "If the desire for trade and the exigencies of political ambition made travelling anything but an abnormal enterprise, the missionary who desired to carry the word of God to the remotest confines of earth would find no difficulty in arriving at Malabar Coast."⁷

Another point of disapproval of the Saint Thomas tradition is based on its reference to the Brahmins in Kerala in the first century AD. This school of historians argues that there were no Brahmins in Kerala in the first century AD.⁸ They say that this tradition is false since it speaks about the conversion of Brahmins and upper caste Hindus. According to Gundert, Buddhism was dominating Kerala then. He states: "it seems that *Sremaner*, a part of Buddhists rather than Brahmins, dominated the then Kerala"⁹

The first Christians of Kerala were indeed not the converts from upper caste Hindus alone. The Christianity welcomed anybody who came into the new faith. However, at the same time, the conversion of Brahmins could not be ruled out entirely since Kerala was not absolutely Aryan-free in the first century AD.¹⁰ Even though the Aryan domination came into full force only by the 8-10 centuries AD, there were Aryan settlements in Kerala since the third century BC.¹¹ In that context, the conversion of Brahmins was possible in the first century AD.

⁴ Hough, James, *The History of Christianity in India, Vol. I*, London, 1839, P 36

⁵ Gundert, *Keralolpathy ... Op. Cit.*, P 338

⁶ Sreedhara Menon, A, *Kerala Charitram*, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 1988, Pp. 57-65

⁷ Velu Pillai, *State Manuel Vol. I ... Op. Cit.*, P 654

⁸ According to Paret, European historians raised this argument (Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 190 - 1)

⁹ Gundert, *Keralolpathy ... Op. Cit.*, P 338

¹⁰ Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai admits the presence of Brahmins in Kerala in the first Christian centuries (Sam, N, (Ed.), *Elamkulam Kunjanpillayude Thiranjadutha Krithikal, Part - I*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2005, University of Kerala, P 239

¹¹ Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Charitram, Op. Cit.*, Pp. 90 - 93

The *Acta Thoma*

The first written document about the Saint Thomas tradition is the second century Syriac book called *The Acts of Saint Thomas* or *Acta Thoma*. Its author, Bardaisan of Edessa (AD 154 - 222), narrates the details of the missionary journey of Saint Thomas from the beginning of his travel after the Pentecost until his martyrdom.¹² This book was so popular then; hence, it was translated into several languages, including Greek, in the second and third centuries.¹³

This book was considered as fiction by historians till the nineteenth century discovery of the authenticity of King Gondaphoros, a character mentioned in *Acta Thoma*. It is further deduced that his period was around AD 46, probably up to AD 60.¹⁴ This period tallies with the legends about Saint Thomas. Initially those who deny the Saint Thomas connection of the Nazranis used this discovery. They argue that the place names and customs mentioned in *Acta Thoma* do not correspond with those in Kerala. Hence, the missionary work of Saint Thomas was not in Kerala but somewhere else, they say.

On the contrary, some others like Fr. Bernard and E. M. Philip argue that all events described in *Acta Thoma* happened in Kerala. They try to find the Kerala originals of the place names mentioned therein. Even though they succeed in giving reasonable originals for them, they fail in giving an Indian explanation for certain customs described there.¹⁵ A step further above, Fr. Dr. Thomas Koonammakel, a known Syriac Scholar, traced out that one of the Greek versions of *Acta Thoma* carries a family name, which bears the same meaning of the *Pakalomattom* in Kerala tradition¹⁶.

Z. M. Paret, after long and detailed analysis of *Acta Thoma*, takes a middle course. According to him, the first part of *Acta Thoma* did not happen in Kerala but in Persia, Secotra island near present-day Bahrain and Northwest India. However, he proves that the last parts of *Acta Thoma*

¹² Mathews Kathanar, Valiya Paretu, *Marthoma Sleehayude Nadapadikal* (Malayalam Translation of *Acta Thoma*), Kottayam, 1937

¹³ Paret, *Nazranikal Vol. I...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 281-2

¹⁴ Paret, *Nazranikal Vol. I...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 281-2

¹⁵ For more details see. Alanchery, Fr. Bernard, *Marthoma Christianikal*, Kottayam, 1916, Pp 172 – 3 and Philip, E. M., *Marthomasleehayude Indian Sabha*, Kottayam, 1929, Pp 28-9.

¹⁶ *Pakalomattom* vaguely translated as 'the land of Sun'. Dr. Thomas Kunammakal disclosed this information to the present author in person.

happened in Kerala through the circumstantial analysis. He also proves that place of the death and burial of Saint Thomas described in *Acta Thoma* is Mylapore near Madras. This is same as in the legends of the Nazranis.¹⁷

The *Acta Thoma* indeed influenced the later developments of the Saint Thomas tradition of the Nazranis. It was possible that this book reached the Nazranis through the Persian immigrants in the first millennium itself. Still the differences between both of them proved that the Saint Thomas tradition of the Nazranis was not developed from *Acta Thoma*.

The Saint Thomas tradition stood as the identity for the Nazranis during the pre-Portuguese period. Friar Jordan, who visited India in AD 1302, states that "In India there are a scattered people, one here and another there, who call themselves as Christians but are not so, nor they have baptism nor do they know anything about the faith. Nay, they believe Saint Thomas the great to be Christ."¹⁸ This statement has to be taken in this background. His statement about lack of baptism and Christian knowledge may be because of his lack of understanding of Indian Christians. However, his observation about their concept of Saint Thomas may be true since they lived in a larger community among whom incarnations of gods were more popular than the gods themselves. There is no wonder if the Nazranis once projected and believed that Saint Thomas was an incarnation of their god.

The Christians of Saint Thomas

None of the ancient Churches, with apostolic or later origin, identified itself with its founders' name. On the contrary, it was very common in the Christendom during the period of heresy to abuse the opponents with its leader's/ founder's name when the division occurred. Nestorians and Jacobites are the best examples.¹⁹ Those titles were used to accusingly remind the opposition that they are not the rightful successors when the division occurred and both the factions claim the succession of the mother Church. However, it also happened that such derogatory names became official ones in later stage.

¹⁷ Paret, *Nazranikal Vol. I...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 279 - 341

¹⁸ As quoted by Ferroli S. J., D., *The Jesuits in Malabar Vol. I*, Bangalore, 1939, P 65

¹⁹ There were several examples for them like Aryans (those who followed Aries), Badasanites and Euthician etc.

Normally, the ancient Christian Churches were known by the name of the country or city like 'Church of Corinth, of Jerusalem, of Antioch', etc. After the theological divisions, it included a short suffix to expose their faith like Roman Catholic Church, Armenian Apostolic Church, Greek Orthodox Church, Malankara Orthodox Church etc. The lack of a suitable political identity to describe the Nazranis who were scattered in numerous kingdoms of India made it impossible to identify them politically. Their staying away from theological disputes and their great veneration for their founder Saint Thomas might have led the foreigners to call them as the Christians of Saint Thomas.

In the course of history of the Nazranis until the Portuguese period, no such heresies were recorded to identify the Church with a person's name. Even then, it was not justifiable in the case of the founder himself, who is one among the twelve apostles. When the foreign travellers, especially Christians, had seen the Nazranis, who were different from all known Churches to them, they had no other choice but call them with their founder's name. The Persian Church accepted Malankara as the "Holy See of Apostle Saint Thomas." The Persian primates to Nazranis bore the title as "The Bishop Metropolitan, Superintendent and the ruler of the See of the holy apostle Mar Thomas."²⁰

Whatever the original tradition, it was indeed influenced later by the *Acta Thoma*. That book, which was so popular in the Syrian Church in the Middle East, was indeed brought into Kerala by the successive Persian prelates who maintained their connections with the Nazranis till the arrival of the Portuguese. There was nothing objectionable to the Nazranis in it and it influenced their own oral tradition heavily since it was available in written form.

The other available written documents about the Saint Thomas tradition are of the post-Portuguese period. Within those fifteen centuries, it is possible that many additions took place in the oral tradition. In between, it was necessary for Nazranis to establish that they were of high origin in order to establish and safeguard their position in the upper chest of the *Jathy* system during the process of Aryanization of Kerala. It became necessary to establish a separate identity within the Christian community to safeguard their position

²⁰ This title is from a Syriac book copied at Kodungallor in AD 1301. For more information, see Van Der Ploeg, O. P., J. P. M., *The Syriac Manuscripts of St. Thomas Christians*. Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications, 1983, P.187

in the *Jathy*-based Kerala society when the Portuguese started converting the lower castes to Christianity. Nazranis substantially used the Saint Thomas tradition with his upper caste disciples to establish their superior origin rather than that of the neo converts during the Portuguese period and hence, it was mistaken as a legend of the sixteenth century origin.

Maargam Kali Pattu

One of the oldest documents carrying the local tradition about Saint Thomas is the song for *Maargam Kali*,²¹ the performing art of the Nazranis. The *Maargam Kali Pattu* narrates the story of Saint Thomas's mission. Its heavy dependence on *Acta Thoma* indicates the Persian influence in the *Maargam Kali Pattu*. This is believed as having been written by *Vettikunnel Itty Thomman Kathanar* of Kallissery who lived in the seventeenth century of Christian era.²²

However, Dr. P. J. Thomas traces the origin of such a song further back. *Jornada* of Gouvea describes the performance of a folk art form with the enactment of the Saint Thomas ballad by the Nazranis of Angamaly in AD 1599, which seems to have been *Maargam Kali*. Peter Maffei in AD 1558 states that the Nazranis performed the Saint Thomas story to the Portuguese at Kochi on their first meeting. After considering all these, Dr. Thomas suggests that the *Maargam Kali Pattu* was with a pre-Portuguese origin and the above-mentioned Itty Thomman Kathanar might have rewritten it in the present form²³. It is possible that some Nazranis, who were well versed in the *Acta Thoma* in Syriac as well as in the local performing arts created the crude form of the present day *Maargam Kali* in the pre-Portuguese period. Except its pre-Portuguese origin, there is no trace to find the actual period. However, it confirms that the Saint Thomas tradition was alive with the Nazranis even before the sixteenth century.

Pseudo Traditions

Some authors have challenged the apostolic origin of the Nazranis due to the unrealistic nature of certain Pseudo-traditional stories about the mission of Saint Thomas in India like a ballad named *Thoma Parvam Remban Pattu*

²¹ *Maargam kali* = the play of *Maargam* or 'the play of the way'

²² Thomas, *Christhiyanikalum...*, *Op. Cit*, Pp 66-9

²³ Thomas, *Christhiyanikalum...*, *Op. Cit*, P 66

called *Remban Pattu* for short. Some authors have taken this ballad as an authentic old document of the Saint Thomas tradition. They developed their theory on the authenticity of the Saint Thomas tradition based on this *Remban Pattu*.

It is said that a *Remban* (monk) named Thoma of *Maliakal* family in Niranam, a direct disciple of apostle Saint Thomas, wrote the history of the Saint Thomas mission in the first century as a ballad. His forty-eighth generation successor, another Thoma Remban of the same family abbreviated it into the present form of the *Remban Pattu*.²⁴ Mathias Mundadan gives an abstract of the legend, which provides a detailed statistics of the miracles and conversion of Saint Thomas.²⁵

Fr. Barnard Alanchery first published this song in 1916. He considered it as an authentic document.²⁶ T. K. Joseph did not believe in the *Thoma Parvam Remban Pattu* because of its very late entry in to the history, apart from its unrealistic content. He found no trace of *Remban Pattu* or any mention about such a song before AD 1892.²⁷ Leslie Brown also is not confident about this ballad.²⁸ Mingana comments on the contents of *Remban Pattu* as follows:

It would be useless to emphasise the fact that these traditions are a dim echo of the Syriac *Acta*, and apart from these facts, there is as much history in them as in some good stories of the Arabian Nights Entertainments. To say more than this would be an insult to the intelligence of a historian.²⁹

Z. M. Paret totally refuses its historical value even as an old legend due to its dubious nature and unrealistic statistics. He suspects that it was fabricated in the early twentieth century or at the most, in the late nineteenth century, for promoting certain vested interests.³⁰ In this situation, any study on the Saint Thomas tradition based on *Remban Pattu* is not possible. On the contrary, the Saint Thomas tradition cannot be written off just because of the

²⁴ Bernard, *Marthoma Christanikal*, Op. Cit., Pp 98-109

²⁵ Mundadan, A. Mathias, *Sixteenth Century Traditions of St. Thomas Christians*, Bangalore, Dharmaram College, 1970, Pp 61-3

²⁶ Bernard, *Marthoma Christanikal*, Op. Cit., Pp 60-81

²⁷ For more reference see Joseph, T. K., *Pracheena Indiyile Kristhumatha Pracharanam*, Thiruvalla, CLS, 1950, Pp 61-3

²⁸ Brown, Leslie, *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas*, Madras, B. I. Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1980, Pp 49-50

²⁹ Mingana, A, *The Early Spread of Christianity in India*, The John Rayland's Library Bulletin, Manchester, 1926, P 77

³⁰ Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. I*, Op. Cit., Pp 199- 231

unreality of *Remban Pattu* since the latter was fabricated with vested interests.³¹

Early References

Many early Church fathers have mentioned about the apostolic mission of Saint Thomas to India apart from *Acta Thoma*. The *Acta Thoma* evidently influences some of them. However, some others are of original nature. Probably the first among them is the Syriac work *Malfanooso D'sleehe* (The Doctrines of the Apostles) written not later than AD 250.³² Clement of Alexandria vouches for the mission of his teacher Pantaenus the philosopher to India in AD 189-190.³³ The great Syriac poet Saint Ephraim the Syrian (- AD 373) sang about the apostolic mission of Saint Thomas to India.³⁴ He might probably have been under the direct influence of the *Acta Thoma*, but still his writings show the Syrian understanding about the apostolic mission to India. Gregory of Tours mentions about this mission in AD 590.³⁵ Mingana comments about the mention in *Malfanooso D'sleehe* as "...On the other hand, another Edessene writer, the author of the Doctrines of the Apostles...was at least vaguely aware of the existence of a Christian community in India...The author of the Doctrine is not under the influence of the Act of Thomas, but he clearly believes in the mission of the Apostle of India..."³⁶ It is very clear from these writings that the early Church fathers accepted the apostolic mission of Saint Thomas to India and the existence of the Indian Church. Even if these records do not mention anything specific about Kerala or the west coast, general awareness about India existed there.³⁷

³¹ Fr. Dr. Thomas Koonammakkal, a noted Syriac scholar expressed a different opinion about *Remban Pattu* to the present author. According to him, even if the song itself and the elaborations inside are fabricated, its basic story may contain an ancient local tradition and hence worth to note.

³² In the work above mentioned, Saint Thomas, is described as "he guide and governor of the church, which he found and ruled in India." See Ferrolli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 59

³³ "...of these Pantaenus was one: it stated that he went as far as India..." (Eusabius, *The History of the Church*, Baltimore, Penguin Classics, 1967, P 213)

³⁴ Saint Ephraim wrote many hymns on the apostolic mission of Saint Thomas (Mingana, *Early Spread...Op. Cit.*, P 18)

³⁵ Ferrolli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 63

³⁶ Mingana, *Early Spread...Op. Cit.*, Pp 16-7

³⁷ Some authors challenging these testimonials because the India mentioned there was not the one that known as India now, but Arabia Felix or even Ethiopia. Perhaps some authors made such a mistake but not all. In case of Gregory of Tours, it is certain that he is not talking about Arabia Felix. The same authors, who denied linking these testimonials to India, did the same with the visit of Theophilus the Indian. But it is quiet improbable in case of him to mistook India as some other place since he was a native of Maldives, adjacent to Indian coast.

The Tomb of Saint Thomas

The strongest evidence reinforcing the Saint Thomas tradition of the Nazranis is the tomb of Saint Thomas. The Nazranis never claimed it as anywhere within the geographical boundaries of their land, but at Mylapore in the east coast of India. Several testimonies through centuries beginning with the *Acta Thoma* are there supporting the Mylapore tradition. Several early Portuguese documents confirm the existence of the Tomb in Mylapore.³⁸

The first among the series of testimonials about the tomb of Saint Thomas is from the Mohammedan merchant Suleiman, in his *Salsalat-al-Traverika* (Chain of Chronicles) of the year AD 841, which gives a description of India and China. Speaking of Malabar, he mentions *Kulam-male*³⁹, a port frequented by Arabs, and Chinese and Egyptian merchants from Alexandria. According to him, from *Kulam-male*, in ten days the ship reaches *Betumah*. The Frenchman Renaudot was the first to identify *Betumah* with *Beit-Tumah*, or "house of Thomas," an expression designating the tomb of Saint Thomas at Mylapore.⁴⁰ This description establishes the physical existence of the tomb of Saint Thomas at Mylapore. An entry in the Saxon Chronicle regarding the alms sent by King Alfred the great in AD 883 to India for Saint Thomas and Saint Bartholomew was nothing more than the expression of the westerners' concept of the tomb of Saint Thomas.⁴¹

The description of Macro Polo, the famous Venetian traveller of the thirteenth century not only throws lights on the tomb of Saint Thomas, but also gives some hints about the whereabouts of Nazranis. Regarding his visit to India in AD 1292, he says, "the Body of Messer Thomas the Apostle lies in the province of Malabar... The Christians who have the administration of the Church possess forests of trees that bear the Indian nuts and from them they draw the means of their livelihood. As tax, they pay monthly to one of the Royal brothers a grout for each tree."⁴² Even though his description indicates

³⁸ In different descriptions, the name of Mylapore is found as different but researchers identify all of them as the same place. For more details See: Medlycott, A. E., *India and Apostle Thomas*, London, 1905, Pp 195-200 and Mundadan, *Traditions...*, Op. Cit.

³⁹ =Quilon

⁴⁰ Ferrolli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P. 63

⁴¹ Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 396-400

⁴² Ferrolli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 64-5

that Marco Polo was not able to distinguish between Malabar and the Coromandel coast, his description is found accurate in all other respects.

In AD 1305, John of Montecorvino, writing from the Peking says "...I remained in the country of India, where stands the church of Saint Thomas the Apostle, for thirteen months and in that reign baptized in different places about one hundred persons."⁴³ It is not clear whether he is speaking about the church in Mylapore alone or about the church at large in Kerala or Coromandel Coast. However, in AD 1321, the Franciscan Blessed Oderic of Pordenone speaks clearly about Mylapore. After describing Kerala, he continues as "...From this realm of Minibar it is a journey of ten days to another realm... where is laid the body of the Blessed Thomas the Apostle. His church is filled with idols and beside it are some fifteen houses of Nestorians, that is to say Christians, but vile and pestilent heretics..."⁴⁴ According to Ferroli, Blessed Oderic was acquainted with the Nestorian errors on his meeting with them in China. Therefore, he understands them well when he speaks about Nestorians.

The next description is of John de Marignolli, who came to India on his return journey from China. He writes in AD 1348 about Mylapore: "The third province is called *Maabar* and the Church of Saint Thomas, which he built with his own hands, is there, besides another which was rebuilt by the agency of workmen..."⁴⁵ Marignolli refers to the church of Saint Thomas as being situated in *Mirapoles*, and to the priests who gathered up the earth with which his blood was mingled and buried it with him.⁴⁶ Medlycott observed on the narratives of Marco Polo and John de Marignolli as "...This Christian practice [Pilgrimage] applies to tombs of martyrs, and was not certainly in the early ages extended to the tombs of holy persons who had not died for the faith; the practice, in other words, attests the Apostle's martyrdoms..."⁴⁷

The Mohammedan historian Mufazzal ibn Abil-Fazail wrote in his history of the Mamlouk Sultans AD 1358 as "...From there [Ceylon] the pilgrims go to visit the monastery of *Mar Touma* ... who was one of the

⁴³ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 65

⁴⁴ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 65

⁴⁵ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 66

⁴⁶ Medlycott giving details of Marignolli's account (Medlycott, *India...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 125-126)

⁴⁷ Medlycott, *India ...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 129

Apostles..."⁴⁸ Even though the account of Mufazzal ibn Abil-Fazail cannot be taken as a first hand information, his description is accurate in certain other respects.

From all the above, the following points can be arrived at.

1. Saint Thomas's mission to India has been commented upon from as early as the second century AD.
2. Christianity in Kerala existed from the early centuries of the Christian era.
3. The first Christians of Kerala were the local Dravidians

The following points can be derived from the pre-Portuguese descriptions of Marco Polo, Blessed Oderic and John de Marignolli regarding the tomb of Saint Thomas.

1. The tomb of Saint Thomas existed in an abandoned town, was yet venerated.
2. Pilgrims take some earth from there as an ancient practice.
3. The church was governed by native Christians
4. They were Nestorians
5. The same Christians had the plantations of coconut.
6. They earned a livelihood from coconut and paid tax for that

Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum

Some authors believe that the Saint Thomas origin of the Nazranis was created for defending the Portuguese advances over them in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Hence, their terminology of self-expression *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* was also formulated during that period with the same purpose. The literary meaning of this phrase is the religion and lineage or race of Saint Thomas⁴⁹.

This concept of *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* need not have originated in the Portuguese period. In a caste-oriented society like that

⁴⁸ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, Op. Cit., P 12

⁴⁹ In old Malayalam language, *Maargam* means a way. In Indian context, religion is treated as a way (of life). Every religious school, especially non-Brahmin ones, was known as a *Maargam* like *Buddha Maargam*. *Vazhipadu* was used in old Malayalam, especially among Christians, as lineage or race. (Gundert, Dr. Hermann, *A Malayalam and English Dictionary*, Kottayam, D. C. Books, 1991, P 926) For examples see Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Pp 68 ff

of Kerala, lineage played an important role in defining the social status⁵⁰. It is probable that when Brahmins drew their claim on Kerala from *Parasurama*, the Nazranis claimed theirs from Saint Thomas. By claiming *Vazhipadu* (lineage) of Saint Thomas, they not only ensure their superior race, but freedom of religion also.

The *Maargam*

It may be the case with the *Maargam* also. When the Brahmins project *Smrithis*⁵¹ as their book of law, both ecclesial and civil, the Nazranis might have countered it with the *Maargam* of Saint Thomas. Perhaps they might have claimed it as equally ancient and rich just like *Smrithy*. There is no wonder if Nazranis, who venerated Saint Thomas with such a deep passion, expressed their entire identity, or in Hindu terms *Dharmam*,⁵² with a single phrase *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*. However, their concept on *Maargavum Vazhipadum* was not vague or meaningless. It had a theological root according to the faith of the Persian Church,⁵³ to which the Nazranis also associated themselves. It is obvious from the note of Fr. Penteado in the early sixteenth century which states "As regards their national customs, their will is corrupted by their priests just as there were twelve apostles, even so, they founded twelve customs, each different from others..."⁵⁴

From this report of Fr. Penteado, a Jesuit priest who worked with the Nazranis from AD 1516, it is found that the Nazranis had a clear idea about the independent identity of Christian Churches like theirs. Perhaps they got that concept from the Persian Church. If this broad idea existed during the early stage of Portuguese connection, definitely it existed earlier than that, which in due course developed as *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* when the Roman Catholic pressure increased.

Fr. Penteado's narration confirms that the Saint Thomas tradition of Nazranis is about Saint Thomas the apostle himself and not of any later

⁵⁰ Even the petty-kings of Kerala, out of whom most were upgraded chieftains to *Kshathriya* by Brahmins, linked their lineage to *Surya* (Sun) or *Chandra* (Moon) and claimed as *Suryavamsa* or *Chandravasa* like the real *Kshatriyas*.

⁵¹ *Smrithi* is the Hindu law. It covers all temporal and religious affairs of them. For Kerala, one pseudo-*Smrithy* called *Sankara Smriti* with doubtful origin existed.

⁵² According to Hindus, Hinduism is not a religion but a *Dharma*

⁵³ Maclean, Arthur John, *The Catholicos of the East and His People*, London, 1892, P 246

⁵⁴ As quoted in Mundadan, A. Mathias, *History of Christianity in India, Vol. I*, Church History Association of India, Bangalore, 1984, P 495

Thomas like Knai Thomman or any other Thomas. The comparison of Saint Peter the apostle to their Thomas indicates that they meant Saint Thomas the apostle when they speak about Thomas as a part of *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*.⁵⁵

The Muthappen Concept

The *Muthappen* concept of The Nazranis is to be taken on this account. All over the Nazrani settlements, Saint Thomas is known as *Muthappen*. This is a Dravidian phrase denoting grandfather or ancestor. Considering the veneration of the Nazranis for Saint Thomas, it is quite probable that they placed Saint Thomas as the Patriarch of their community by the term *Muthappen*. This appellation is found as exclusively reserved for Saint Thomas.⁵⁶

The Nazranis placed Saint Thomas at the shoes of *Parasuraman*, the legendary founder of Brahmin settlements as well as the Brahmin religion in Kerala. It is reasonable to think that the Nazranis put all their differences from Brahmin religion in the mere terminology *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*. Placing Saint Thomas as the Patriarch just like Parasuraman for Brahmin religion, they claimed a separate origin and through *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*, they made a separate identity from Brahmin religion. In addition, *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* stands as the unique phrase expressing the identity of the Nazranis in all aspects during the pre-Portuguese period. In other words, *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* was their way of life.

The Migration Tradition

The Nazrani community received and absorbed migrations several times in the first millennium. Some authors suggest that the whole Nazranis are of the result of Migration from abroad or from other parts of India. *Niranam Grandhavari* mentions one of them as: -

"There is an argument that Saint Thomas did not come to Malayalam but he came only up to *Nagapattanam*⁵⁷ and some

⁵⁵ See below the topic *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* in Chapter V

⁵⁶ *Muthy*, a female equal of *Muthappen*, used rarely in very few pockets of Kerala like *Koratty Muthy* to mention Saint Mary. However, it is not at all popular like *Muthappen*. Even the other most popular saint among Nazranis, Saint George, is simply known as *Punyavalan*, which is applicable for any saint.

⁵⁷ Nagapattanam is in Tamil Nadu

believers from there came and established *Maargam* in Malayalam...⁵⁸

There are several views about the migration of Christians to Kerala from different places and at different periods. They are important to note since they were also vital in the formation of the Nazranis. The migrations of Christians to Kerala are an accepted fact even if the argument that these migrants constituted the entire Nazrani community is under challenge. First among them are the migrations from abroad.

Persian Migration of AD 345

One of the most celebrated legends of the Nazranis is about the migration of *Knai Thomman*⁵⁹ in AD 345. According to the local tradition, the leader of the migration from the Middle East was known as Knai Thomman, which means Thomas the merchant⁶⁰. He was also known as Thomas Cana or Thomas Cananeo. The local legend regarding this migration is available from the letter, written in Syriac of Mathai Kathanar to C. Schaaf in AD 1726. According to that, the migration took place after a vision in the night of the bishop of Edessa regarding the desperate state of the Nazranis due the lack of priests. The Catholicos of the East, hearing about that vision, sent Thomas of Jerusalem, a merchant, to enquire about the situation. Upon his report "...by order of the Catholicos, that after a very short time the merchant Thomas of Jerusalem left his country accompanied by the very bishop who saw the vision, and by priests and deacons, by men, women, and children too from Jerusalem, Baghdad and Nineveh. They went on board a ship and came to Malabar, and reached Maliomkara in the year three forty fifth of our lord..."⁶¹ However, according to the letter of Mar Thoma IV in AD 1726, Saint Thomas appeared in a vision to King Abgar of Edessa also.⁶² *Niranam Grandhavari* echoes an almost same version as:

In 345, Saint Thomas was seen in the dream of the bishop of Uraha.⁶³ According to that, as per the orders of the Patriarch of

⁵⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P. 160

⁵⁹ The person in discussion is referred in different forms such as Thomas Cana, Thomas Cananeo, Thomas of Jerusalem, etc. The oldest local form *Knai Thomman* is followed in this study.

⁶⁰ For the details see Paret, Z. M., *Malankara Nazranikal Vol. II*, Kottayam, Jacob Mathews Chemmarppally (Pub.), 1966, Pp 1-88

⁶¹ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 43-5

⁶² Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 49

⁶³ *Uraha* is another name of Edessa

Antioch⁶⁴, sent Mar Joseph Episcopa, priests, deacons, men, women, and children along with Thomas of Kana since the baptism and marriage was administered in Malayalam by elders due to the lack of priests. They came and settled at Malayalam.⁶⁵

From these legends, the following are to be derived.

1. The Nazranis were in a very bad state without priests or guides.
2. The Nazranis were under the jurisdiction of the Catholicos of the East then.
3. Knai Thomman was a native of Jerusalem.
4. Knai Thomman was ordered to make an enquiry.
5. He came to India, found out the pathetic condition of the Nazranis, and given feedback.
6. He volunteered for the migration in order to rescue the Nazranis
7. He migrated with a bishop, clergy, men, women and children.
8. They settled down at Kodungallor.

The *Southists* among Nazranis, who claimed to be the direct descendents of Knai Thomman strongly advocate this legend to prove their Jewish origin and superior race. In their marriage songs, the *Southists* describe the above legends in detail. They even state the names of seven lineages from which seventy families were chosen to migrate to India⁶⁶. Joseph Chazhikattu, in his book 'The Syrian Colonisation of Malabar', tried desperately to prove this theory⁶⁷. He went further to state that Knai Thomman selected families from the relatives of Jesus Christ and Saint Thomas.⁶⁸ However, there are many weak points in this theory. They are:

- a. If they came by the order of the Catholicos, which Catholicos? According to Ferrolli, this Catholicos was not "the Patriarch of Seleucia, who was acknowledged head of all the Bishops only in 410 A.D. and assumed the title of "CATHOLICOS" under Dadisho (421-456 A.D.)."⁶⁹ According to Mingana no Catholicos existed then"... could have possibly attended to the

⁶⁴ In several eighteenth century documents, the 'Catholicos of the East' replaced by the 'Patriarch of Antioch'.

⁶⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 77

⁶⁶ For the full text of marriage song, see: Lukose, P. U., *Purathana Pattukal*, (Ninth edition), Kottayam, Jyothi Book House, 1998, Pp 1-16

⁶⁷ Chazhikattu, Joseph, *The Syrian Colonisation of Malabar*, Kottayam, The Catholic Mission Press, 1940.

⁶⁸ Chazhikattu, *The Syrian Colonisation...*, Op. Cit., Pp 119-20

⁶⁹ Ferrolli, *Jesuits ... Vol. I*, Op. Cit., P. 63

business of merchant Thomas from Jerusalem..." Hence, he treats the whole story as unhistorical.⁷⁰

b. If Knai Thomman was a Jew from Jerusalem, why should he attend the meeting summoned by the Catholicos? The above mentioned legend stating that the Catholicos called a meeting of the people under his jurisdiction. Jerusalem, which was in the Roman Empire, did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Catholicos of Seleucia in the Persian Empire, ecclesiastically or politically.

c. If they migrated as mission of help, what was the need of men, women and children? Just a bishop and priests would serve the purpose.

d. If they migrated to reinforce Nazranis? Why, as they claimed, they abstained from intermarriage? Fr. Joao Maria Campori, in a letter written to Aquaviva, the Fr. General of Jesuits in April AD 1604 states that "...this Armenian Thomas of Cana had brought his wife from Babylonia and on arrival at Cranganore, had taken a concubine amongst the women of the country. According to others, on arrival he married one of St. Thomas' Christians and also had a slave as concubine..."⁷¹ It indicates that their lineage is not starting a group of people migrated from the Middle East but from Knai Thomman alone.

e. If they were chosen and sent, why no office in the church was reserved for them? During the later centuries, the *Southists*, the legendary direct decedents of Knai Thomman, never came into the leadership of the Church in any form⁷².

Most of the historians reject this theory relating to the migration to the Catholicos and to Palestine. According to them, Knai Thomman, means merchant Thomas, was a Persian merchant who came to know about the Nazranis during his business trips. When the Christians were forced to flee from Persia during the great persecution of Sapor II, he took his family and left to the friendly soil of Malabar to save himself. With the help of Nazranis, he settled down at Kodungallor. Mingana observes this theory as follows:

⁷⁰ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., P 44

⁷¹ Feroli, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op. Cit., P. 75*

⁷² The two exemptions for the above are of the same period. The first one was Anjilimoottil Itty Thomman Kathanar, the co-leader of the *Coonen-cross* oath of AD 1653, served the Church devotionally till his death. Another priest was Kadavil Chandy Kathanar from Kaduthuruthy, who became one of the four advisers of the Mar Thoma I, but betrayed the *Coonen-Cross* oath later.

...We do not deny that the persecution of Sapor gave a stimulus to the emigration of more Christians from southern Persia to India; indeed there is every possibility that such an emigration did actually take place; but we do maintain that there is also every possibility that Christian community of a comparatively important size existed before that time in India, and that it was more the existence of this community that attached co-religionists from Persia in the time of the persecution than the bare sword of Sapor.⁷³

Z. M. Paret, after detailed discussions on different theories on the Knai

Thomman migration, came to the conclusions that:

1. The migration took place in AD 345
2. The leader of the migration was Thomas the merchant (Knai Thomman), not Thomas of Cana
3. The migration was from Persia not from Jerusalem
4. They were Persian Christians, not Jewish Christians.
5. The migration was for escaping from the great persecution of the Persian Emperor, Sapor II
6. The Nazranis were not in a pathetic condition at least in temporalities.
7. The king, because of the influence of the Nazranis, welcomed them warmly.⁷⁴

The Northists and Southists

The only caste difference existing today within Nazranis is in between *Thekkumbhagakkar* (the *Southists*) and *Vadakkumbhagakkar* (the *Northists*). Majority of Nazranis are *Northists*. It is accepted that *Vadakkumbhagakkar* are the native Christians or Nazranis. Almost all historians agree that these names derived from their initial residence in the north and south sides of the *Mahodayapuram* market at Kodungallor. However, regarding the origin, the arguments are different except its relation with Knai Thommen. One of the first written accounts of the origin was available from the letter of Fr. Joao Maria Campori, written to Fr. General Aquaviva of the Jesuits in April AD 1603. It gives the following tradition connected with Thomas Cananeo:

[According to one tradition] This Armenian Thomas of Cana had brought his wife from Babylonia and on arrival at Cranganore, had taken a concubine amongst the women of the country. According to others, on arrival, he married one of the St. Thomas' Christians and had a slave as concubine. From these two women, one

⁷³ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., P 7

⁷⁴ For full of his discussions, see Paret, *Nazranikal ...*, Vol. I, Op. Cit., Pp 1- 88

legitimate and the other concubine sprang up two generations of Christians who looked upon each other as two different castes. That is why the people of these castes did not intermarry, and even the same villages had different churches, attended by different castes, although they mingled with each other for everything else. Naturally, each caste pretended in turn to be descended from the legitimate woman and, for that reasons, to be superior to the other...the best and greater part of these Christians are the descendants of those baptized by the Apostle St. Thomas.⁷⁵

Another earliest written account of the origin of *Southists* was written by the vicar of the Ernakulam church, probably a *Northist*, in Portuguese language in AD 1676 which is now preserved at British Museum as *Solans MS. 2743 A*. It says;

The king *Sacara Vittia*⁷⁶ gave a woman, a native of this kingdom, as interpreter (*lingoa e interprete*) and cook to the said Canai Thomas, and they say that this person was a woman whose occupation was that of *mainatto*⁷⁷ (washerwoman) and washing clothes, and consequently of servile and low caste. And the children of this woman, instructed by the said Canai Thomas in the faith of our lord Jesus Christ, were the progenitors and founders of the Christians of Saint Thomas who are called of the South... Considering what was said above, and what was said of the first church which the holy man Canai Thomas built at Cranganore, and considering the three hundred royal houses⁷⁸ and families which remained of those who were obedient- although they suffered persecution from the above said magician⁷⁹ (and) minister of the devil - it follows accordingly that all the places in the neighbourhood of Cranganore are of the nobler Christians, of those of higher and more royal blood...⁸⁰

However, the *Southist's* always argue that they are of higher race above *Northists* who were, according to *Southists*, interpolated. In 1872, Rev. G. Curian wrote that "...Even though their religious belief was one and the same, they remained separately with different customs and manners and without intermingling and inter marriage. They also claimed nobility over the other..."⁸¹

⁷⁵ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P. 75

⁷⁶ *Chakravarthy* (= the emperor)

⁷⁷ *mainatan* is the name of a washer-*Jathy* existed in Kerala

⁷⁸ This number varies from legend to Legend

⁷⁹ Manikkavachaker

⁸⁰ *Kerala Society Papers Vol. I & II, Op. Cit.*, P 200

⁸¹ Curian, Rev. G., *Oru Prakaranam*, Kottayam, 1872, P 14

The *Southists*, now styling themselves as *Knananites*⁸² are promoting the story about their origin as follows. Knai Thomman selected 72 Jew families from the relatives of Saint Thomas the apostle from Palestine to migrate to Kerala. They abstained from intermarriage with the native Christians or anybody else till today. They settled down at the southern side of the newly built Mahadevarpattanam. This group, who are keeping the "purity of their blood," are called '*Thekkumbhagakkar*'.⁸³ Most of the historians rejected this story mainly for two reasons such as

- a. It is already proved that the Knai Thomman migration was not from Palestine, but from Persia.
- b. There is no anthropological difference between *Southists* and *Northists*.⁸⁴

Another legend about their origin is that the King had given two wives to Knai Thomman. One was a Nair and the other was a *Veluthadathu Nair* (washer). The *Northists* and *Southists* were their children respectively. The latter was treated as slightly inferior due to the caste of their mother. This argument also carries little weight. This argument existed even in the seventeenth century with slight difference. On January 9, AD 1604, Fr. Joao Maria Campori wrote that both the groups "...consider the opposite caste are the descendants of the slave. Therefore, they don't intermarry, and in the bazaars, they have separate churches for each caste. They communicate in everything else..."⁸⁵ The *Naalagamam* gives a unique tradition according to the *Northist* version about the origin of *Northists* and *Southists*⁸⁶.

The Nazranis from Jerusalem and the native Nazranis became relatives. To avoid the loss of dignity of the caste, the slaves in the immigrants and the servants⁸⁷ in the natives were made as relatives. The '*Periyor*' [the nobles] constructed 400 shops in the northern side and '*Cheriyor*' [the commons] constructed 72 shops in the southern side...⁸⁸

⁸² The name *Kananyakkar* or *Knanaitis* was come into general use only in the twentieth century. They were known as *Thekkumbhagakkar* until then. Now the *Southists* prefer to known as *Knanaitis*.

⁸³ Joseph Chazhikadan, in his large volume of *The Syrian Colonisation of Malabar*, tried to establish this story as well as the nobility of *Southists* over *Northists*.

⁸⁴ For more details about this discussion Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, Pp. 1 – 88

⁸⁵ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 296

⁸⁶ Mar Simon Dionysus, Karottuveetil, *Naalagamam MSS*, Pp. 114 - 7

⁸⁷ The word *Paryappettaver* is used. This means one who belongs to somebody else.

⁸⁸ Mar Simon Dionysus, Karottuveetil, *Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 115 – 6

This description gives a reasonable explanation for this division. It indicates that the division was based on economy rather than race. It also explains the lack of anthropological difference between two groups. *Naalagamam* further describes that different customs and manners fixed for both groups to retain this separation forever. The traces of them are still present in the social customs. The three versions of Knai Thomman story, recorded in the nineteenth century are as follows.

1. Knai Thomman made residence at Kodungallor, the southern country, for the children in his first wife who came from abroad. After her death, he married a local Nazrani woman. The children in this marriage settled at Angamaly or nearby northern country. They were known in the respective names according to their place of residence.
2. The Christians of the north Kerala migrated to Kochi due to the persecution. They had nobles and prominent families among them. They were called *Northists*. Those who were already at Kochi then were called as *Southists*.
3. When the migrants and Nazranis were intermarrying, the slaves in the migrants' community and the backwards in the Nazranis too intermarried to avoid the loss of nobility. Nobles built 400 shops in the northern side of the Mahodayapuram market street and backwards built 72 shops in the southern side. Hence, they got the respective names.⁸⁹

The weak point in the first story is the geographical position of Kodungallor and Angamaly. Kodungallor is north of Angamaly hence this story carries no logic. In addition, this story says nothing about other migrants and the rest of the Nazranis. In the second story, also the question of logic arises. Kochi became prominent only after the fourteenth century AD. In addition, this legend is silent about the Knai Thomman origin claimed by *Southists*. Both the stories deny the Mahodayapuram origin of the *Northists*, which is a proven fact.

The third story, which is the same as of *Naalagamam*, points out an economic reason behind the division. The later description in *Naalagamam* details the permitted business for both the groups. *Northists* were designated to trade on silk, gold and silver whereas dry nuts and vegetables⁹⁰ were assigned as the merchandise to the *Southists*.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Kuruvilla, Rev. K., *Prakaranam*, Cochin, 1872, Pp 16-7

⁹⁰ The actual words are '*Kottalum Kayacharakkum*'

⁹¹ These differences were said as made to retain the discrimination between *Northists* (*Vadakkumbhagakkar*) and *Southists* (*Thekkumbhagakkar*). See *Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 115 -7

The nature of the products assigned to be dealt by both groups indicates the economic conditions of *Northists* and *Southists*. These products are stated along with difference in customs⁹². Perhaps the economic classification was made as caste difference later. The other differences in customs were deliberately imposed to differentiate both the sections permanently. The designated sweet for marriage, *Ayani Appem* for *Northists* and *Ayani Karika*⁹³ for *Southists* also points out that the *Southists* were treated as a little inferior by *Northists*. Hence, the *Naalagamam* version of the story is found most reasonable for the division.

The most popular Knai Thomman story spins around a washerwoman, that Knai Thomman married a local washerwoman and had children by her. The *Southists* claims that they are the offspring of Knai Thomman in his legitimate foreign wife and all the *Northists* are born on the washerwoman. The *Northists* claim vice-versa. The washerwoman element is too strong not to be rejected. Hence, some moderate authors, adopting the *Naalagamam* version, suggest that the children of the washerwoman were also included in the *Southist* community. They were denied nobility and priesthood since they were treated as inferior in caste. According to some historians, intermarriage existed in between *Northists* and *Southists* till the Portuguese period. George Verges writes.

However, both *Southists* and *Northists* disliked doing the same [marriage] with the children of the washerwoman, who were also treated as a part of *Southists*. The priesthood was also denied to them due to their inferior nature. When the Portuguese proposed to marry the Nazrani women, all the *Northists* and most of the *Southists* denied. However, a few *Southists*, who were of the washerwoman line, offered their daughters to Portuguese for marriage. This made the *Northists* treat all the *Southists* as traitors and refused to perform any more intermarriage. This forced the *Southists* to marry from their group alone. Later they started to claim that they are retaining the purity of blood.⁹⁴

As a part of Archbishop Menezes's attempt to get people attracted to Roman Catholic Church, many *Southists*, who were ever denied it, received

⁹² *Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 115 - 6

⁹³ *Ayani Appem* is a Nazrani sweet. *Ayani Karika* is made in the same process but they are granules.

⁹⁴ Varghese, George, *Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church History Part I*, Kottayam, 1993, Pp. 201-9

ordination for the first time at Kaduthuruthy, the parent church of *Southists*. This made the separation complete between the *Northists* and the *Southists*⁹⁵.

There is reason to believe that the Kaduthuruthy church had some strong relations with the Portuguese. One of the manuscripts in Kaduthuruthy church is named *Kaduthuruthy Valiya Portuguese Palliyude Viseetha Sukshippu* (The visit book of big Portuguese Church of Kaduthuruthy)⁹⁶. No other church of the Nazranis had such a name. It is probable that the *Southists* used the Portuguese connection to attain their long cherished dream of attaining the nobility and priesthood whereas the Portuguese got a good ally within the Nazrani community to fulfil their Romanization process of Nazranis. Whatever be the reason, the division between the *Northists* and the *Southists* was completed before the oath of *Coonen Cross* in AD 1653. After that, the *Southists* were also divided just like *Northists*. They are remaining as a separate body, but intermarriage is going on between *Romo-Southists* and *Syro-Southists*.

The *Southists* are a very small community compared with the *Northists*. At a time, they were called *Ancharapallykkar* (Group of five and half churches). Those were Udaymperor, Kaduthuruthy, Kottayam, Chungam and Kallissery churches. The half church mentioned was said to be their joint right over Piravam, Punnathura, Paingalam and Athirampuzha churches⁹⁷. The approximate date of establishment of these churches are Udaymperor – AD 1510, Kaduthuruthy – AD 1500, Kottayam – AD 1550, Chungam – AD 1579 and Kallissery AD 1580. The Paingalam and Punnathura churches were found in AD 1627 and AD 1635 respectively.⁹⁸ All these churches have their origin in the Portuguese period.

The Kaduthuruthy and Kottayam churches belonged to both *Northists* and *Southists*. However, the *Northists* withdrew from both the churches and established their own ones, nearby. This division happened in the sixteenth century. In the case of Kottayam, The gap between the foundation of the first church and separation was just twenty years. In both cases, the *Northists*

⁹⁵ Padmanabha Menon, K. P., *Kochi Raagya Charitram, Vol. I, Cochin, 1914, P 436*

⁹⁶ Mathew Cherusseril, Fr., *Kaduthuruthy Valiyapally, Kumarakam, 1982, P 54*

⁹⁷ Mathew Cherusseril, *Kaduthuruthy ... Op. Cit., Pp. 87 – 8*

⁹⁸ The Diocese of Kottayam, *Platinum Jubilee Souvenir, Kottayam, 1986, Pp. 64 –5*. However, some churches claim as much older.

were more in number compared with *Southists* and their churches were bigger than the parent churches. If the majority left the parent church, there must be some strong support for the minority, the *Southists*, to retain the parent church. This external help was probably received from the Portuguese, who had control over the native kings then. However, the *Southists* were not found playing any prominent role of their own during the post-Portuguese period.

The Armenians

Another possibility is the migration of Armenians. Several manuscripts during the Portuguese period regarding the legends of Nazranis, state the leader of Persian migration as "Merchant Thomas, the Armenian."⁹⁹ Indeed, there was a lot of confusion among westerners in between Urmia and Armenia, which is not far away from Urmia, then seat of the Catholicos of the East. However, this legend needs attention more than a geographical confusion.¹⁰⁰ A similar observation is found in the history of Armenians in India as; "Fully seven centuries prior to the landing of Vasco De Gama on the Malabar Coast, on the 20th of May, 1498, an enterprising Armenian merchant, Thomas Cana by name, landed on the same coast in the year 780 AD...and we soon read of him as a prosperous merchant at Cranganore and afterwards at Angamale...The early Portuguese writers call him Thomas Cananeo and give his nationality as Armenian. He is known to the Malabar Christians of the present day as Knayi Thomman or Kana Thoma, which means the merchant Thomas."¹⁰¹

Armenia, by declaring Christianity as their state religion, became the first Christian country in AD 301. Ever since, they remain as a single Church, Armenian Apostolic Church, in the oriental orthodox community. Armenians are also remaining as an ethnic identity ever since. Membership to the Church is obtained either by birth or by marriage only. Armenians spread world wide as merchants. Everywhere they retained their religious and ethnical identity just like Jews. Even though they were pious Christians, they were never

⁹⁹ Assamanus clarifying that Thomas was called as Armenian because of his Aramic mother-tongue. (Assamanus, J. S., *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, Vol. IV, Rome, 1719-1728, P 443)

¹⁰⁰ The author of the Narratives of Joseph the Indian also had this confusion. (Vallavanthara, Antony, *India in 1500 AD*, Kottayam, Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute of religious studies Publications, 1984)

¹⁰¹ Jacob Seth, Mesrobian, *Armenians in India*, (Reprint of 1937 edition), New Delhi, Oxford and IBH Publishing Co., 1983, P 612

involved in missionary work due to their ethnic consciousness and the vested interest in commerce. Armenians are found in India from the Mogul period. Historical evidences show their settlements mainly in north India during the Mugal period. They were at Agra, Gwalior, Fathepur Sikri, Delhi, Lahore, Kabul, Surat, Bombay, Chinsurah, Chandernagore, Saidabad, Monghyr, Calcutta, Lucknow and Dacca. Their sole settlement in the south India was Madras from the sixteenth century¹⁰².

Armenians settled in Surat even before the sixteenth century. They had a church and priests there in 1579.¹⁰³ Armenian merchants were aware of the tomb of Saint Thomas in Madras. Diogo Fernandes and Bastino Fernandes, the two Portuguese arrived at Pulicat from Malacca, heard about the same from some Armenian merchants in AD 1517 and discovered it.¹⁰⁴ According to an old manuscript of AD 1790, the Armenians permanently settled at Madras in AD 1666.¹⁰⁵

Though the Armenians are well settled all over India even before the sixteenth century, no traces are available about their presence in Kerala till the advent of Portuguese. It is not reasonable to think that an enthusiastic trading community like Armenians would neglect a place like Kerala with such a vast commercial potential. On the contrary, it is probable that Kerala must be one of their first targets considering whole India. Then their absence is inexplicable.

The widespread legend about the migration of Knai Thomman, as he reached Malabar in AD 345, does not correspond with the year of migration mentioned in the Armenian legend. However, while converting the same to the Armenian era, it became 329 of that era.¹⁰⁶ This looks similar to the other legends if the era is neglected. Though its possibilities are remote, it cannot be rejected fully.

Considering the nature of Armenians and the commercial potential of Kerala, it is justifiable to think that Armenians indeed migrated to Kerala and settled there in the first millennium AD. It could be one or more of the several

¹⁰² For more details see Jacob Seth, *Armenians ...*, *Op. Cit.*,

¹⁰³ Jacob Seth, *Armenians ...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 225-8

¹⁰⁴ Stated by Henry Davison Love in 'Vestiges of Old Madras Vol. I, P.277', quoted by Jacob Seth, *Armenians ...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 579

¹⁰⁵ Jacob Seth, *Armenians ...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 579

¹⁰⁶ Armenian era begins in AD 551. (Jacob Seth, *Armenians ...*, *Op. Cit.*, P. 104)

'Persian migrations' said to have happened in between the fourth and the tenth centuries AD. In addition, one of the Thomas Cana was an Armenian merchant as the legends said. It is also possible that the said migration took place in AD 780, that is 329 Armenian era. They might have later dissolved in the native Christian community of Nazranis. In addition, the course of time wiped out the difference of Persian and Armenian migrations from the minds of Nazranis and perhaps its dates. Hence the absence of early Armenian settlements in Kerala and the confusion about the name "Thomas Cana the Armenian" as the leader of migration is justified. It is possible that the Armenian immigrants constituted a portion of the Nazranis.

Mar Thomas Around AD 800

Some historians suggest that the Knai Thomman migration took place around AD 800 instead of AD 345. Mundadan confirms that such a legend exists.¹⁰⁷ Some documents show this date more precisely as AD 745.¹⁰⁸ C. M. Agur suggests the date of arrival of Knai Thomman as AD 745 and describes him as an Armenian.¹⁰⁹ Cardinal Tisserant gives the date of arrival as AD 774 or AD 775. According to him, the leader of the migrants was not merchant Thomas, but a bishop called Mar Thomas accompanied by a group of immigrants. He compared them with the Zoroastrians who fled to India fifty years before this event from Persia to escape the Muslim persecution.¹¹⁰ Cardinal Tisserant suggests that this Mar Thomas was, perhaps, the same monk Thomas, consecrated as a bishop by Mar Timothy, the then Nestorian Catholicos. He took this information from a comment of Assemanus.¹¹¹ Referring to the local legends, Cardinal Tisserant concludes that this community settled down at Kollam.¹¹² Mingana, who does not believe the date of arrival of Knai Thomman as AD 345, speaks of Knai Thomman as "...who seems to have lived towards the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth centuries, say between AD 795-824. His seat seems to have been a

¹⁰⁷ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, Op. Cit., Vol. I, P.102

¹⁰⁸ Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 73

¹⁰⁹ Agur, *Church History ... Op. Cit.*, P 12

¹¹⁰ Tisserant, Eugene Cardinal, *Indiyile Pourastya Krithavarude Katha*, (Translation of *Eastern Christianity in India*) Kottayam, Deepika Book House, P 15

¹¹¹ Assamanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis ...*, Vol. IV, Op. Cit, P 443. In his book, *The Historia Monastica*, of AD 840, Thomas, Bishop of Marga confirms the ordination of a bishop named Thomas in that period. See Bndge, E. A. Wallis, *The Book of Governors*, London, 1893, P 447

¹¹² Tisserant, *Indiyile...*, Op. Cit., P 15

town in the coast of Malabar... There is hardly any reasonable doubt that if this bishop has any historical personality at all, he is to be counted among the monks whom the Patriarch Timothy I sent..."¹¹³

Mingana further argues that If this Thomas is a historical personage, he is different from Knai Thomman Cana, the Nazrani tradition might have made a stupid chronological mistake of about four centuries and a half, "...but then this unhistorical Thomas was a simple merchant, and not a bishop, while the possibly historical Thomas Cana was a bishop..."¹¹⁴ Mingana also is found not to be free from the general confusion about the Persian immigrants. It is reasonable to think that the bishop Mar Thomas, sent for the spiritual supervision of Nazranis, was not much engaged in the temporalities of the Church, whereas Knai Thomman, a merchant by profession, seems to be more interested in the worldly matters. The major contributions of Knai Thomman of AD 345 are the foundation of *Mahodayapuram* in Kodungallor and the procurement of the privileges as a royal copper plate grant. G. B. Howard, with a wrong understanding that Knai Thomman was a bishop, ascertains; "...But the name of Mar Thomas is associated in history as much with the temporal affairs of his diocese, as with those of spiritual nature; and he is said to have been eminently successful in promoting the external prosperity of the people committed to his care..."¹¹⁵

It is possible that a second migration, along with an assigned East-Syrian bishop to Nazranis, took place in the ninth century just as in the case of the previous one along with Knai Thomman in AD 345. A lot of mixing took place between the activities of Knai Thomman and bishop Mar Thomas during the later centuries. The element of *Manikkavachaker*, associated with the Knai Thomman legend also is to be considered here along with this viewpoint. It is impossible that Kanai Thomman or Mar Joseph of Edessa, who accompanied him in AD 345, defended the conversion of *Manikkavachaker* since the period of *Manikkavachaker* is the late seventh century.¹¹⁶ Keeping a margin for the

¹¹³ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., Pp 65-6

¹¹⁴ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., Pp 44-5

¹¹⁵ Howard, Rev. George Broadley, *The Christians of St. Thomas and their Liturgies*, London, 1864, Pp 16-7

¹¹⁶ Gopalakrishnan, P. K., *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram*, Trivandrum, Kerala Bhasha Institute, 1984, P 248 and Sessa Aiyar, K. G., *Manikka Vacegar and His Date*, Madras, 1909, AES reprint, New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1986

decay of the Church after *Manikkavachaker's* mission, the period of bishop Mar Thomas is fit for the maintenance of the damage caused by him.

Leslie Brown further links the arrival of bishop Mar Thomas and the conversion of *Perumal*.¹¹⁷ He arrived at this conclusion from the alternative date suggested for this conversion as AD 745 by Kunjikuttan Thampuran.¹¹⁸ He linked the arrival of, Buddhists from Baghdad, stated in the *Keralolpathy* with Mar Thomas.¹¹⁹ This argument is weak for two reasons.

1. *Keralolpathy* speaks about two Buddhists - Mar Thomas is known to have come alone. The migrant community along with him was not a part of the *Perumal* story.
2. The date of the arrival of Mar Thomas derived from other sources does not correspond with AD 745.

Hence, the 'Buddhists from Baghdad' did not include Mar Thomas, the bishop in discussion. Perhaps the two other Christian missionaries who arrived to preach in Kerala since the Nestorian missionary activities were very active then. Hence, the presence of a Persian bishop named Thomas in Kerala was probable in the AD eighth century. Considering the circumstances, it is also possible that a Persian migration took place along with him.

The Migration of Maruvan Sabrison

Among the migrations to Kerala, the one to Kollam in the ninth century is well documented by the *Tharissappally* copper plates. Rev. G. Curian describes the local legend about the migration connected to these copper plates as follows.

In AD 825 (1-2 ME), two bishops named *Mar Sabor* and *Mar Afroth* along with a rich man *Bar Iso* who was called *Iyoob* landed at Kollam. It seems that they were Nestorians. They came by the ship of *Iyoob*. It can be said as the third migration¹²⁰ of foreigners to settle down here. They too received honours and privileges from *Sankaran Iravi Sree*, the king of Venad. They laid foundation for a church on Sunday, *Makaram 29, Chingam Raasi, Karkkidaka Koor*.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ For more details see the topic 'Conversion of *Perumal*' in this Chapter

¹¹⁸ Brown, *The Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 73

¹¹⁹ For more details, see the title 'Conversion of *Cheraman Perumal*' in this chapter.

¹²⁰ Rev. G. Curian attached the settlement to Kodungallor in connection with the *Iravi Korthen* copper plate as the result of Manichaeism and hence treating that as the first migration.

¹²¹ Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 18. Rev. K. Kuruvilla giving a slightly different, probably polluted, version (Kuruvilla, *Prakaranam, Op. Cit.*, Pp 19-20)

The letter of Mathai Kathanar in the early eighteenth century to Carlos Schaaf also gives a condensed version of this story.¹²² This migrant community did not isolate itself as the *Southists* claimed about the Knai Thomman migration. They were intermarrying with the Nazranis and the descendents are still known as *Kollakkkaran Muthalalis*.¹²³ Later they migrated to nearby places like Chathanoor and Kallada. According to Leslie Brown, there were fifty families of *Muthalalis* at Chathanoor and fifteen at Kallada¹²⁴ who remaining as an integral part of Nazranis.

Later Migrations

Some authors like Rev. Kuruvilla suggest another migration in the tenth century. Even if there is no evidence or legends existing regarding the same, a possibility of such a migration cannot be ruled out on the grounds of the increasing Muslim pressure in the Middle East and the existing trade potential in Kerala. By the first recording of these legends in the sixteenth century, a lot of mixing took place in between them. The name Thomas created the maximum perplexity among the missions of Saint Thomas the Apostle, Kanai Thomman and of one or more bishop, Mar Thomas. They were interlinked and in certain cases telescoped to Saint Thomas, the apostle. It is very difficult to identify each of them with the Thomas concerned. It is the case of intermixing of migration legends. However, the Persian migrations were certain and their impact on Nazranis was evident.

Migration From the East Coast

There is an equally strong argument about the migration of Christians to Kerala from the east coast of India. This argument was propagated widely after the Synod of Udayamperor, though several of such were a part of the traditions of Nazranis before that.

Thiruvamkodu Christians

Thiruvamkodu, a place adjacent to the old capital of Venad, presently in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, is one of the oldest Nazrani settlements. The Christians of Thiruvamkodu, known as *Tharisas*, have a unique history. According to the legends of Nazranis, Thiruvamkodu is the half

¹²² Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., P 45

¹²³ They are still using their surname as *Muthalali*.

¹²⁴ Brown, *The Indian Christians...* Op. Cit., P 74

church in the so-called *Eazhara* (Seven and a half) churches built by Saint Thomas. According to the legends, they became Christians by Saint Thomas and migrated to Thiruvamkodu under his own leadership. The legend is summarized as follows:

While Saint Thomas was preaching at Mylapore, a sect of *Vellalas*, who were doing the business of gold, silver, precious stones and silk, converted as Christians. They were altogether sixty-four families. The king was angry while he knew about that conversion. He called those *Vellalas* and asked them to give up their new religion. [He threatened them] that otherwise [he] would kill them. When they refused, their properties were confiscated. The frightened merchants took asylum with Saint Thomas. He took them in the night towards southwestern direction. They reached Thiruvamkodu...The king received them with jasmine flowers...He gave a piece of land for constructing houses for all sixty four families and another one for constructing a church...Then Saint Thomas left for Mylapore."¹²⁵

From this legend, the following points can be derived:

1. There was a Christian community at Mylapore
2. They were *Vellalas* engaged in trading.
3. They were persecuted.
4. They migrated to Thiruvamkodu
5. They were taken to Thiruvamkodu by Saint Thomas.

While considering the confusion regarding the person of Saint Thomas, he should be any Thomas, Kanai Thomman, or bishop Mar Thomas or anybody else. However, it is more probable that the migration took place later than the days of Saint Thomas. T. K. Joseph wrote that "...by the year AD 293; some *Vellala* Christians persecuted by their king had fled from Kavaripattnam (Pukar) on the east coast of south India and come in a ship to Quilon in Travancore and settled among indigenous Christians already flourishing there...the Chera king found the Christians a valuable commercial asset...most probably they were brought and settled there by an ancient king of Travancore for purpose of commerce..."¹²⁶ T. K. Joseph did not believe that this persecution was religious. He thinks that while those *Vellala* Christians competed with the Chinese at Kavaripoompattanam in trade, the king

¹²⁵ Edamaruku, *Kerala Samskaram...*, Op. Cit., Pp 488-90

¹²⁶ *Kerala Society Papers...*, Op. Cit. Vol. II, Pp 121-3

supported Chinese and suppressed Christians.¹²⁷ Whatsoever the reason, the Thiruvamkodu Christians were a migrated community from another part of Tamil Nadu. The status given only as *Ara* (half) church was an indication of a later origin of Thiruvamkodu church. However, the date of such a migration is beyond calculation. Considering the alleged connection with *Manikkavachaker*, it may be even in the ninth century AD.

There was a legend that a Saint Thomas and a priest of his own were buried in the big tomb in the southern courtyard of the Thiruvamkodu church.¹²⁸ At present, the tomb is believed as of a *Kathanar* of Konat family in the late eighteenth century that also carries the mortal remains of Fr. K. V. Geevarghese Remban of the twentieth century. However, it is possible that the Konat Malpan was buried in an existing tomb. This may perhaps be the tomb of the one, probably bishop, Mar Thomas, who saved the *Tharissas* from persecution and made them settle at Thiruvamkodu.

The Synod of Udayamperor mentions *Tharissas* as Nazranis. It indicates that they were treated as a part of the main body of Saint Thomas Christians then. Now the remaining of them is very much a part of the main body without any difference. Till two generations back, the male members of Thiruvamkodu Christians used *Pillai* as their surname instead of the usual *Mappilai* of Nazranis.

During the Synod of Udayamperor, The Christians of Thiruvamkodu existed even though they did not participate in that Council.¹²⁹ According to the canons of the said synod, they were living without any pastoral care.¹³⁰ The geographic distance from the rest of the Nazrani community was the major reason for that. It can also assume from the said canon that the Thiruvamkodu community was not sound to support a priest and was too small to generate a priest of its own. If the proper pastoral care were not extended from the time of the Synod of Udayamperor, they would be reduced to Hinduism or Islam as in the case of some other communities. Even after

¹²⁷ Joseph, *Pracheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 33-5

¹²⁸ Joseph, T. K., *Six St. Thomases of South India*, Chenganoor, 1955, P 33

¹²⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavar*, *Op. Cit.*, P 83

¹³⁰ " When this holy synod here that there are some Nazranis at a place called Thiruvamkode...It is ordered to appoint a priest as there ... It was also ordered by the synod to fix higher monthly salary to him than other priests." (Zacharia, Scaria, *Udayamperor Sunnhadosinte Canonakal*, Edamattom, Indian Institute of Christian Studies, 1994, P.208)

the Synod, their situation was not much better in their religious affairs. Fr. Joao Maria Campori wrote on 20 August 1618, after visiting the *Taridacal*¹³¹ that "...[they are] few in number... they are considered by the pagans as of noble birth and high standing. They have free entrance to the palace, their office being to supply all the needs of the king:¹³² so that they have no intercourse, not only with the low caste people, but even with the Portuguese and other saint Thomas Christians. But they follow their civil customs in every thing..."¹³³ He further states that never do they allow the Roman Catholic missionaries to enter their churches "...because they deal with *Mucovers* and other low-caste people..."¹³⁴ The Thiruvamkodu church is now a part of the Malankara Orthodox Church. A very few descendants of real *Tharissaykkal* are still there.¹³⁵ Leslie Brown observes about them in the twentieth century as follows:

Faithful *D-hairyaykal* were distinguished from all other Christians in language, in many cultural practices, and in dress until two generations ago. The men used to retain the *Kutumi* or single lock of hair on the crown of the head, and sacred thread was put on the mail babies after baptism. The women wore the *pandiada* and the other Hindu ornaments. They have now assimilated themselves to the Jacobite community and intermarried with them¹³⁶

The *Tharissaykkal* of Thiruvamkodu migrated to the northern Nazrani settlements like Kollam, Mavalikkara and Kayamkulam etc. in later centuries. Even today, some families of these places claim their Thiruvamkodu origin. However, they lost all uniqueness by entering into the Nazrani mainstream. Even if they had a clear ethnic identity different from that of the Nazranis, they never alienated themselves from the Nazrani mainstream like *Southists*.

Nilakkal Community

Nilakkal, a hilly area in Pathanamthitta district, is believed to be one of the seven Christian communities established by Saint Thomas. Nilakkal was a trade centre in one of the major land route from Niranam port via Pandalam,

¹³¹ = *Tharissaykkal*

¹³² The palace of the king of Venad was at Kalkkulam. This justifies the argument of T. K. Joseph that *Tharissaykkal* were settled there for the purpose of commerce

¹³³ Ferrolí, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 422-3

¹³⁴ Ferrolí, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 422-3

¹³⁵ In 1984, when the present author visits there, only one family of real *Tharissaykkal* exist.

¹³⁶ Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 79.

Nilakkal, and Cumbam to the interior Tamil Nadu and Coromandel Coast.¹³⁷ This was abandoned for centuries and that area is in thick forest now. The ruins of a church and a settlement were discovered near Nilakkal Mahadeva temple in AD 1957.

Of the seven congregations claiming Saint Thomas origin, all except Nilakkal are at ports. This arises the question on the authenticity of the Nilakkal connection of Saint Thomas. If Saint Thomas had not founded Nilakkal, it is possible that it is a later replanting of one of his communities from somewhere else.¹³⁸ Such a migration is possible from midland or coastal Kerala. However, there is no reason for such a shifting of an entire community to Nilakkal from anywhere in Kerala.¹³⁹

Traditionally Nilakkal was known as *Chaayal* among the Nazranis. This *Chaayal* may be the original settlement of Saint Thomas Christians who migrated to Nilakkal later. The location of Nilakkal is convenient for making a settlement by the immigrants from Tamil Nadu. It was one of the first places beyond Western Ghats while travelling via the route mentioned above from Tamil Nadu. Considering the migration of Coromandel Christian communities to Kerala mentioned in oral tradition, it is possible that Nilakkal was one of their settlements. From the similarity in the names *Chaayal* and *Kaayal*, it may even suggest that they were the immigrants from Kaayalpattinam in Tamil Nadu. Kaayalpattinam is a developed village on the banks of river Thamraparni in Thiruchenthloor Taluk, Thirunelvali District, Tamil Nadu. Now it is an interior place with Muslim majority.¹⁴⁰ During the period of Marco Polo (+ AD 1293) Kaayalpattinam was a flourishing port city.¹⁴¹ Later it went interior by the formation of new land in between port and the sea and hence lost its commercial importance.

¹³⁷ Joseph, M. O., *Kerala Christianikal*, Cochin, Janatha Book Stall, 1972, Pp. 52-3, 78-9

¹³⁸ The term '*Pally*' was used for the Christian community also. It is possible that a community of Saint Thomas origin was migrated in full and claiming as the original '*Saint Thomas Pally*'.

¹³⁹ Though Nazranis from the first communities moved inland and established new *Pallys*, no such migrants claimed Saint Thomas as the founder their new *Pally*. The sole exception is Nilakkal. Other Nazranis also accepting that. The only reason for that was the entire replanting of one of the first communities. Oral tradition mentioning no persecution in Kerala led to an exodus. However, it states about the persecution in Coromandel coast and migration of Christians from there to Kerala.

¹⁴⁰ The State Institute of Encyclopaedic Publications, *Sarva Vinjanakosham Vol. VII*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1984, P 156

¹⁴¹ Panikkassery, Valayudhan, *Marco Polo Indiyil*, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 1980, Pp. 103-4

The local derogatory name of Nilakkel Christians may be taken as an evidence for their Tamil Nadu origin. While mentioning their number, it was used abusively as *Chaayal Motta Moovayiram* that means 'the baldheads of *Chaayal* numbered three thousand'.¹⁴² The Nazranis are reported as having *Kudummi*¹⁴³ on their head even in the seventeenth century. Therefore, they cannot be called as *Motta*. Perhaps the migrants from Kaayalpattanam were baldheads. The baldheads seem entirely different from the Malayalees who always have a *Kudummi* as a part of *Jathy* system. Hence, the Nilakkel Christians were abused *Motta*. This indicates a separate identity of Nilakkel Christians.

Nilakkel was abandoned before centuries and its inhabitants came down to the plains and settled in different parts of Kottayam and Pathanamthitta districts. Traditions say that they settled at Kanjirappally, Aruvithura, Chegannur, Kadmbanadu, Tumpamon etc. According to the oral tradition, the reason for that fleeing was '*Vakrappuliyum Perumpattayum*' (*Varakrappuli* and *Perumpatta*). None of the several interpretations given for these terms satisfactorily explains its meaning.

The date of the flight from Nilakkal is stated differently as AD 68, 566, 623, 1150, 1248 and 1348. Ward and Corner had seen the ruins and some temple authorities informed them that the disaster happened about 300 years back.¹⁴⁴ Z. M. Paret suggests that the disaster was the result of the great floods of AD 1341.¹⁴⁵ The flood might have destroyed Nilakkel or its economy. In both cases, a flight was reasonable. Now the Nilakkel Community has no separate identity. They have merged fully with other Nazranis.

The Mylapore Migration

According to some authors, there took place a migration of Christians from Mylapore to Kerala. The early Portuguese reports stating to the existence of a once flourished Christian community in the Coromandel coast

¹⁴² Kuruvilla, *Prakaranam...*, Op. Cit., 1872, P 10

¹⁴³ =Tonsure (a tuft of hair)

¹⁴⁴ Paret, Z. M., *Vakrappuliyum Perumpattayum*, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 1966, P 10

¹⁴⁵ A royal charter of king of *Thekkumkoor* of 624 ME (1448/9 AD) grants permission to one Thommy, who is the fifth generation descendent of another Thommy, who flee from Nilakkel, to construct a church at Kanjirappally. Z. M. Paret calculated about 100 years for that five generations and assuming that the migration took place in the fifth decade of fourteenth century (AD 1340-49). The most important event which changes the course of history and geography of Kerala during that period was the great flood of AD 1341 that closed the Kodungallor port and opened a new sea link at Kochi. See Paret, *Vakrappuliyum Perumpattayum*, Op. Cit., Pp. 9-15

who were forced to flee to Kerala due to persecution. Some of the Portuguese writers kept a view that most, may be all, of the Nazranis were made of Mylapore migrants. Fr. Joao Maria Campori wrote in AD 1604 that "the best and greater part of these Christians descend from those whom St. Thomas baptized at Mylapore, and who later on, being violently driven away by wars, passed over to the Malabar coast."¹⁴⁶

Francis Roz, the first Roman Catholic bishop of Nazranis, strongly advocated the constitution of the Nazranis by the migrants from Mylapore alone, who settled down in different parts of Kerala. According to him, it happened in the fourth century AD. Mundadan points out that Roz himself narrates the existence of Nazranis before the alleged migration in the fourth century, in his writings. His aim was to restore the privileges of the archbishopric of Angamaly, for which he was appointed as the bishop, which was later reduced to a bishopric under Goa.¹⁴⁷ Placid J. Podipara agreed with a migration from Coromandel coast but according to him, only to Thiruvamkodu, of *Tharissaykkal*.¹⁴⁸

According to another tradition, the Christians of Mylapore and Coromandel coast were forced to flee westward. Some of them settled in Travancore. Some of them went to the Ghats confines of the ancient kingdom of Calicut, settled there and lost the traces of Christianity.¹⁴⁹ Those who settled in Travancore, remain as Christians.¹⁵⁰ All traditions agreed the migration and settlement of Mylapore Christians to Kerala. However, none except Roz argue that the Nazrani community entirely consist of those migrants. Perhaps Roz elaborated the Thiruvamkodu story to the entire Malankara for the implementation of his personal strategy.

The Impact of Migrations

The legends about all migrations agree that a Kerala Christian community existed before the migrations. It also states that the remaining native Christians, according to some legends only eight families, joined the

¹⁴⁶ Ferrolli, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 296

¹⁴⁷ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, Pp 71-4

¹⁴⁸ Podipara, Placid J., *The Canonical Sources of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Kottayam, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1986, Pp 49-50

¹⁴⁹ For more details about the Todamala community see: Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, Pp 108, 112, 319

¹⁵⁰ Ayyar, L. K. Ananthakrishna, *Anthropology of the Syrian Christians*, Ernakulam, 1924, P 18

immigrants to form the future Nazrani community. Hence, the migrations could not be treated as the formation of Nazranis, but only as a reinforcement of the indigenous Christian community.

The survival of Christianity in Kerala was in one way indebted to the foreign migrations. Christianity could not have survived without properly ordained priests. There were strong legends about the period(s) without any priests among Nazranis, even though the legends states the priest-less period as in between second to the fourth centuries AD,¹⁵¹ while considering the general perplexity in the chorography in the history of Nazranis, it could be any period prior to the arrival of Persian prelates. The legends about priest-less period were so deep-rooted since it was remarked even in the early twentieth century¹⁵². According to Ittoop, in several ancient *tharavads*, a place was left as sacred in the house, where it was believed that the marriages and baptisms were officiated by the elders during the priestless periods.¹⁵³ The bishops and the missionaries, who are said to be the leaders or members of the migration from the Middle East, not only linked them with the Christendom, but also saved them even from vanishing by the deviation into the local religions especially to the Brahmanic religion. They also ensure the future supply of bishops and doctors of Church to Nazranis from the Middle East.

The most important impact of both foreign and domestic migrations is related to the trade. In every said migration, there was an element of commerce. The formation of trade zones in Kodungallor and Kollam by Persian Christians and its privileges made the Nazranis attach to any one of them to safeguard their interests.¹⁵⁴

The Later Evangelisation Tradition

The third theory about the origin of Nazranis speaks about its origin by later evangelisation.¹⁵⁵ Some of them are already discussed earlier. T. K.

¹⁵¹ Curian, *Oru Prakaranam, Op. Cit.*, P 10

¹⁵² E. J. John, then principal of Trivandrum Law Collage and a member of the Malankara Orthodox Church, described this in his address to the *Malankara Pally Yogam* in AD 1911.

¹⁵³ Joseph Ittoop, Pukidiyil, *Malayalathulla Suriyani Kristhanikalude Sabha Chanthram*, Kottayam, 1869, P 84

¹⁵⁴ There is a legend confirming this union. "On the arrival of Knai Thomman at Kodungallor, the remaining Nazranis of *Kottakkayal Parisha* and sixty-four families of *Dhariyaykkal* welcomed him." (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 89-91)

¹⁵⁵ The author of the *Niranam Grandhavari* was aware about such an argument.(Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P160)

Joseph suggests the origin from the Bardesanite missionaries.¹⁵⁶ Some others speak about Manicheans of the third century AD.¹⁵⁷ However, P. Cherian argues that if the Manicheans ever preached here, it was the proof of the existence of a Christian community then.¹⁵⁸ William Logan doubts the origin of Nazranis as from the third century Gnostics, especially the ones called Orphites.¹⁵⁹ Those who wish to deny the apostolic origin of the Nazranis generally propagated the later evangelisation theory. However, most of them failed to give a conclusive person or date for such a non-apostolic evangelisation. G. M. Agur abbreviated the arguments of the writers discrediting Saint Thomas tradition and concludes thus: "...it becomes evident that the St. Thomas' story must be received with great caution and that without further evidence we cannot attribute apostolic origin to the Malabar Church..."¹⁶⁰

It is very clear from the Agur's evaluation that those who were propagating the later evangelisation theory believed that the Saint Thomas tradition was a Roman Catholic product. In fact, that tradition existed centuries before the arrival of Portuguese. The authors, who said Saint Thomas tradition as a Roman Catholic product, either did not see or neglect the pre-Portuguese documents about that tradition of Nazranis. The missionary activities of the later Christian preachers could not be ruled out. However, as far as the Saint Thomas origin exists, such a later evangelisation could not be treated as the origin of The Nazranis.

The Nazranis in History

Early Testimonials

Some School of historians point out that the visit of Pantaenus took place in AD 189-190, and it was made to the Nazranis. According to some others, Pantaenus' visit was not to Malabar or any other part of India but to Africa or Arabian coast for India. This, according to them, was due to the confusion of the early writers regarding the terminology 'India', who frequently

¹⁵⁶ Bardesinism was a heresy developed by Bardesan at Edessa around AD 200. (*Joseph, Pracheena...*, Op. Cit., Pp 33-9, 72-3)

¹⁵⁷ Agur, *Church History...Op. Cit.*, Pp 10-1

¹⁵⁸ Cherian, P., *The Malabar Syrians and Church Missionary Society*, Kottayam, CMS Press, 1935, P 40

¹⁵⁹ He further doubts that the later legends of Brahmin evacuation of snakes from Kerala means the suppression of those Orphites to whom snakes were an unavoidable part of their religion. (Logan, William, *Logante Malabar Manuel*, Calicut, Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Company Ltd., 1997, Pp 214-5)

¹⁶⁰ Agur, *Church History...Op. Cit.*, Pp 6-7

mistook Arabian Felix and African coast as India. The same challenges were made for the claim of the Indian representation by bishop John in the Council of Nicea of AD 325. There is an entry reference in *Chronique de Seert* "...that during the Patriarchate of *Shahlupha* and *Papa*, say about AD 295-300, *Dudi* (David), bishop of *Basrah*, on the Persian Gulf, an eminent doctor, left his see and went to India, where he evangelised many people..."¹⁶¹ This reference need not be about Kerala. However, its chances could not be ruled out

Sangam Literature

Some authors suggest that the existence of Nazranis is found in the *Sangam* literature. According to them, certain forms of worship and some description of places of worship described in *Sangam* literature are of Christianity. They point out that the Tamil epic *Pathittupathu*, believed to be written between AD 75-100, describe a Christian liturgy. According to them, the description of a sacrifice with bread and wine that was called 'sacrifice of peace' is the description of holy Eucharist.¹⁶² If it is really indicating a Christian liturgy, this is the first record outside the Bible mentioning holy Eucharist. They even point out that the term *Kadavul maena* in *Manimekhala* stands for a Christian building of worship that is a Church.¹⁶³

Kesary Balakrishna Pillai, interpreted one verse of *Pathittupathu* and one of *Chilappathikaram* which states that the king attended the religious service according to the *Veda* of those who came beyond sea, which was with wine. He argues that that service was Christian since Buddhists, Jains or Jews did not have any service with wine as Christians have in their celebration of holy Eucharist.¹⁶⁴ As far as this observation is not so conclusive, further study is essential on this subject.

Theophilos the Indian

The first unchallenged claim about the existence of the Nazranis in Kerala was by 'Theophilos the Indian', a native of Maldives who visited them as an emissary of Emperor Constantine before AD 356. During his long voyage as the head of missionaries sent to Arabia, Theophilos reached his

¹⁶¹ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 18

¹⁶² J. J. Morris made a detailed study about the existence of Nazranis in *Sangam* literature. His studies were published as a book titled 'Kerala in the First Millennium AD.' For more details see: Morris, J.J., *Kerala in the First Millennium AD*, Quilon, 1984, Pp. 84-6

¹⁶³ Morris, *First Millennium...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 2-3

¹⁶⁴ As quoted by Edamaruku, *Kerala Samskaram*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 78-80

home island of Maldives and then Kerala.¹⁶⁵ Medlycott interpreted his activities and concludes that Theophilos had indeed visited the Nazranis.¹⁶⁶ According to some other authors, Theophilos mistook some other place as India. It is quite unreasonable to think that a native of Maldives, which is in close proximity with India, went wrong in narrating India, especially Kerala coast. His narratives can be taken as an evidence for the existence of Nazranis in Kerala. The description of Theophilos proved that Nazranis existed in Kerala in the fourth century AD.

Mingana points out that Indian Church was developed enough in the fifth century to send her priests to be educated in the best schools of the East Syrian Church. He made his assumption based on two Syriac documents. The first is a Syriac translation of the Pauline Epistles of about AD 425. In colophon of the commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Isho'dad writes as follows: "This Epistle has been translated from Greek into Syriac, by *Mar Komai*, with the help of Daniel, the priest, the Indian..." The second document according to him is an act of *Ma'na*, bishop Rewardashir, of about AD 470, who wrote "...in Persian (i.e. Pahlawi) religious discourses, canticles, and hymns, and translated from Greek in to Syriac the works of *Diodore* and *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, and sent them all to India: " And he dispatched to the Islands of the sea (= Bahrain), and to India, all the books he had translated..."¹⁶⁷ According to Mingana these documents proved the following.

1. The Indian Church existed in the fifth century A.D.
2. It was in close relationship with the East Syrian Church.
3. Christian Indians were well versed in the Greek sciences.
4. The ecclesiastical language of Indian Christians at the beginning of the fifth century was Syriac, not any of the many Indian dialects.

Even if these conclusions are accepted, it does not prove that the Indian Christianity mentioned there includes that of Kerala. However, considering the later testimonies, there are chances for the same.

¹⁶⁵ Philostorgius recorded the activities of Theophilos in his 12 Volume history written in AD 423.

¹⁶⁶ Medlycott, *India ...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 195-200

¹⁶⁷ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 27-28

Cosmos Indicopleustes

The clear evidence of the existence of Nazranis in the sixth century is available from the narrative of Cosmos Indicopleustes, who travelled extensively in the countries beyond the Red Sea between AD 520 and 525. Cosmos was a Nestorian, although writing in Greek, who got his nickname Indicopleustes, which means Indian traveller, from his extensive travelling. He wrote;

Even in the Island of Taprobane (= Ceylon) in inner India where the Indian Sea is, there is a Church of Christians, with clergy and a congregation of believers, though I know not if there be any Christians further in that direction. And such also is the case in the land called Male (=Malabar) where the pepper grows. And in the place called Kalliana, there is a bishop appointed from Persia, as well as in the Island of Dioscoris (Socotra), in the same Indian Sea. The inhabitants of that island speak Greek, having been originally settled there by the Ptolemies, who ruled after Alexander of Macedon. There are clergy there also ordained and sent from Persia to minister among the people of the island, and multitude of Christians.¹⁶⁸

Cosmos testifies to the existence of Christian communities in Kalliana, Malabar and Ceylon and among the 'rest of the Indians'. It is very clear from his narration that he was speaking about Kerala. The geographic positioning and clear descriptions of the other communities like Arabs indicate that he really mentioned India beyond doubts. His narrative confirms the following also.

1. There were no native Christians in Ceylon in the sixth century. However, a migrant Persian community with priests existed there.¹⁶⁹
2. There was a Christian community of natives at *Male*, the pepper country.
3. There was a bishop appointed from Persia at *Kalliana*.
4. They were under the Nestorian Catholicate of Persia

Mingana had an impression that Kalliana was Kalyan near present day Mumbai. However, a conscious look on the text shows the mention of Kalliana coming along that of Male, the pepper country. More precisely, the mention of

¹⁶⁸ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 29-30

¹⁶⁹ While speaking about Persians in Ceylon later in his narration, he specifies their Persian ethnicity. However, in case of Male, he speaks only about Christians, not as Persians or any other foreigners. (Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 30)

bishop at Kalliana comes after that of Christians in Male. Therefore, it is more realistic to think Kalliana as Kollam, an ancient port and a Christian centre.

The Syriac Documents

According to Ferroli, *Saliba-Zekha*, Seleucian Patriarch (AD 714 – 728), raised the Indian Church to the state of Metropolitan Church. The head of the Indian Episcopate was called 'the Gate of all India'.¹⁷⁰ There are several East Syrian documents between the sixth and eighth centuries AD mentioning the existence of Christianity in India¹⁷¹. It is true that none of them specifies Christianity in Kerala. However Mingana asserts the state of Indian Christianity as "Everywhere, except perhaps in a few towns of the coast of Malabar, the Christians must have been in a hopeless minority...From the seventh century, India was also a seat of a Metropolitan...the coast of Malabar, and the north-western regions, which were in close proximity to Persia and the Arabian sea. These two districts probably represent the route followed by the early Christian missionaries...Malabar was the key to early Christianity of south and maritime India"¹⁷² All documents referred by Mingana may speak about Kerala also. It may even be mentioning the Nazranis alone as Indians. The existence of Christianity in India at large proves the existence of that in Kerala since it alone survived till the arrival of Portuguese.

Gundert's Description

Gundert gave the following description about the religion in Kerala in the sixth and the seventh centuries AD.

According to *Kerala Mahathmyam*, by then the locals were able to visit abroad by ships. One Queen of *Kolathiri* made a stone inscription at Eazhimala,¹⁷³ praising the god who saved her during her journey to Egypt. After other [than Hindu] missionaries came to Eazhimala and converted the king of *Kolathiri* into *Maargam*, they built *Pallys* [places of worship] and *Angadys* [Palaces for trade] at Madai etc. Even though the king was very kind to Brahmins, *Parasuraman* was angry with him. He removed the king and murdered *Margakkar*. Then the remaining *Margakkar* went to Valapattanam and settled there. They built the *Pally* and

¹⁷⁰ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. 1, Op. Cit.*, P 64 Several Persian bishops in Kerala of later centuries and even the native Mar Thoma bishops of Pakalomattom family in the eighteenth century AD are also found using this title. Therefore, the title *Gate of India*, was applicable for the Persian bishop in Kerala. Perhaps his jurisdiction was wider, while it was given.

¹⁷¹ Mingana points out several examples of East Syrian documents referring India. (Mingana, *Early Spread...Op. Cit.*, Pp 31-32)

¹⁷² Mingana, *Early Spread...Op. Cit.*, P 10

¹⁷³ Eazhimala was the ancient capital of *Kolathiri*, for westerners it was *mount de Eli*, or Mount Dilly

town there... it should not be ascertained whether those *Margakkar* were true Christians or belong to some other religions.¹⁷⁴

There are no historical evidences so far to prove this story. However, there is a great possibility for such set of instances. This story is equally applicable for both the Christians and Muslims. However, in the Catalan Map of AD 1375, Mount Delly, south of Mangalore, marked as a Christian city and at the foot of Mount Delly Duarte Barbosa noticed Jews. Barbosa lends authority to the Catalan Map since the Jews of Malabar usually were found together with Christians for trading purposes.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, chances are more for Christians to be mentioned in this story. Gundert describes the growth and decay of the maritime trade of Nazranis during this period as follows

... They gradually acquired wealth through their trade from Persia to *Eazham* [Sri Lanka] in the south. The number of believers also increased. The two trade routes via the Red sea and the Persian Sea and their connection with other Christians in the west were stopped immediately. The true faith given by Jesus Christ and his disciples and the love that bound together the Church and the enthusiasm to preach the word of God were diminished due to the internal quarrels and affection to the temporalities and hence the Church was declined. The rest of them [Christians] were persecuted. An anti-Christ named Muhammad had rose and won Arabia in 622. Then on the trade and the Church diminished in Greece and Persia and even destroyed in some places. The Christians in Europe were not bothered about others but just fight for themselves. The world even forgot the existence of the Church in Malabar...Then the Arabs won all over Persia, they found that Syrians did not have idols or such rituals, and hence their persecution was decreased. Even then the Syrians were afraid and lost enthusiasm. Hence it leads to comment by good people in 650 [AD] that Patriarch Simon did not send advisers to the Church in India...¹⁷⁶

Here Gundert actually gives the reasons for the deterioration of the Persian Church and not that of Nazranis. However, the decay of the Persian Church has affected Nazranis not only in the spiritual side but in their temporalities also. The fall of entire Middle East to Muslims gave the control of Arabian sea to them. Hence, the chances of Nazranis to trade with Middle East fell under the mercy of Muslims. However, it happened later only.

¹⁷⁴ Gundert, *Keralolpathy ...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 338

¹⁷⁵ Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P. 63

¹⁷⁶ Gundert, *Keralolpathy ...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 340-1

Later Testimonials

Historians generally regard the period from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries as the dark period in the history of the Nazranis. However, a few narratives mentioning about the existence of Nazranis are available during this period. The only sources to build up their history are those passing notes. Some of them are referring only to the tomb of Saint Thomas. However, those too prove the existence of Nazranis since Mylapore tradition is an integral part of the history of Nazranis.

Syriac Document of AD 1301

A very important document of AD 1301, copied at Kodungallor, provides valuable information about Nazranis. It reads as follows:

"This holy book was written in the royal, renowned, and famous city of Shingala¹⁷⁷ in Malabar, in the country of India, in the Church of illustrious martyr Mar Cyriacus¹⁷⁸...In the time of the great pilot and director of the holy Catholic Church of the East... holy Father Mar Yahb Alaha V, the Turk, Catholicos Patriarch of the East¹⁷⁹...And in the time of bishop Mar Jacob, Metropolitan and director of the holy see of the Apostle Saint Thomas, that is to say, our director and the director of all the holy Church of Christian India... This holy book with all its rights and requirements was finished on a Wednesday, in June, of the year 1612 of the Greeks¹⁸⁰...It was written by the weak scholar and the sinner, Zechariah, son of Joseph, son of Zechariah, one of the pupils and relatives of our above Father and director, and by name a deacon, from the above-mentioned town Shingala."¹⁸¹

These three short passages show that The Nazranis were under the Nestorian Catholicos then. It shows that there was a resident Metropolitan at Kodungallor. It also shows that there was a church, Christians and clergy at Kodungallor. The Nazranis were referred to as the 'Holy See of Apostle Saint Thomas' in ecclesiastical circles. They used East Syrian liturgy.¹⁸² They had

¹⁷⁷ *Shingala* is a Syriac form of *Chengala Azhi*, an ancient name of Kodungallor. Another Syriac New Testament copied in AD 1510 is marked as copied at '*Sangala* that is *Qrwngalur* (= Kodungallor)'. See Van Der Ploeg, *Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 186-7

¹⁷⁸ Saint Cyriacus (Kuriakose or Cyriac) was a child martyr of the fourth century AD. The church mentioned above was probably Palayoor, not far from Kodungallor, which was stated by Portuguese in the early sixteenth century as dedicated to Saint Kuriakose.

¹⁷⁹ Mar Yab' Alaha ber Turkaye III was the Nestorian Catholicos from AD 1283 to 1317.

¹⁸⁰ East Syrians used Greek era till recently. To get Christian era, subtract 311.

¹⁸¹ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 69-71

¹⁸² The Pauline Epistles of the said book is according to the East Syrian rite.

Old Testament names.¹⁸³ The bishop was a teacher, certainly religious also. They had priests of their own.¹⁸⁴

The clear statement about the Holy See of the Apostle Saint Thomas indicates without doubt that the Saint Thomas tradition was so powerful in the early fourteenth century, two centuries before the arrival of Portuguese. It also indicates that the Persian hierarchs also accepted this claim of Nazranis.

John of Montecorvino

The statement of John of Montecorvino in AD 1305 should be taken on these grounds. He, writing from the Pekin in AD 1305, says the "I remained in the country of India, where stands the Church of Saint Tomas the Apostle, for thirteen months and in that reign baptized in different places about one hundred persons." In AD 1306 he writes again that "There are (in Malabar) very few Christians and Jews and they are of little weight. The people persecute much the Christians and all who bear the Christian name."¹⁸⁵ Even though John of Montecorvino speaks about the persecution of Indian Christians, least chances are there that he was speaking about Nazranis. Ferroli comments: "...Strange that he should speak of religious persecution in Malabar, where the Christians were in general unobtrusive and unproselytising..." John of Montecorvino may be speaking about the Christians of Coromandel coast, where scattered Christian communities and persecution was found later.

Friar Jordan of Toulouse

It is also doubtful whether Friar Jordan of Toulouse, a French Dominican, was narrating in AD 1302 about the mainstream Nazranis in his *Mirabilia Discripta*. He states as "In this India there is a scattered people, one here another there, who called themselves Christians but are not so, nor have they baptism nor do they know anything about the faith. Nay! They believe Saint Thomas the Great to be Christ! There, in India I speak of, I baptized and brought into the faith about 10,000 souls."¹⁸⁶ While the above stated Syriac

¹⁸³ By introducing himself as 'Zechariah, son of Joseph, son of Zechariah', the copyist specifying the names of three generations.

¹⁸⁴ The copyist was a deacon

¹⁸⁵ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 66

¹⁸⁶ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 66 He believed that Jordan speaking about Nazranis. But a Malayalam edition of *Mirabilia Discripta*, published from Kollam creating confusion. (Rozario, Msgr. A. J., *Kollam Christhanikal*, Kottayam, Pellissery Publications, 1995, Pp 118-38) This edition made the Jordan's visit to Kollam very doubtful. However, his description about Christians in India, found at a

document of AD 1301 clearly indicates the proper pastoral care and clergy education the Nazranis had, it is unrealistic to think about the total negligence in the next year. If his narration is authentic, one is forced to believe that the pastoral care available at Kodungallor was limited there only, which was least possible. Hence, Jordan was speaking not about Nazranis.

Blessed Oderic of Pordenone

In AD 1321, the Franciscan Blessed Oderic of Pordenone passed down to Malabar, according to him, "where the pepper grows. In the forest in which the pepper grows, there are two cities, one called Flandrina¹⁸⁷ and the other Cilngilin.¹⁸⁸ In the city of Flandrina, some of the inhabitants are Jews and some are Christians; and between these two cities there is always internal strife, but the result is always that the Christians beat and overcome the Jews..."¹⁸⁹

Kodungallor is accepted as an old Christian centre, whereas Panthalayini Kollam is found mentioned for the first time as a Nazrani settlement. During the Synod of Udayamperor in AD 1599, there was no Nazrani settlement north of Kunnamkulam in Trichur district except an unorganised few in Bepor,¹⁹⁰ who were only namesake Christians then. This justifies the existence of another community in Panthalayini Kollam, which was a major trading centre then. This description of Oderic of Pordenone also proves that Nazranis were merchants. He mentioned about the frequent quarrel between Jews and Christians in those two towns. Even though the reason for the quarrel was not stated, there was no other reason but was for the control of the market, since Jews and Christians were merchants.

This also proved that the trade, at least in the northern parts of Kerala was not a monopoly of Nazranis. They had to compete with Jews, who were in the same profession in the same territory from the very beginning of Christianity in Kerala. Later they both lost it to the Arabs and Muslims, who were supported by the *Zamorins* of Kozhikkodu.

different part of his book that narrating Kollam or the pepper country, is not about Nazranis. The number of people baptized by him was only 300 according to Kollam edition. He may probably referring one of the scattered communities outside the Nazrani heartland.

¹⁸⁷ *Flandrina* is Panthalayini in Kozhikodu district. It was also known as *Panthalayini Kollam* or North Kollam, which was a famous port.

¹⁸⁸ *Cilngilin* is *Chengala Azhi* that is Kodungallor.

¹⁸⁹ Ferrol, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, 1939, P 67

¹⁹⁰ Mundadan, *Traditions ... Op. Cit.* Pp. 110 – 1

Ibin Battuta

Ibin Battuta states that the merchants of Kollam belong to a caste named *Suliban*.¹⁹¹ Considering his other usages of names, *suliban* might be anything including *Tharissa* or *Suriyani*. He clearly stated that they were not Muslims. Correlating this with the other descriptions of the same century, *Sulibans* were nobody but Nazranis. According to Ibin Battuta, they were extremely rich. They can even buy an entire shipload of merchandise while it available. They can also load a ship fully with merchandise. He stated that their warehouses always filled with merchandise.¹⁹²

John de Marignolli

John de Marignolli provides valuable information about the Nazranis of Kollam. He visited Kollam in AD 1348 on his return journey from China. He writes:

On Palm Sunday, 1348, we arrived at a very noble city of India called Quilon, where the whole world pepper is produced... it grows not in forests but in regular gardens, nor are the Saracens the proprietors, but the Christians of Saint Thomas. And these latter are the masters of the public weighing office from which I derived, as a perquisite of my office as Pope's Legate, every month a hundred gold fanams and a thousand when I left...¹⁹³

From this narration of John de Marignolli the following can be established:

1. There were Christians at Kollam
2. They were known as Christians of Saint Thomas
3. They had (all) the pepper plantation
4. They are the masters of public weights
5. They are wealthy enough to provide regular perquisite

The *Tharissappally* copper plates of the ninth century entrust the *Pally*, hence its members, as the masters of public weights and measures. Marignolli's description proves that they were retaining that dignity in the fourteenth century also. When the Nazranis met Alfonso D' Albuquerque in AD 1504, they stated that they lost this privilege due to the crime committed by one among them.¹⁹⁴ Marco Polo places the Nazranis as the coconut

¹⁹¹ Panikkassery, Velayudhan, *Sancharikal Kanda Keralam*, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 2001, P 169

¹⁹² Panikkassery, *Sancharikal...Op. Cit.*, P 169

¹⁹³ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 66-7

¹⁹⁴ Paret, *Nazranikal Vol. I ... Op. Cit.*, P 474

growers, whereas John de Marignolli describes them as pepper growers. Both indicate that Nazranis not only performed as merchants, but as farmers also.

John de Marignolli introduces the Nazranis as the Christians of Saint Thomas. There is only one chance to get that impression to Marignolli, from the Nazranis. They may explain their Christianity as *Marthomayude Maargam* to him. The great reverence of Nazranis towards Saint Thomas may make Marignolli to call them Christians of Saint Thomas.¹⁹⁵ It also proves that Saint Thomas tradition was more ancient than the Portuguese period. But the next paragraph of John de Marignolli has a confusing statement as "There is a church of Saint George there, of the Latin Communion, at which I dwelt..."¹⁹⁶ Ferroli comments that the present-day Syrian Catholics use this remarkable document to prove that they have never adhered to heresy, but that they have always been attached to the See of Rome.¹⁹⁷ However, before jumping into such a conclusion, a thorough analysis of his narration is needed. The following points are there in his description.

1. He was talking about a Saint George church
2. That church was in Latin Communion
3. Christians of Saint Thomas were not stated as in Latin Communion
4. He was describing separately about the Christians of Saint Thomas
5. He was not linking Christians of Saint Thomas and Saint George church

When the Nazranis of Kollam met the Portuguese Viceroy Alfonso D' Albuquerque, in AD 1504, they had showed him the Saint Thomas church alone as theirs.¹⁹⁸ They had explained its importance also to the Portuguese. However, no mention was made about the said Saint George church or the pillar erected by John de Marignolli. If it was any way important to them, they would definitely tell the Portuguese since that pillar was there even in AD 1662, in which year Dutch Baldaeus had seen that.¹⁹⁹ If it was pointed out, at

¹⁹⁵ Nowhere in the world, any Christians in the old time, were found as called with their founders' name like Pauline Christians, Christians of Saint Peter etc. Even the other mission fields of Saint Thomas were also not known as such. So, this exception may happened only because of their self-definition of Christianity, *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadam*, was so strong which prevent others from calling them nothing but Christians of Saint Thomas.

¹⁹⁶ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 66-7

¹⁹⁷ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 66-7

¹⁹⁸ Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 34-5

¹⁹⁹ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 67

least the priests along with the Portuguese would take it seriously since the Pope's arms were engraved on it. Therefore, it leads to the conclusion that the said saint George church in Latin communion did not belong to the Nazranis. It may be of some other converts or even some foreign settlers who were not in Kollam when the Portuguese was arrived in AD 1504.²⁰⁰

Ma-huan

The fifteenth century Chinese traveller, Ma-huan identify the merchants in Kochi as *Chetti* during his visit to Kerala in the first half of the fifteenth century. He describes them as a caste different from Nairs and Muslims. He also describes them as rich merchants holding an upper position.²⁰¹ Great possibilities are there for the *Chettis* in Kochi to be Nazranis. Kochi and its outskirts were Nazrani settlements for centuries²⁰². The Nazranis were called *Chettis* in different parts of the kingdom of Kochi and surrounding places even in the twentieth century.²⁰³ The dominant Hindu trading caste, *Konkanis*, migrated to Kerala only after the Portuguese conquest of Goa in the sixteenth century. Therefore, the only possibility left for *Chetti* was Nazranis. From the descriptions of all the pre-Portuguese testimonials mentioning Nazranis, the following points can be derived.

1. Nazranis existed in Kerala
2. They believed in the Saint Thomas tradition
3. They were predominantly engaged in trade and commerce
4. They were engaged in the cultivation of pepper and coconut
5. They were a reputed segment in the society.

²⁰⁰ There was a possibility of a Venetian settlement in Kollam then, Venetians were great merchants and Roman Catholics (that is, they were in Latin Communion). Venetian gold coins were esteemed greatly in Kerala before the arrival of the Portuguese. Joseph the Indian, who left India with Cabral, had some of them he had brought from India. They are identified as of AD 1400-1414 periods. (Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, Pp 202, 291)

²⁰¹ Panikkassery, *Sancharikal...Op. Cit.*, Pp 192-4

²⁰² The distribution of pre-Portuguese churches alone proves the density of Nazranis in and around Kochi. Mattanchery, Anchikkaymel (present-day Ernakulam), Edappally, are within the present day Kochi city. Pallikkara is a few Kilometres away. Whereas Thrippunithura Nadamal and Karigachira are in the adjoining town Trippunithura.

²⁰³ In the early twentieth century, Nazranis at Irinjalkkuda was called as *Chettis* along with their names like *Thoma Chetti, Mathai Chetti* etc. (Joseph, *Six St. Thomases... Op. Cit.*, P 121) It is reported by Fr. Mookkancheril Patros Remban that even in 1940s', the Nazranis were called as *Chettis* in and around Angamaly.

Later Developments

The Conversion of *Cheraman Perumal*

The conversion of *Cheraman Perumal*, the then ruler of Kerala, from Hinduism is one of the widespread legends in Kerala.²⁰⁴ It is said popularly that he was converted into Islam. However, some historians disapprove of it and state that he was converted into Christianity. T. K. Joseph keeps the latter opinion. Z.M. Paret also favours this argument. The argument of T. K. Joseph, based on *Keralolpathy*, states that a *Cheraman Perumal*, who ruled from Thiruvanchikkulam at Kodungallor, became a Christian in AD 317. He was known as *Pallivanavar* or *Pallivaner*. According to him, "Almost all versions of *Keralolpathy* from different parts of Kerala agreed that the *Perumal* abandoned Hindu religion and accepted Buddhism first...The *Perumal* refused to return to Hinduism even after the Buddhists were defected by Brahmins. Even he was just reciting that the "*Buddha Margam* is right and asked everybody to accept it...then he ordered to consecrate another *Perumal* and left to *Makkam*. That *Perumal* is known as *Pallibanapperumal* ...*Pallibanapperumal* left to *Makkam* after four years of ruling..."²⁰⁵ after stating this general tradition, T. K. Joseph added the following:

One *Keraloolpathy* at *Kapelligattu (Nampoothiri) Mana* states as follows..."during the period of the seventh *Perumal*, *Boudhanmar* (Buddhists) from *paradesam* (= foreign land) reached Mahadevar Pattanam (in Tamil, Makothayar Pattanam) (in Kodungallor). They went to Kodungallor, met Cheraman Perumal, and preached to him...then He insisted on all to accept this. Then the *Kali* was *Rouravam Devargyam*²⁰⁶ ...one or two Buddhists from *Vakudash* (Baghdad) called themselves as *Paradeshikal* (they may probably be Bardesanits i.e. Foreigners) reached *Malanadu*. They landed at Kodungallor and said that they came to meet the king of *Malanadu* (Kerala) and to preach their religion...The *Perumal* understood that it was the *Sathyaveda* (true faith) and decided to follow that *Veda*...*Cheraman Perumal* had given 72 dignities and ornaments to them till the end of justice and the universe...Then he built four churches for them in *Malanadu*²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Logan, *Malabar Manuel...*, *Op. Cit.* P 205

²⁰⁵ Joseph., *Pracheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 36-8

²⁰⁶ The literary meaning of *Kali* number *Rouravam Devargyam* is the kingdom of god is hell. It attracts attention. This *Kali* is not representing Buddhism since there is no concept of 'Kingdom of God' is there whereas Christianity has. It also indicates the dislike of the fabricator of this *Kali* word, probably a Brahmin, towards the said event.

²⁰⁷ T. K. Joseph gave brackets in this quotation. He further stating that Mr. K. R. Menon M.A. M. Sc. (London), a senior officer of Kochi palace and a researcher, had seen the above *Kali* number *Rouravam Devargyam* at the above stated *Kaplingadu* book in 1940 and another book of Mr. Narayanan Nampoothiri of *Cherli Mana* and in a book at Kochi government records. T. K. Joseph also stated that

T. K. Joseph argues that even though the *Keralolpathy of Kapligadu Mana* did not speak about Christianity, the arrival of missionaries from Baghdad prove that they were Christians since Islam did not exist then. According to him, *Bardesan*, a Syriac word from Baghdad, can easily become *Paradeshi* in Kerala dialect. The word *Paradeshi* has different meanings such as foreigner, pilgrim and beggar. If *Paradeshi* carries only one meaning as he said, there was no need to use 'called as *Paradeshi*'. *Paradeshi* alone would be enough. Therefore, he concluded that those missionaries were not Christian, but they were Bardesanites heretics.²⁰⁸

It is certain that the religion brought in by the Buddhists from Baghdad was not the real Buddhism. Considering the practice of Kerala Brahmins to call any religion other than Hindu as Buddhist, it should be any other religion. T. K. Joseph ruling out the possibility of Islam based on the date calculated by the *Kali* number. Since the authenticity of *Kali* number is not proved beyond doubt, it can be Islam too. There comes the relevance of the word *Paradeshi*. T. K. Joseph regards that as local form of Bardesan, a fourth century Gnostic, who was treated as a heretic by Christians, who had great influence in and around Baghdad. This point needs reconsideration while taking the meaning of the word *Paradeshi* as foreigner (stranger) or pilgrim.

In the early stages of Christianity, Christians considered themselves as strangers (foreigners) in this world. They consider this world as only a temporary shelter for them and their permanent residence as the eternity. The clear indication of this is found in the epistles of Saint Paul and Saint Peter.²⁰⁹ Considering the Christians as strangers and pilgrims was a common theme among the early Church fathers.²¹⁰ In the course of the rise of monasticism, this concept was developed much further. The Syriac liturgy is full with this symbol.²¹¹ Therefore, *Paradeshi* is indicating the Christians rather than a heretic group. From this, it is clear that the name *Paradeshi* is applicable and

Mr. Menon copied the above stated quotations. The *Kali* number is mentioned, as "the *Kali* of the date of arrival of *Mappilas* is *Rouravam Devargyam*." Mr. Ramavarma Marumakan Tahmpuran of Kochi and Mr. K. N. Daniel calculated the date of the *Kali* Number *Rouravam Devargyam* as Thursday February 14, 317 AD." According to T. K. Joseph, that day to be considered as the date of arrival of Bardesanite missionaries and *Perumal* accepted Christianity in that year. (Joseph, *Pracheena...*, Op. Cit., Pp 38-9)

²⁰⁸ Joseph., *Pracheena...*, Op. Cit., P 40

²⁰⁹ 2. Corinthians 5.1, Hebrews 11.13, 1. Peter 1.17, 1 Peter. 2.11

²¹⁰ The epistle of Saint Clement of Rome to Corinthians begins with the address 'Strangers and pilgrims'

²¹¹ For example, the burial services according to the west Syrian tradition repeatedly mentioning Christians as *strangers and pilgrims*.

meaningful for the mainstream Christianity rather than Bardesanites. The early Christian missionaries, who travelled with great religious zeal, preferred to call themselves as *Paradeshi*. Hence, the religion of the *Paradeshis* from Baghdad was Christian since Islamic doctrines did not have such a concept.

It can also be stated that the *Pally* where *Pallivana Perumal* lived was the *Perinjanathu Pally*, which is now known as *Neelamperur Pally Bagavathi* temple in between Kottayam and Chenganassery. This assumption is made from the cross-like building over the burial place of *Pallivana Perumal* just outside the walls of the said temple and from the bronze statue as wearing cross discovered in AD 1888 from that tomb. According to T. K. Joseph, *Perijanathu Pally* is *Peri (ya) Jainathu Pally*, which means the great Jain temple. He also argues that when the *Perumal* shifted his residence to that *Pally*, it was called as *Beth-Malke* (the house of king) in Syriac. *Beth-Malke* became *Makkam* later.²¹² From the analysis of this story, the following stages can be found in the transition of *Perumal*:

1. The *Cheraman Perumal* was a Hindu
2. He assumed Buddhism first
3. He remained as a Buddhist even after the Buddhists failed intellectually to the Brahmins.
4. Then he abdicated his throne and went to live in a *Pally*.
5. Christian missionaries approached him.
6. He accepted Christianity

P. K. Gopalakrishnan, even though hesitates the reality of the conversion story of the *Cheraman Perumal* due to the difference in *Kali* numbers, considers that *Cheraman Perumal* was converted into Islam, and observes that event as follows:

There is no wonder in the situation of the seventh and the eighth centuries, that a Kerala king accepted a new religion that offers brotherhood and equality. Buddhism and Jainism were already decayed. However, a strong Hindu religion was not yet enforced. There was an atmosphere of rivalry and disgust existed between Sivism-Vishnavanism and Buddhism-Jainism. In that circumstance, it cannot be ruled out as unrealistic, if *Cheraman Perumal* was converted into a religion that is enlightened with brotherhood of mankind.²¹³

²¹² Joseph., *Pracheena...*, Op. Cit., P 75

²¹³ Gopalakrishnan, *Samskarika Charithram...*Op. Cit., P 290

His observation about Islam is equally applicable to Christianity also. *Cheraman Perumal* or any chieftain may accept Christianity, which would safeguard his position in the newly emerging caste-oriented society, and avoid humiliation under the Brahmin religion, which defeated his old religion.

Conversion of Nairs

The legends about Mar Sabor and Afroth state that they had converted Nairs into Christianity at places like Udaymperor.²¹⁴ This legend should be analysed with the same basis of the conversion story of *Cheraman Perumal*. The word Nair means nothing more than any non-Christian at that time.²¹⁵ Therefore, Christianisation of Nairs by those Persian bishops can be the conversion from any other religion. Now, the *Cheraman Perumal* story can reinterpret on these grounds. If the *Perumal* in the above-mentioned story is just a nobleman in Kerala during the final stages of the invasion of Brahmin religion, this story has a much wider dimension. Then this story can be reinterpret with the following stages.

1. He was a Buddhist / Jain
2. His religion failed intellectually to Brahmins
3. He could not survive as a Buddhist / Jain and retain his dignity
4. He did not like to accept Brahmin religion
5. He was approached by Christian missionaries
6. He accepted Christianity

It is possible that Nazranis accepted a *Perumal*, some other noblemen, or a few common men to their community before they closed their doors to retain their caste dignity. Those persons were the zealots of their old religion who were disappointed by the failure of Buddhism/Jainism to Brahmin religion but who were unable to resist the incoming Brahmin religion effectively. Those conversions need not be due to the affinity to the doctrines of the new religion, but as an expression of rebellion against the conqueror.

Fall of Nazranis to Saivism

The religious revolution that took place between the seventh and the eleventh centuries of the Christian era affected Nazranis. During that period, the growth of Saivism and Vaishnavanism that shook the religious system in

²¹⁴ Gundert, *Keralolpathy ...*, Op. Cit, P 344

²¹⁵ Considering the said story was written centuries later after the incident.

the entire south India grew rapidly in Kerala also. Traditions say that the Saivism affected Nazranis during that period. It is said that *Manikkavachaker*, a Tamil Saivaite saint, was behind the conversion of Nazranis into Saivism. The *Naalagamam* describes the local tradition connecting *Manikkavachaker* and Nazranis. According to that, there was a period after Saint Thomas without any priests. Therefore, the Nazranis were forced for a long time to administer the sacraments like baptism and marriage by elders. Hence, the temple rituals attracted Nazranis. During that time, "...a magician named *Manikkavachaker*, who was a rival to Christianity, arrived at Mylapore. He made the headmen and nobles in Christianity believe him by his black magic. Then he persecuted the rest of the Nazranis by the royal order. Then that heathen came to Malayalam...By using necromancy, he introduced Saivism among Nazranis in the shore from Kottar to Kollam. Majority of Nazranis left Christianity. Still...eight families remained without joining *Manikkavachaker*. Even though they suffered a lot from his black magic, they never recited his *guru mantra* or wear his ash. They never rejected the true God. Since they did not wear ash, the *Manikkavachaker* and his folk called them *Dhariyaykal* [Those who do not wear]. Till today the Christians are known as *Dhariyaykal*."²¹⁶

A slightly different version is available from the letter of a Mathai Kathanar to C. Schaaf in the early eighteenth century. According to this version, the persecution of *Manikkavachaker* was held at Mylapore "...so the remainder of the faithful came and took refuge in Malabar. When the believing brethren of the Malabar saw them, they were greatly pleased with them and lived together the life of Christians..."²¹⁷

T. K. Joseph gives a different version of this story. For him, *Manikkavachaker* was not a Saivite from Tamil Nadu, but the founder of the Persian religion called Manichanism, which was treated as a heresy in Christianity. According to him, "...*Manikkavasaker* may be a polluted form of *Manikkavasakarer*. *Manikkavasakarer* means attractor to the religion of *Manikkai*... There was only a little Christianity in that religion..." He suggests that the migrants from the river mouth of Kavari were the offspring of the

²¹⁶ *Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 103 – 7

²¹⁷ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., P 43

Manichean mission in the beginning of the third century.²¹⁸ There is a strong theory about the origin of Nazranis as from the religion of Manes. Those who refuse the apostolic origin of Nazranis generally propagated this. Even though he does not refuse the apostolic origin of Nazranis, William Logan raises a possibility in the spreading of Christianity in Kerala through Manichanism.²¹⁹ However, Medlycott totally rejects this idea. According to him, Manes, the founder of that religion, or his disciples never even visited India.²²⁰ In a lengthy chapter, Medlycott proved that such a visit had never taken place. The period of Manes was the third century AD. It is not possible to distil out such a heresy from the church in Kerala, which was remote from centres of Christian intellectuals. If Christianity was introduced in Kerala through Manichanism, greater possibilities are there to reduce it as a Hindu sub religion rather than purified as true Christianity after the collapse of Manichanism. In the local legends, converts from Christianity are stated to have practiced Saivite customs. Considering all the above, it is not possible that the person in the above mentioned story was the Persian magician Manes or any of his disciple but the Saivite saint *Manikkavachaker*.

C.V. Narayana Iyer states that the period of *Manikkavachaker* is the late seventh century.²²¹ This date seems more apt rather than the one prescribed by T. K. Joseph. Gundert links the growth of Brahmin religion and *Manikkavachaker* in the seventh century AD in *Nazranikalude Pazhama* as follows:

...During that period, Buddhism was decayed and Saivism grown in the lands like Malayalam, Tamil etc. They [Saivites] hate other religions and foreigners. They controlled the kings at their wish. They established four *thalies* around the palace of the *Perumal* in Kodungallor to prevent him from taking any decisions alone. They also fixed the rules, as the *Perumal* must govern along with the Brahmin *Thaliathiries* of those four *Thalies*. During that period, a lot of theological arguments and persecution had occurred. Sambanoor Moorthy, a famous Saivit came to Madurai from Chidambaram, killed 7,000 *Sramanar*. Since those defeated in religious arguments with them were brutally murdered, many non-Saivites left the country and went to *Eazham*. May be that was the reason behind the evacuation of *Eainkammafer* who left to

²¹⁸ Joseph, *Pracheena...*, Op. Cit., Pp 33-5

²¹⁹ Logan, *Malabar Manuel...*, Op. Cit.

²²⁰ Medlycott, *India and Apostle Thomas*, Op. Cit., P 203

²²¹ As stated by GopalaKrishnan, *Samskarika Charithram...*Op. Cit., P 248

Eazham after refusing the king. A Pandian minister named *Manikkavachaker*, who was famous for his adoration to Siva and for his tactics, came to Kerala during his voyage for the establishment of Brahmin religion. It seems that he believed that Syrians were a kind of Buddhists and hence he persecuted them rigorously and altered a lot from true faith.... Brahmins and kings also took that period as the right time to eliminate that [Christian] religion and to steal the wealth accumulated by Nazranis since they lost the support from the west.²²²

From all the above, the following can be arrived at:-

1. A faction of Nazranis of southern Kerala was converted to Saivism in the early stage of domination of Brahmin religion in Kerala.
2. The Brahmins wanted to eliminate Christianity
3. The Nazranis were without intellectual support and without proper pastoral care.
4. The Brahmins also had an eye on the wealth of Nazranis.
5. Nazranis were persecuted to accept Brahmin religion
6. Nazranis were divided into two and one of them fell into Brahmin religion
7. A portion of Nazranis remained as Christians.

There are different opinions about the number of Christians that remained after the conversion. Some say that they were only sixty-four families.²²³ Some others expand it to sixty-four *Gramems* or villages of Nazranis.²²⁴ The Travancore State Manuel gives the lowest number as just eight families.²²⁵ However small may be the number; all agree that the native Christianity survived that persecution. Comparing the process of conversion of Buddhists and Jains in Kerala, this is almost similar to their defeat. Hence, this story is acceptable as real even if there is no historical evidence.

Restoration of the Nazranis

Gundert describes in brief the restoration of their trade as follows.

According to the local legends, the following happened then...By the grace of God the persecution ended and the chieftains allowed them [the Nazranis] to do their trading activities somewhere. They went to *Eazham* and brought back

²²² Gundert, *Keralolpathy ...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 341

²²³ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 85-7

²²⁴ There was some connection in between Nazranis and the number sixty-four existed. At a time they were known as *Arupathinaalilkkar* (the *Sixtyfourists*)

²²⁵ Velu Pillai, *State Manual Vol. I ...Op. Cit.*, P 664 However, this number may only indicate those of Thiruvankodu alone.

Einkammaler along with *Eazhaver* alias *Chokovar* by ship and settled them in Kerala...²²⁶

The *Tharissappally* copper plates states that Nazranis were flourishing at Kollam in the ninth century AD. It not only proves the existence of Nazranis and their church at Kollam, but their high status in the society also. The copper plates also prove that the profession of Nazranis was trading.²²⁷ This justifies the above-mentioned statement of Gundert that the Nazranis were restored their old profession as merchants.

In the case of Buddhists and Jains, who were also persecuted during the same period along with Nazranis, such a restoration had never taken place. History says that they were reduced to the folds of Brahmin religion eventually. Out of the three organized religions that were compelled to embarrass Brahmin religion, Christianity, probably the smallest out of them, only survived. There were some unique elements favourable to Nazranis that were not available for the other two. Otherwise, Nazranis would not have remained as Christians in front of the thriving Brahmin religion.

The reason is buried in Gundert's description. It states that the persecution had ended and local chieftains allowed the Nazranis to do the business. This permission should not be treated as an act of charity. There might be something to lose by the persecution of Nazranis or something to gain by their restoration to the chieftains. As mentioned above, the Nazranis were already established as merchants. They had enough contacts with the Far East and the Middle East. They may also have had adequate infrastructure for domestic trade. It is possible to replace the domestic trade with somebody else. However, it was not easy to substitute the intercontinental and maritime trade immediately.

The Christian merchants existed not only in the Middle East, but even in China and the Far East.²²⁸ Therefore, the Nazranis probably had an intercontinental business network of their own. The collapse of such a network might have caused a rapid decline in the export-import business of Kollam and other southern ports, which also affected the inland centres. The decline

²²⁶ Gundert, *Keralolpathy* . . . , *Op. Cit* , P 342

²²⁷ The full text of the two *Tharissappally* copper plates, known also as Quilon plates or Syrian Christian copper plates are available from *Travancore Archaeological Series Vol. VI Part II*, Trivandrum, 1927, Pp 67-8, 80-2

²²⁸ For more details see 'The *Tharissa* Network' in Chapter III

in trade had also affected the income of chieftains as levies and taxes adversely. In such a situation, it is possible that the Nazranis were permitted to continue their business.

Persian Missionaries

Another most important event happened during that time. *Niranam Grandhavari* describes that great incident in one sentence as "...In 825th year of Christ, that is one in *Kollam* era, Two Episcopas named Mar Sabor, and Mar Afroth came along with a merchant named Sabrison."²²⁹ This Sabrison is found as the recipient of the *Tharissappally* copper plates. Therefore, the founder of the said *Tharissappally* is Sabrison himself or the arrived bishops. It is reasonable to think that the bishops established the church with the help of Sabrison.

Gundert assumes that Mar Sabor and Mar Afroth were sent by Nestorian Catholicos Mar Timothy (AD 770-820), who sent missionaries to different parts of the world. However, he is not confident about the date of their arrival. He also states that there is an argument that their arrival was not in the ninth century, but in the tenth. According to him, "they got royal consent to preach all over Venad and to baptize. After their demise...their names were given to the churches...the people are paying great respect and offerings to them."²³⁰ The arrival of them helped Nazranis in two ways. Firstly, they got spiritual leaders. Secondly, they got a merchant with intercontinental connection who took residence along with them. Both of them definitely helped Nazranis to avoid the elimination of their religion. However, the establishment of *Tharissappally* arises two questions.

1. Why a new church was constructed
2. Why it was named as *Tharissappally*

A church, believed to have been founded by Saint Thomas, already existed then. The Portuguese saw two churches in Kollam in AD 1500. It was described as one was found by Saint Thomas and other by Mar Sabor and Mar Afroth.²³¹ There are two possible answers for the construction of a new church when one with apostolic origin existed.

²²⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 82

²³⁰ Gundert, *Keralolpathy ... , Op. Cit* , P 344

²³¹ Some suggesting that that the actual church of Saint Thomas was washed away by sea by then and only *Tharissappally* was remind during the arrival of the Portuguese.

1. When Sabrison built a new market, they built a new church there.
2. The existing church was not approachable since it was following the practices that they could not accept.

The important point here is the name *Tharissappally* (the *Tharissa* church). Christianity, including the Persian Church, begins to dedicate the churches to the saints centuries earlier. Hence, the new church at Kollam must be dedicated to a saint and must be known in his (her) name. Even the name of the founder is acceptable as happened in rare cases. However, here, instead of both, it was named as *Tharissa*. Hence, the name of the new church becomes significant. Almost all historians agreed that *Tharissa* is an abbreviated local form of the Syriac word *Thri-sai-Subho* that means Orthodox, which means in popular sense as 'of true faith'. T. K. Joseph states that the Persian Christians were called *Tersa*. He argued that they were known as *Tha-sa* in Chinese language in AD 781.²³² It may be true for the Christians but not for a church.

Considering the state of Christianity during the arrival of Mar Sabor and Mar Afroth in Kerala, a church called as *Thri-sai-Subho* have a relevance. Tradition says that the Nazranis were highly polluted in Christian doctrines due to the lack of proper pastoral care for a long time and local influence. It is reasonable to think that the Persian bishops had seen a church highly polluted in their context that was intolerable to them. They may also have seen that the church founded by Saint Thomas was also in such a state. In such a stage, it is very reasonable that they built a new church according to the norms of the Persian church, introduced the traditions of Persian Church there, and called it the church of true faith, that is, *Thri-sai-Subho*. The legends about their mission within the Nazranis also justify this explanation.

The name *Dharyakal* used for Nazranis is to be considered in this context. It is generally agreed that *Dharyakal* is another form of *Tharuthaykkal* or *Tharissakkal*. The above-mentioned legend says that they got that name because they refused to wear ash as instructed by *Manikkavachaker*.²³³ It is more apt to say that after the arrival of Mar Sabor

²³² Joseph, *Pracheena...*, Op. Cit., P 58

²³³ In Malayalam language, those who not wear ash are said as *Bhasmam Dharikkathavar*. It is said that this *Dharikkathavar* became *Dharyaykal*.

and Mar Afroth, those remained as Christians and followed them, called themselves as *Thri-sai-Subhos* which meant "those of true faith." This *Thri-sai-Subho* became *Tharissa* just like in the case of *Tharissappally* and later became *Tharuthaykkal* or *Dhriyakal*.

Conclusions

From the evidences mentioned above, it can be concluded that even though the apostolic origin of the Nazranis is not beyond doubt, the existence of the Nazranis in the early centuries of the Christian era is a reality. However, there are not enough evidences to reject the Saint Thomas tradition of the Nazranis. The Nazranis were mainly a Dravidian stock, but the presence of a few Brahmin or Jews could not be ruled out. Several migrations from Persia and Mesopotamia in the first millennium of the Christian era not only strengthened the Nazrani population, but it saved the Nazranis from the eradication of the Christian faith by the dominant Brahmanic religion. The migrants merged with the local Nazranis and became a single community. There was no denominational discrimination within the Nazrani community except the one based on economic status.

The migrations not only strengthened the Nazrani community, but also made the Nazranis associate with the Persian Church. The Persian missionaries were an effective check for the invading Brahmanic religion. This support was sufficient to defend the ideological warfare raised by the Brahmins in which the Buddhists and Jains failed. The entry of Buddhists and Jains - who refused to join the Brahmin religion - to Christianity also happened during the invasion of Brahmin religion to Kerala.

The ideological support of the of the Persian missionaries and the trading outlets they provided to the Nazranis forced the Brahmins to withdraw the absorption plan to reduce the Nazranis under the fold of Brahmin religion. The pressure of the local chieftains who needed the money brought in by the Nazranis through the maritime trade also forced the Brahmins to a cease-fire. Naturally, this led the Nazranis to stick to trade and commerce, the profession that saved their religious identity.

While preventing the Brahmin advancement with the help of the Persian church, obviously the Nazranis accepted the Persian Christianity as

their true Christian faith at least officially. Perhaps this process minimised the true Indian form of Christianity to the lowest possible level. The pre-colonial Christianity of Nazranis is discussed in Chapter IV. On the other hand, the Nazranis were adjusted themselves into the coexistence with the Brahmin religion. This social formation is discussed in Chapter III.

Chapter – III

THE PRE- COLONIAL NAZRANI COMMUNITY

Early Settlements

Tradition, even though varies from one to another, says that Saint Thomas established *Eazhara* (seven and a half) churches in Kerala. The most popular list consists of Niranam, Palur, Nilakkal, Kottakkayal (Parur), Kokkamangalam, Kollam and Maliyankara. Thiruvamcodu, which was replanted by the apostle himself, was treated only as half church.¹

However, it is very doubtful whether all the above mentioned were formed during the apostolic time. It is also doubtful whether the number seven was of a later origin². Mathai Kathanar wrote only about six churches including Thiruvamkaodu as the result of the mission of Saint Thomas in the early eighteenth century.³ While writing to W. H. Mill In AD 1821, Abraham Kathanar of Travancore mentioned only five churches.⁴ Mar Thoma IV, then Prelate of Nazranis, wrote to Carlos Schaaf of Amsterdam in AD 1721, as “The names of the seven churches built by St. Thomas are first Mailapore, and then Corignalore, Parakar, Irapelli, Kokammaglam, Niranam, and Tirobancore. This happened in A.D. 52. From this date the faithful diminished little in our country...”⁵

There are only five churches of Saint Thomas origin in Kerala according to this narration excluding Mylapore and Thiruvamkode. It gives an impression that the concept of seven or seven and a half churches was not in existence till the eighteenth century. The variation of the so-called seven from legend to legend indicates that there was no conclusive list. The inclusion was made because of the prominence of each church on the date of each narration. T. K. Joseph places all except ‘Mahadevapuram’ and ‘Kurakkeni Kollam’ as modern compared to those two.⁶ Considering various lists of different periods, it seems that there are only four churches with apostolic origin in all of them. They are Kodungallor

¹ Another tradition stating that *Eazhara Pally* means *Eazhu Aracha Pally*, means seven royal churches

² Seven is considered as a sacred number or rather as a symbol of perfection for Christians. A Jewish concept derived this. Roman Catholics used it very commonly like in case of seven sacraments. Even in Syrian tradition, such a concept was existed. Example- seven *Maranaya* (=of Gods) feasts.

³ “ Then he left that place and came to Malabar, and reached Malykara, where he preached the gospel to the inhabitants of the country, built an altar to the lord, and ordained two priests. He then left the country and went to Kutkayal, and built a church in it; he did the same thing in Irapeli, Gukamaglam, Nirnam and Tirubokut. After that he went back to Mailapo...”(Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., P 43

⁴ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., P 50

⁵ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., P 49

⁶ *Kerala Society Papers...*, Op. Cit. Vol. II, Pp 122-3

(location uncertain) Parur (North Parur- Kottakkayal), Niranam and Kollam. The legends about the Saint Thomas's mission in the port cities of the south India justifies this list since all the above-mentioned places were old ports.⁷

Expansion of Settlements

The expansion of the Nazrani settlements shows a specific pattern. This is found as linked to the expansion of trade. The Nazranis were, at their will or on invitation, setting up their trading activity first by settling down. Then the churches were built. The beginning of a settlement may be as an *Angady* (market street) or as individual shops. However, all of them were found expanded as *Angadys* later. Several evidences prove that the settlements were trade-oriented. The Kothamangalam Saint Mary's Valiya church was established on *Chingam* 15, 515 ME (AD 1343). This was built for the use of the inhabitants of the *Angady* set up by the Nazranis on *Makaram* 1, 513 ME (AD 1338), under the orders of three Hindu chiefs of Kothamangalam.⁸ In the history of the Kolloppara church, believed as founded in 515 ME (AD 1340), the names of six families, which were known as the co-founders of the church, were mentioned. Out of the six, three have *Peedika* (=shop) appearing as a part of the family name.⁹

Thazhakkatupally Stone Inscription

The example of *Thazhakkatupally* also can be taken into consideration. The famous *Thazhakkatupally* stone inscription, granting permission to two persons to open two shops, is now in the yard of Thazhakkadu church. This inscription states nothing about the existence of a church.¹⁰ However, the string of events that led to the present position may be as follows.

1. Chathen Vadukan and Iravi Chathen established their *Peedikas* by royal charter at Thazhakkadu.
2. That place was developed as a market.
3. More Nazranis were attracted by the new prosperity.

⁷ All over the world, the Christianity spread in the first century as a city, especially with trade importance, based religion. The availability of transport facilities and probably the presence of Jewish community may be the reason for it.

⁸ This information is available from the separation deed of AD 1509 in between both the churches in Kothamangalam (Saint Mary's and Saint Thomas) as two *Yogams*. This deed was made in presence of Archdeacon Itty Kuriyathu and was preserved at Pothanikkattu Family. T. K. Joseph published an extract. (*Kerala Society Papers...*, *Op. Cit.* Vol. II, P 278)

⁹ According to Joseph Panikker, one that was not having *Peedika* with their family name, got the present family name recently. He also stating that all these six houses were around a place called *Angadyppara* (= market rock), which is a clear indication of trading origin of Kolloppara Nazranis (Mathew, Alex, *Joseph Panikkarude Kolloppara Pally Charithram*, Thiruvalla, Krishava Sahithya Samathy, 2003)

¹⁰ Ramachandran, Dr. Puthussery, *Sasanabhasha Mathrukakal*, Kottayam, N B S, 1986, P 60

4. They too came and settled at Thazhakkadu.
5. They built a church.
6. The stone inscription was placed in front of the church.

Trade Routes and Expansion

The Nazrani settlements show that most of them are adjacent to the old trade routes of Kerala. Pre-Portuguese churches were found at Thrrippunithura, Palliikkara, Kolancherry, Kadamattom, Kuruppumpady and Kothamangalam. All of them join a trade route linking Kerala ports to Tamil Nadu even today. Many pre-Portuguese churches are found adjoining another major land trade route linking Niranam, an ancient port, via Chengannur, Pandalam, Nilakkal, and Cumbom to the interior Tamil Nadu and Coromandel coast.¹¹ All major centres in its Kerala side have a church. In most cases its respective *Angadys* are still identifiable. This clearly proves its Nazrani inhabitants were merchants. A brief sketch given by *Niranam Grandhavari* shows a good example of Nazrani settlements.

...All those people [Nazranis] lived at Kodungallor for more than four hundred years after the period of *Cheraman Perumal*; they came to Chendamangalam and met the *Chilliyarvattom* dynasty. After a few days they went to Angamaly, which belongs to Mangad dynasty, met the king and established the church and *Angady* and stayed there...After seven hundred years they met the *Vadakkumkoor* dynasty and left to Kuravalingadu and built a church there and are stay there [since then]...¹²

The stages mentioned in this exodus are *en route* even today from Kodungallor to Kuravalingadu. According to this description, it seems that the entire Nazranis left each place to migrate to the new territory. In fact, all the places mentioned here are still Nazrani settlements with pre-Portuguese churches. Therefore, moving from one place to another settlement was not a replanting but only an expansion by a portion of the original community. This statement also indicates that the Nazranis took the initiative to establish the new settlements. There may be two reasons for this.

1. The business prospects found in the capitals of the newly emerged kingdoms.

¹¹ Joseph, *Kerala Christianikal...*, Op. Cit., Pp. 52-3, 78-9

¹² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 126

2. The increase of the Nazrani population beyond the limit to provide the life-supporting system at the parent settlement.

Even if both the above are applicable, the second carries more weight since the initiative came from the Nazrani's side. The period of the stay in each place has to be considered next. It is stated that they left Kodungallor and Angamaly after four hundred and seven hundred years respectively whereas from Chendamangalam they moved out 'within days'. This is an indication of the size of the settlement only. If the settlement is big, the saturation point is higher. Hence, a move-out was required only after a long period as seen in the cases of Kodungallor and Angamaly. However, if it was small like Chendamangalam, frequent move-outs were necessary since the saturation point to provide life-supporting system was very low.

Another point is the places of the Nazrani settlements mentioned. All of them are the capitals of the respective kingdoms.¹³ In the search for new settlements, the Nazranis might have used the intention of the kings to develop their capitals as good markets. The period of this exodus may be calculated from the above description, starting from the first century of the Christian era.

From Kodungallor – Fifth century AD

From Chendamangalam - Immediate, may be within a few years.¹⁴

From Angamaly - Twelfth century.

The first move-out was said to have happened in the next century of the Knai Thomman migration in AD 345. The last from Angamaly to Kuravalingadu, was probably immediately after the division of Vempolinadu, by which Kaduthuruthy became the capital of new *Vadakkumkoor*.¹⁵

Politics and Settlements

A keen observation traces out the relation between the changing political condition of Kerala and the expansion of the Nazrani settlements. Almost every capital of small kingdoms between Kodungallor and Kollam has a pre-Portuguese

¹³ The only exception is Kuravalingadu, in that case Kaduthuruthy, The capital of *Vadakkumkoor* is just seven Kilometres from there.

¹⁴ Chendamngalm was a small kingdom, probably a river island. The Nazranis may found it with little prospects. According to M. O. Joseph, Chendamngalm was a small kingdom. (Joseph, M.O., *Villarvattom*, Ernakulam, Book – A - Month Club, 1953, Pp 72-3)

¹⁵ *Venpolinnadu*, a local kingdom in Kerala divided into two in the twelfth century, the new divisions were *Thekkumkoor* (the southern regime) and *Vadakkumkoor* (the northern regime) respectively. (Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Charitram, Op. Cit.*, Pp. 172-3)

church and an *Angady*.¹⁶ In several cases, the church is within the vicinity of the residence of the respective king/ruler.¹⁷ In several cases the churches and Hindu temples are found adjoining.¹⁸ It all indicates that the Nazranis settled down at the capitals of the newly emerged kingdoms and built *Angadys*. Considering the proximity of the palaces and temples with the Nazrani settlements and their churches, it is also certain that the rulers invited them to settle down.

The location of Mulamthuruthy and Kandanadu churches in the Ernakulam district shows another type of political influence. Both the churches have adjoining *Angadys* and still are strong Nazrani settlements. They are hardly one kilometre apart but in different princely states.¹⁹ Even though both these places were not the capitals, it sounds a game of politics in their closeness.²⁰ Either they were the trade link between both the states or perhaps the respective rulers, established one on competition after seeing the prospects of the other, to tap the same potential. In both cases, Nazranis were benefited.

Another such trade-related presence is evident from the location of Vettikkal Dyara church, five kilometres east of Mulamthuruthy in Ernakulam district. According to the legends, a stone cross existed there since the tenth century AD. A chapel was developed there at least by the late eighteenth century. However, it never became an autonomous parish or developed an *Angady* with permanent residence. However, there was a weekly market functioning till recently which, according to the local legends, was there for centuries. Vettikkal was in the kingdom of Kochi but just in the boundary between Kochi and Travancore, earlier between Kochi and *Vadakkumkoor*.²¹ This may be a trade out-post of the Mulamthuruthy *Angady* to deal with the interior of *Vadakkomkoor*

¹⁶ Many examples are still available. Alangadu (in Mangadu), Kottakkavu and North Parur (in Parur), Kaduthuruthy (in *Vadakkumkoor*), Kottarakkara (in Kottarakkara), Kayamkulam (in Kayamkulam), Karunagappally (in Karunagappally) etc.

¹⁷ The distance between the residence of the rulers and the respective churches are only a few hundred meters. Example - Edappally, (Edappally Church), Thekkumkoor (Kottayam both *Valiya* & *Cheriya* Churches), Karthikappally (Karthikappally Church) Chempakassery (Kudamaloore Church), Kochi (Karigachira and Thrippunithura Nadamel churches) etc.

¹⁸ Piravam, Kailooppara, Kottayam *Valiya*, Thrippunithura Nadamel, Chegannur etc. churches are very close to major temples. In several cases just other side of a wall.

¹⁹ Mulamthuruthy was in Kochi and Kandanadu was in Travancore. Before the establishment of Travancore, Kandanadu was probably in *Vadakkumkoor*.

²⁰ The name of the water route in between both of these places invites attention. The river port in between is called *Kolanacherrykadavu*. Either it might be linked to *Kolanacherry*, a Nazrani trade centre about 25 kilometres east of Mulamthuruthy, or derived from the word *Kolam*, means pepper.

²¹ Even today, one of the stones marking the boundary between the princely states of Kochi and Travancore known as *Ko-Thi Kallu* (Kochi- Travancore stone), is reaming in this church premises.

and hence Nazranis erected a cross to establish their presence.²² Perhaps Vettikkal was not prosperous enough to establish a permanent *Angady* and hence developed no church. T. K. Joseph describes as:

“...Such Christian trading colonies established by Kerala kings...*Unnunili Sandesham* of 516 ME (AD 1340-41), indicated in the poem by the chronogram *thandamaya* mentions *aapanas* (aapnasreni-bazaars) in Kaduthuruthy, a town in Vadakkumkur territory. These rich bazaars were most probably of Christian traders settled down there. Documentary evidence apart, traditions bears eloquent testimony to commercial facilities and favours granted by Kerala kings and chiefs to Christian colonies like those in the old *Kampoloms* and *Angadys* and *Theruves* of Tiruvancode, Quilon, Kayamkulam, Kallada, Kundara, Thiruvalla, Kottayam, Muttam, Parur, Irinjalakkuda, Palur and many other important centres in Travancore, Cochin and British Malabar...”²³

Almost the same pattern is found in the foundation of settlements in south also. According to the legends, the Kundara, Kallada and Kayamkulam churches were built by Mar Sabor and Mar Afroth. The first two were in the outskirts of Kollam, precisely speaking Kundara is in the ancient land route from Kollam to Tamil Nadu via Aryankavu ghats and Kallada is in the river mouth of river Kallada, which also was a trade route. Regarding Kayamkulam, it had become a trade centre and a small kingdom by the sixteenth century.²⁴ The legends linking *Khadeeshans* with its establishment show that the period of establishment was not earlier than the *Therisappally*. This period and its location in the trade routes leading to Kollam indicates that the Nazranis established new settlements in the trade routes to exploit the newly accrued potential at Kollam after the *Tharissappally* copper plates.

Kudikal

The smaller form of Nazrani settlements was called *Kudikal*.²⁵ *Kudikal* was consisting of a few houses of Nazranis without an *Angady* or a church.²⁶ They were attached to a far away church for religious purpose even though their

²² Vettikkal is still associated with Mulamthuruthy and the said Dyara was belongs to the Mulamthuruthy church till AD 1877.

²³ *Kerala Society Papers...*, *Op. Cit.* Vol. II, P122

²⁴ All three churches are still known as *Khadeesha* churches. The Nazranis using the word *Khadeeshans* for those two bishops.

²⁵ = 'place of living' (in Malayalam language)

²⁶ This is evident from the canons of the Synod of Udayamperor. The ninth canon of the seventh secession according to the Malayalam version, asked Nazranis residing at *Kudikal*, either to move to *Angadys* or built own church since there were no churches in *Kudikal*. (Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 237

relations with the churches were minimal.²⁷ These Nazranis might have settled there for the purpose of trade that was to collect pepper and spices, sell imports and to perform the *Kuladhrma* as *Vysya*. They certainly had plantations also. Some of such *Kudikal* later developed as *Angadys*. Even though an *Angady* was not developed, churches were established later in such *Kudikal*.²⁸

Perhaps the *Angadys* were the first form of expansion of the Nazrani settlements during the post-copper plates period because of the prospects in commerce. *Kudikal* came secondly during the later period in association with the conversion of the Nazranis as an agrarian community.²⁹

The Nazranis and the *Jathy* System

The Nazrani *Jathy*

During the Pre-Brahmin period, the Nazranis might be in different occupations just like any other people of the then Kerala society. However, they were predominately merchants during the Brahmin period. In fact, they along with the Jews and Muslims served the purpose of the *Vysias* in the *Chathurvarna* system of Kerala. There were no caste or sub-caste of Kerala origin with *Kuladhrma* as merchants among the numerous sub-castes in Kerala, except just two exceptions of *Ravaris* and *Tharakans* who were limited in a few pockets of the north Kerala.³⁰

Nazranis confirmed their profession as merchants at their first meeting with the Portuguese. Gundert narrates the first meeting of Nazranis of Kodungallor with the Portuguese in AD 1500. According to him, they introduced themselves to the Portuguese commander Pedro Alvaris Cabral. "...We are living at Kodungallor for ages. In addition, merchants like Jews, Egyptians, Persians, and Arabs are living there. We too do have the occupation as merchants. We are paying taxes to the king of Kodungallor for that ..."³¹

²⁷ According to the eighth canon of the fifth session of Synod of Udayamperor, They hardly came to their respective churches once in a year. (Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 167-8.) According to the legends, they administered all the sacraments including marriage and baptism during that single visit. Such a practice may leads to the visit of all families together as observed by the Synod of Udayamperor.

²⁸ For example, there were no *Angady* at Mutuchira and Manarcadu. However, old churches are there.

²⁹ It is very clear from the canons of the Synod of Udayamperor that the religious life of *Kudikal* was minimal or nil and had no church. (Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 167 -8)

³⁰ For more details about the castes and sub castes in Kerala, see Baskaranunni, P., *Pathombatham Noottandile Keralam*, Trissur, Kerala Sahithya Academy, 1988, 1988, P 196

³¹ Gundert, Dr. Herman, *Kerala Pazhama*, Forth Edition, Kottayam, Vidyarthi Mitram, 1983, P 18

The Brahmanic Religion

In the Brahmin-centred mainstream society of Kerala, one cannot engage in any profession if it was not their *Kuladhrma*. The Brahmin system created numerous castes and sub-castes to execute the minute jobs, required even for once in a while, with the same as their *Kuladhrma*. However, except the *Ravaris* and *Tharakans*, who were limited in a few small pockets in north and northeast Kerala, there is no trace of any merchant Hindu *Jathy*. However, the Brahmin society needed the service of a merchant caste.³² It was not possible that a caste or sub-caste of Brahmin-centred society in Kerala would cease to exist before the sixteenth century. Hence, may be no one with *Kuladhrma* as merchants was ever created and existed among Kerala Hindus. However, there must be somebody, who had trading as their *Kuladhrma*, to perform it for generations, since it was essential for the functioning of the caste system. Kanippayoor Sankaran Nampoothirippadu describes the law and practice of *Kuladhrma* in Kerala.

According to the *Dharmasastra*, the correct derivation of profession of a caste is *Kuladhrma*...Here; nobody was free to choose a profession of his own. Instead of that, certain families were entrusted with certain profession as their *Kuladhrma*. It was for the benefit of the country - the society - rather than the personal needs, likes, or dislikes...[the law] insisting that nobody should consider personal profit, loss, likes, or needs in performing own *Kuladhrma*. In performing *Kuladhrma*, consider only whether it is his *Dharma*. The law also prohibits one from performing the *Kuladhrma* of somebody else...In brief; performance of the *Kuladhrma* of somebody else is also prohibited as the non-performance of one's own *Kuladhrma*.³³

According to the *Kuladhrma* concept, it was impossible to substitute one's profession with somebody else because his or her own *Kuladhrma* was binding everybody.³⁴ If somebody was not available to perform a certain job, the Brahmin society would either create or adopt a caste or sub-caste to perform that duty. However, in case of merchants, none of such is found in Kerala.

³² For example, every temple required incense, which was not locally available. The service of merchants was required to procure them.

³³ Sankaran Nampoothirippadu, Kanippayoor, *Aryanmarude Kudiyettam Keralaithil Vol. II*, Kunnamkulam, Panjagam Pusthakesala, 1965, Pp 1-3

³⁴ For example, a cloth washed by a Brahmin, the top-most in the caste system, cannot be considered as fully purified. It will be treated only as *Nampothiri Sudham* or *Patter Sudham* (Kerala and Tamil Brahmin purity). Only a cloth washed by *Veluthadan*, the washer *Jathy*, treated as pure.

The Formation of *Jathy* System in Kerala

The present day *Jathy* system in Kerala was a creation of Brahmanic religion. The formation of *Jathys* took its final shape along with the formation of Brahmin-centred socio-political system in Kerala. There is difference of opinion about the date of that event. According to the Saint Thomas tradition of the Nazranis, Brahmins existed in the first century AD. K. P. Padmanabha Menon suggests the third century BC as the period of Brahmin invasion of Kerala, whereas William Logan states the period of invasion as the eighth century AD. P. K. Gopalakrishnan, after detailed discussion, suggests the fourth century AD as the period of large-scale migration of Brahmins to Kerala.³⁵ Even though it did not mean that there were no Brahmins in Kerala before that, the real power of Brahmins started to rise only after that large-scale invasion.

Accepting Others into Brahmanic Religion

All upper caste Hindus did not migrate to Kerala from their origin. Nor did all of them have a pure Aryan lineage. Even *Nampoothiri* Brahmins of Kerala are not pure Aryans. Some historians point out that even fishermen were made as *Nampoothiris*.³⁶ If so, there is no wonder if the entire other *Jathys* were made from Dravidian stock of Kerala. P. K. Gopalakrishnan explains the formation of Kerala's complex caste system as follows.

The Brahmins in Kerala were well organized. So the *Jathy* system was established comparatively earlier [than in other parts of south India]...The Kerala society was divided into two as Brahmins and their allies on one side and those who opposed Brahmin religion on the other side...the society was further divided into two on this ground. One as Hindus and the other as those who were beyond the limits of Hindu religion. Those who accepted Hindu religion were divided into *Varnas*...Trade was in the hands of foreigners. Jews, Christians and later Arabs became strong in trade here...So, a *Vysya* section with trade as their profession was not developed here...All the above formed the *Savarnna* [Upper] section of the society...³⁷

Even though this explanation is acceptable in general, P. K. Gopalakrishnan's observation about Christians seems to be incorrect. He made his statement about Christians with a prejudice, as they all were foreigners. As seen earlier, the Nazranis were native people even though minor elements of

³⁵ Gopalakrishnan, *Samskarika Charithram...*, Op. Cit., Pp 210-3

³⁶ Gopalakrishnan, *Samskarika Charithram...*, Op. Cit., Pp 213-4

³⁷ Gopalakrishnan, *Samskarika Charithram...*, Op. Cit., Pp 284-6

foreigners were merged with them in different periods. It is true about Jews, Arabs and Chinese that they would not come to the fold of Brahmin religion. However, it was not applicable in the case of native Nazranis. They were approachable and deemed to fall into Brahmanic religion according to the *Nampoothiris* since they were the only sect that did the inland trade till the spread of Islam in the northern part of Kerala. The Brahmins would keep Jews, Arabs and Chinese in the port cities alone, but it was not possible with Nazranis. Still they remained as Christians, positioned as *Vysyas* by Brahmins and bought the privileges in the creamy-lair of the newly formed society.

The *Vysyas*

It is not reasonable to believe that Brahmins did not try to create a *Vysya* caste of their own or convert the Nazranis into their religion. However, Brahmins had several difficulties to create a trader caste of their own. Firstly, there was nobody with Indian origin except Nazranis who were engaged in trade to adopt into Brahmin religion. However, Nazranis were not ready to be absorbed into Brahmin religion. Secondly, it was impossible to import enough *Vysyas* from Aryan heartlands since the Brahmins themselves were not enough. Even if they did so, it was very difficult for them to establish. On the other hand, Nazranis had their own strong points. They had experience of generations in the tradecraft. In addition, they had enough contacts, especially of the same religion in the Far East and the Middle East. They also established their contacts and settlements for the domestic trade also. It was impossible for a newcomer to penetrate into that intercontinental net.

There may have been merchants of Jain / Buddhist or of any other Dravidian religion existence. In such a case, they were the primary targets of Brahmins to be converted to create a Hindu *Jathy* of merchants. However, their religious affiliation was only with the Far East, which was not known as a major market for Kerala's prime export, pepper. In that case, promotion of them and suppression of Nazranis would make a sudden fall of pepper trade with the Middle East, which would cause a rapid decline in the income of kings and local chieftains as taxes and duties. Such a step may force them to move against Brahmins, which must be avoided by Brahmins since they were paving the way for a good relation with the kings for their own benefit. I. C. Chacko evaluates the reason for the absence of 'policy of attack' towards Nazranis. "It was not because

of unselfishness that the kings honoured them with privileges, and built churches, but just for their own benefits..."³⁸

Brahmins had another disability also. Their law strictly prohibits the sea journey of the four *Varnas*. Hence, even if they created *Vysyas* of their own, they were forced to depend on somebody else for maritime trade. All the above provided a safer position for Nazranis in their profession. It may also be possible that Brahmins deliberately smashed everybody except Nazranis and foreigners from the profession of trade to destroy the economic strength of their principal enemies, the Buddhists. The Brahmins might have considered Nazranis as lesser enemies and kept aside them to deal after the Buddhists were finished. They might have considered making some special rules for Nazranis to permit them for sea journey without losing the *Varna* while they came into Brahmin religion as like in the case of Buddhist medical doctors.³⁹ It was also possible that the remaining Buddhist / Jain merchants were forced either to quit their profession or to join Christianity. Possibilities for such a polarization were high.

The same period of Aryanization witnesses the encouragement of Nazranis by kings also. The two sets of *Tharissppally Cheppeds* (Quilon Copper plates) were granted in the same ninth century. Nazrani trade ensured a regular income to the kings. It also prohibited the entry of others into the trade since the Christians were made the masters of weights and measures. There is no wonder that the Brahmins took no roles, passive or active, to disrupt the royal support to the Nazranis as it ensured the collapse of Buddhist merchants.

When the *Jathy* formation of Kerala was completed and the *Nampoothiris* stopped the absorption into the upper chest of the society, the element of *Kuladhrma* became the insurance for Nazranis. They had no need to fear the entry of the upper class Hindus into their profession as everybody in the society was born with a *Kuladhrma* and they were bound to be with that. The Nazranis were relieved from the threat of mass conversion by any non-Hindu, non-Christian merchants since the *Nampoothiris* stopped the intake of fresh groups to the upper chest.

³⁸ Quoted by Edamaruku, *Kerala Samskaram, Op. Cit*, P 449

³⁹ During the process of Aryanization, the expert Buddhist medical doctors were absorbed as *Nampoothiris*. *Nampoothiris* were prohibited from performing surgeries. Therefore, special rules were made for the newly adopted Buddhist medical doctors, who were known as *Ashta Vidyas*, that they could perform surgery without losing *Jathy*. Moreover, they alone can do that.

The Nazranis in the *Jathy* System

On the other hand, Brahmin-centred society was forced to accept the Nazranis as *Vysyas*. The legends about the establishment of several churches in the Nazrani heartland as well as the stories of the migration of many Nazrani families to new places hold such an element in their history and legend. They are claiming that their ancestors were invited to settle near a temple or the palace of a local chieftain, to *enna thottu kodukkan* (to purify the oil). On the other side, there are several temples having legends about certain Nazrani families with the right to purify oil (*enna thottu kodukkan*) to those temples.⁴⁰

The literary meaning of *enna thottu kodukkan* is 'touch and give oil'. It is a symbolic presentation of their *Kuladhrma* as merchants. According to practice of *Kuladhrma* in Kerala, Hindus must accept each and every service from the concerned caste alone who has the same as their *Kuladhrma*. Otherwise, it was invalid. In several cases, the services rendered by the concerned people would only be symbolic. Kanippayoor gives several examples of such symbolic performance.⁴¹ While describing the *Kuladhrma* of artisans, he gives more examples of the symbolic performance of *Kuladhrma*.⁴² A comparison of them with *enna thottu kodukkan* establishes the *Kuladhrma* of Nazranis as trading.

It also indicates that the right to *enna thottu kodukkan* was the symbol of the acceptance of Nazranis as *Vysya* in the Brahmin-centred society of Kerala. The Brahmins and the temples cannot buy oil or any other imported supplies from one who was not permitted to sell them. The Nazrani, by touching the oil, symbolises that it is in his possession and hence he is selling it. The temples and the Brahmins can accept it since trading was the *Kuladhrma* of Nazranis. That means they are receiving it from the right source.

However, Nazranis were not always without Brahmin threat. Traces of Brahmin attempts to persecute Nazranis are available from the *Thazakkattupally*

⁴⁰ For more details see Rajandren, P. G., *Keshetravijanakosham*, Kottayam, D. C. Books, 2000

⁴¹ He stated that a cloth could not be usable in a temple even if a Brahmin washes it. For perfect purity, *Veluthaddan* [the washer], who does not come under the upper chest of the society, must wash it. In several cases, he just dips the cloth in water and dries it. It is enough for purity even if it is just symbolic (Kanippayoor, *Aryanmarude...*, Vol. II, Op. Cit., Pp 44-5)

⁴² " Making of every wooden furniture and structure is the *Kuladhrma* of *Aasari* [the carpenter]... When a temple is being reconstructed, it is his duty to dismantle the entire structure...it must be done by a single day...if it is not possible, he will touch all pieces with his scale and chisel. Then it will be dismantled later...When the bronze vessels became [religiously] impure...It will send to the house of *Moosari* [the coppersmith]... He rubs some retort powder over such vessels and send it back. Then it become pure...The meaning of this act is that the said vessel is melted and caste again" (Kanippayoor, *Aryanmarude...*, Vol. II, Op. Cit., Pp 60-7)

stone inscription. The said inscription, which was granting two members of *Manigramam* to erect shops and do business, is believed as of between AD 1028 and AD 1043. It states that any attempt to prevent the recipients from performing their business will be treated as a crime equal to one among the *Panchamahapathakangal* (five capital crimes).⁴³ The questions arising here are:

1. Why it was treated as one of the five capital crimes instead of imposing death sentence.
2. Who are the possible enemies.
3. Why it was written as a stone inscription.

The kings were keenly interested to promote merchants since the latter's prosperity directly filled the state treasury. In this inscription also, the granter ensures the protection by declaring the maximum punishment to assaulters. He ensures that every opponent should get maximum punishment to provide confidence to the merchants in his territory. If he imposes death sentence alone, the Brahmins would escape the net of law.

According to the Hindu law, Brahmins should not be murdered for any reason. Therefore, death sentence was meaningless for them. The maximum punishment a Brahmin can be given was 'out-casteing', which was more horrible for them than death sentence in that society. That too could be imposed only if they committed any one of the five capital crimes⁴⁴. Therefore, if the king wishes to give the maximum punishment, out casteing, to a Brahmin, he has no other choice but to declare that particular act as one among five *mahapathakangal*. A ban on death sentence was not in effect with any other caste in the Hindu society. Hence, the threat for the trading mentioned in the *Thazhakkattupally* inscription was from the Brahmins.

Making an inscription on metal plates or stone was with the intention to retain it permanently. A stone inscription will get more public notice than a metal plate inscription. The use of stone as the medium has its own significance since metal plate inscriptions were familiar in Kerala especially to Nazranis. It indicates that the granter or recipients, probably recipients, wanted to get public attention

⁴³ For the full text of the inscription, see Puthussery, *Sasanabhasha Mathrukakal*, Op. Cit., P 60. For the details about *Mahapathakas*, see Narayanan, M. G. S., *Socio- Economic Implications of the Concept of Mahapataka in the Feudal Society of South India*, Proceedings of Indian History Congress, Calicut, 1976, Pp 111-7

⁴⁴ Ragahva Varier, Rajan Gurukkal and, *Kerala Charithram*, Sukapuram, Vallathol Vidyapeedom, 1995, Pp 192-3

to the grant to threaten the public with the punishment declared for the enemies of their activities. From this, it can be concluded that the threat was enormous to impose capital punishment and to publish it widely.

The profession of Nazranis as merchants did not compete with that of Brahmins since their *Kuladhrma* prohibited the latter from becoming merchants. Then the question arises why they raised a threat against Nazranis. Even if no solid documents are available, it is reasonable to think that the failure of Brahmins to convert Nazranis as a *Jathy* in the Brahmin religion may be the reason for their enmity.

The Brahmins, while restructuring the Kerala society, formed it as more Brahmin-centred than anywhere else in India. Every walk of the society was converted to their pleasure and service.⁴⁵ Those who joined in the first phase were accepted in the *Chathurvarna* system with privileges. Those who came later, probably raised rebellion in the beginning against Brahmins, and they were accepted into Brahmin religion, but kept aside as untouchables. Hence, they perished and became a slave type.

The history of *Ezhavas* can be taken as the best example for the perishing under the Brahmin religion for a later entry to that religion. P. K. Gopalakrishnan gives a detailed description about the process of reducing the *Ezhavas*, who were once Buddhists and kept an affluent position in Kerala society, to an untouchable class after they were forced to accept Brahmin religion.⁴⁶ However, at the same time, Nairs, who were in the same profession of *Ezhavas*, were accepted as *Sudras*, the lowest section in four-caste system of Brahmin religion. The only reason for this discrimination was the early entry of Nairs and the rebellion of *Ezhavas* to the Brahmin religion.

The Nazranis neither accepted Brahmin religion in the first phase for privileges nor in the second to perish. They held a prominent position even after the implementation of the Brahmin religion. The Brahmins were not able to penetrate the hard shell that covered the Nazranis, which was later known as the *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ For the details of the Brahmin concept about other castes, see Sankaran Namboothirippadu, Kanippayoor, *Aryanmarude Kudiyettam Keralaithil Vol. I*, Kunnamkulam, Panjagam Pusthakasala, 1965 and *Vols. II & III*, *Op. Cit.*

⁴⁶ Gopalakrishnan, *Samskarika Charithram...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 289-298

⁴⁷ For more details see the topic '*Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*' in Chapter II

In the process of converting Kerala into a Brahmin-centred society, the first victory of Brahmins was the reservation of priesthood exclusively for them. It leads to the possession of temples and later to the possession of land and properties. In the second stage, Brahmins became the law-makers and executers for all other castes in the *Chathurvarna* system. With the help of kings and *Sudras* who come to their folds, they expelled everybody opposed them from the mainstream as untouchables. By these, they ensured the total dependency of the entire Kerala society to them except the merchants.

Kuladhrma

The Brahmins chained everybody with *Kuladhrma*. Brahmins made their law, *Smrithi*, the law for everybody and retained the right for its interpretation exclusively with them. Consequently, the society became interlinked. This made everybody in the mainstream society depend on each other to live as prescribed by the Brahmins. Making of each and every caste and sub-caste single-profession, watertight compartments made mass movements against Brahmin rule impossible. Rebellion means the withdrawal of life-supporting system by denying the services of other professions. This Brahmin-developed system ensures the total control of them over all others from kings to servants. One who opposes the system had no place to approach for a support because the supporter would also be expelled. This inability leads all other castes to depend more and more on the Brahmins. Therefore, the Brahmins accrued total power by the end of the eleventh century AD.⁴⁸

The merchants, consisting of Jews, Arabs, and Nazranis did not come under *Smrithis* or Brahmin control. The first two might have an advantage of different ethnic identity. However, Nazranis had no such protection since they are of the same origin of Brahmin-centred Kerala society. Perhaps, the Nazranis tightened their shell to prevent any sort of Brahmin attempt to penetrate into it in that situation. They had to keep the Brahmins away from their religion to avoid a takeover. They were not afraid of the economic sanctions of Brahmins since Nazranis did not require any remuneration from the temples due to their profession as merchants. The reasons stated above made the Brahmins accept

⁴⁸ Gopalakrishnan, *Samskarika Charithram...*, Op. Cit., P 298

the existence of Nazranis as merchants. Even then, the Nazranis had to prevent the attachment of their religion as a branch of Hinduism.

Positioning Saints with gods

The first requirement for Nazranis to safeguard the existence of their religion from the attachment to Hinduism was the establishment of a strong theology. To avoid the fate of Buddhists and Jains, the Nazranis avoided a direct confrontation with Brahmins. They placed the saints in the position of Hindu gods instead. First, they projected their founder, Saint Thomas, as a venerable person even to Hindus. He was projected as equal and friend of Hindu gods. There are several local traditions like that. In one, he was described as a friend of *Vishnu Deva*, one among the Hindu trinity, and had conversations with him frequently. It is stated that the local Hindus also believed this. Another tradition places Saint Thomas as the founder of the *Sri Kurumbakkavu*, the famous Hindu Devi temple at Kodungallor.⁴⁹ Further, Saint Thomas was treated like a Hindu god. He had peacock as his vehicle⁵⁰ just like any Hindu god.⁵¹ One can assume that such a positioning for their founder had reserved a moderate position for Nazranis in the *Jathy* formation of Kerala since as they had no separate ethnical identity from the local people who were absorbed to the Brahmin-centred religion.

Perhaps the story of the foundation of *Sri Kurumbakkavu* developed during that period. The first part of this story stated in *Niranam Grandhvari* is a Christian version, which probably was a later addition. The second part of the story, clearly placing Saint Thomas as the founder of *Sri Kurumbakkavu*, may be the older version. The style of writing of that part hints that version of the legend was believed by the Hindus also during the time of writing.⁵²

By positioning Saint Thomas as the person who brought one of the Hindu goddesses and commanded her to stay at Kodungallor, he was placed a step above the Hindu gods. Such a popular act was more effective than a strong theological dialogue comparing both religions. It also avoids the possibility of the post-dialogue rivalry as happened in the case of Buddhists and Jains. Through

⁴⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 53, 160-1

⁵⁰ Thomas, *Malayala Sahithyavum ...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 68

⁵¹ Every Hindu god has an animal or bird as his/her vehicle. Peacock is the vehicle of Subrahmanya, the son of Siva, one among the Hindu trinity

⁵² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 53, 160-1

developing such a story, the Nazranis convey a message that they were ready to coexist with equal religious rights.

There was another threat existing along with this. There was a great possibility for the Nazranis to deflect towards Hindu gods due to the increasing Brahmin influence and temples. The worship of mother goddess, *Devi* and of serpents was very strong in Kerala. Even though they were Christians, those traits were very strong with Nazranis also since they were of the same origin and were living together. There was a great possibility of Brahmin exploitation of those feelings.

Positioning of god(s)

Nazranis dealt with this situation by promoting Saint Mary and Saint George. Saint Mary, the mother of God, who commenced the maximum reverence beyond any other saints, was boosted instead of mother goddess in the Hindu concept, whereas Saint George, whose main miracle was the killing of a dragon, was placed as the destroyer of snakes to avoid the fear of Keralites about snakes. The positioning of this trio (Saint Thomas, Saint Mary and Saint George) in that state prevents the Nazranis from falling out of Christianity. It also created an impression among others that Nazranis have powerful gods in Hindu terms. Almost all of the pre-Portuguese churches in Kerala were established in the name of any one of these three saints.

In the next stage, the Christian saints were placed in kinship with Hindu gods. Saint Mary and Saint George were said as the sister/ brother of Hindu gods. Many local legends, probably of later origin, elaborate the kinship of Christian saints and Hindu gods.⁵³ Indeed the derivations of such relations were against Christian doctrines. However, they were necessary for the survival of the Christianity in Kerala. They served the purpose where it was found necessary but harmless. In no such legends, Jesus Christ is found appearing. It may be a deliberate act of Nazranis to keep their God away from such comparisons since that was against the fundamental faith in one true God of Christianity.

⁵³ For example, Saint Mary of Manarcadu church and *Bagavathi* of the nearby temple are still considered as sisters. The Maha Vishnu of Sri Poornnatriyeeswara temple, Thrippuniithura and Saint George of nearby Karigachira church are as brothers. Saint George of Puthuppally church and *Devi* of nearby Meenadathukavu temple are as brother and sister. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., Pp 53-4) All of such relations are the parts of the local legends.

However, there are also traces proving that such derivations were one-sided. None of the Christian saints - in any form - became enrolled in the list of Hindu gods. This has to be taken seriously since the Dravidian village gods and gods of Buddhists and Jains became petty gods in Hinduism while they were absorbed into Hinduism.⁵⁴ This fact indicates that even though the Nazranis placed their saints along with Hindu gods, they made no leniency to be absorbed into Hinduism.

The pious memory of Mar Sabor and Afroth, who worked among Nazranis during the early stages of Brahmin domination, may have helped to prevent an attachment. Those two who were treated as saints and wonderworkers, were respected greatly among Nazranis. The memories about their miracles were alive even in the sixteenth century.⁵⁵

The above stated positioning worked as a defence mechanism against the merging of Nazranis into the Brahmanic religion. The economic freedom through domestic and intercontinental trade and the theological support of the East Syrian Church was also prominent in that defence mechanism. Even though Nazranis entered in the Brahmin-centred *Chathurvarna* system, it was neither as the dependant of Brahmins nor as the followers of their religion. Nazranis developed a lifestyle to fit them into the *Chathurvarna* system without loosing their religious identity. Perhaps the concept of *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* was derived for the first time as a part of their resistance against Brahmanic religion.

The Nazranis and the Brahmanic Customs

The Local Customs

The social customs of the Nazranis during the pre-Portuguese period had little difference from their environment. According to Mundadan, "In their ordinary life and their lifecycle, the Christians differed very little from the noble castes."⁵⁶ Apart from the rituals according to the Christian doctrines, the Nazranis had several social customs shared with their Hindu brethren. Those rituals were also treated as religious and equal to the sacraments. According to Leslie Brown "Christians observed many of the ceremonies connected with birth, adolescence

⁵⁴ Even Allah, the God of Muslims, entered into the list of Hindu gods. In Thiruvettar temple in Kanyakumai District, Tamil Nadu, *Thiru Allah*, is a petty god with a separate *Sreekovil*.

⁵⁵ Bishop Francis Roz, the first Roman Catholic bishop of Syrian Christians, describing one of them.

⁵⁶ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 121

and marriage and death as Hindus." ⁵⁷ The little information available from the Portuguese documents and from the canons of the Synod of Udayamperor justifies this statement. Even though some of them had Old Testament⁵⁸ and primitive Christian background,⁵⁹ most of them were the just adaptation of the local practices. More precisely, they seemed to be adapted from of the *Samskaras* of the *Nampoothiri* religion, which inducted a person to ones caste.⁶⁰

Samskaras

A close look into the pre-Portuguese Nazrani life discloses that they had almost all the *Samskaras* prescribed for the nobler castes like Brahmins. Some of them were the replacement by Christian sacraments. Some others were the adaptation of local practices with Christian interpretation with or without modification. The rest were the simple practices of the Kerala system. The evidences confirm that such rituals were considered vital in their lifecycle.

Considering the *Samskaras* prescribed in the *Sankarasmrithi*, the *Sekam*, the intercourse, was essential for reproduction. Even though there was no trace of any particular ritual related to this among Nazranis, there was a custom among Nazranis that after marriage, they would go to church only after taking a bath.⁶¹ This may be treated as a relic of some sort of rituals related to *Seam* and *Aadhanam*, a ceremony before reproduction.

Pumsavanam, a ceremony observed by women during their pregnancy, which was popularly known as *Pulikudi*, existed among Nazranis with great ceremonies.⁶² However, no trace exists regarding the practice of *Seemantham*, a

⁵⁷ Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 173

⁵⁸ Zacharia, *Udaymoeror...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 233

⁵⁹ Zacharia, Scaria, *Randu Praacheena Gadya Krithikal*, Chenganassery, 1976, P 210

⁶⁰ According to the Hindu doctrines, every one is born as *Sudra*, the lowest in the *Chaturvarna*. He becomes a Brahmin only by *Samskaras* (*Sankarasmrithi*, Chapter VI, Section IV, Verses 2 - 4). There are altogether sixteen *Samskaras* in a *Nampoothiri* lifecycle. They are 1. *Seam* (intercourse) 2. *Pumsavanam* (a ceremony observed by women during the their pregnancy) 3. *Seemantham* (a ceremony in the fourth month of the first pregnancy) 4. *Jathakarmam* (ceremony incident on the birth) 5. *Namakaramam* (Naming ceremony) 6. *Vathilpurappadu* (a ceremony after birth, purification of the mother) 7. *Choorunu* (first feeding of rice) 8. *Chulam* (first haircut to maintain the *Kudummi*) 9. *Kamavedham* (perforation of ears) 10. *Upanayanam* (Investiture with the *Brahma* string) 11. *Vedarambaham* (Starting of education) 12. *Godhanam* (gift of cows, it also means whiskers) 13. *Samavarthanam* (return after the completion of studies) 14. *Vivaham* (marriage) 15. Acceptance of *Oupasagni* (sacred flame) and 16. *Aadhanam* (a ceremony before reproduction). For more details See Bashkaranunni, *Pathombatham...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 160 - 71

⁶¹ The canons of the Synod of Udayamperor confirm that the Nazrani newlywed did not went to the church till the fourth day after marriage, which was only after taking a bath. (Daniel, K. N., *Udaymoeror Sunnahadosinte Kanonakal*, Thiruvalla, CLS, 1951, P 149) Even at the end of the nineteenth century, there were several post-matrimony rituals existed among Nazranis. (Kochuthomman Appothikkiri, *Kannukuzhiyil, Parishkkarappathy*, Kottayam, Vidyarthi Mithram, 1977, Pp 146 -55)

⁶² The *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Kandanad on *Chingam* 1, 1809 acknowledged the existence of *Pulikudi* and *Therandukuli*, the ceremony marking the attaining of puberty by females. (*Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 158 - 65)

ceremony in the fourth month of the first pregnancy. The *Jathakarmam*, a ceremony at the time of birth, is still being practised.⁶³ This may be a combination of both *Jathakarma* and another *Samskara* called *Namakaranam*, the naming ceremony.⁶⁴ Gouvea describes the Nazrani practice representing the *Vathilpurappadu*, a ceremony after birth for the purification of the mother, as follows:

When women gave birth, they observed the custom of the old law, that in the case of a male child, they did not step into the church before 40 days, when they took the boy for an offering, and in the case of a female child before 80 days, and meanwhile they held her too unclean to enter a church.⁶⁵

The ritual *Chorunu*, the first feeding of rice existed among the Nazranis. Ferroli states that "...After [the birth] some months, the rite of *Annaprasam*, or feeding the child with boiled rice..."⁶⁶ was performed. According to the local tradition, it was fixed during the period of Knai Thomman and Mar Joseph of Edassa, that the father performs *Chorunu* for the *Northists* and the mother does the same for the *Southists*.⁶⁷ According to Leslie Brown "...At the time of the first feeding of rice (*Annaprasanam*), celebrated generally in the sixth month after birth, the parents of the child often vowed to perform this ceremony in a particular church just as Hindus vow to perform it in a particular temple."⁶⁸

Several documents confirmed that the Nazrani men had a tuft of hair called *Kudummi* like all other upper caste Hindus. They had the ear ornaments also.⁶⁹ In such a context, there must have existed the *Samskaras* related to the first haircut to maintain the *Kudummi* called *Chaulam*⁷⁰ and the perforation of ears named *Karnavedham*.⁷¹ The starting of education called *Vedarambaham* or *Vidyarambam* still exists with Nazranis. Ferroli states the eighteenth century

⁶³ Ferroli, according to the Jesuit documents, states that it was existed even in the eighteenth century. According to him "The *Jathakarma*, or feeding of the new born with gold, honey and *Vayampu*, a medicinal plant, is still observed by the wealthy, both Jacobites and Syrian Catholics. Immediately after birth the word *Maran isu Messiah* [Our Lord Jesus, the Messiah] and the child's name are whispered into its ear" (Ferroli S. J., D., *The Jesuits in Malabar Vol. II*, Bangalore, 1951, P 157)

⁶⁴ For the *Nampoothiri* equivalent of the same, see Bashkaranunni, *Pathombatham...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 168

⁶⁵ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 203

⁶⁶ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II*, *Op. Cit.*, P 157

⁶⁷ It is a difference made to retain the discrimination between the *Northists* (*Vadakkumbhagakkar*) and the *Southists* (*Thekkumbhagakkar*). See *Naalagamam MSS.*, Pp 115 -7

⁶⁸ Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 173

⁶⁹ Zacharia, *Udaymoeror...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 240

⁷⁰ "...The child's hair used to be cropped quite close, and, like the Brahmins, only a small tuft (*Kudummi*) was left..." (Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II*, *Op. Cit.*, P 157)

⁷¹ The fourteenth canon of the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor prohibits Nazrani male from perforation of ears and wearing gold ear ornaments. (Zacharia, *Udaymoeror...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 240-1)

practice of "the ceremony known as *Ariyilezhuthu*, or writing with the finger the first letters of the alphabet in rice, performed when the children first go to school."⁷²

The rituals named *Godahanam* and *Samavarthanam* seem to be performed together on the previous evening of ones marriage. *Godahanam*, the *Samskara* related to the 'attaining of age' was a ceremonial shave that was the first in one's lifetime. According to Ferroli "...during the night previous to the marriage it is necessary that the couple should bathe. Before the bath the bridegroom has to be ceremoniously shaved by a barber, whose presence is considered indispensable."⁷³ Even in the late nineteenth century, the Nazranis did not shave their face before this ritual⁷⁴ named *Andam Charthel* and only the official barber of that family performed that. The name *Andam Charthel*⁷⁵ and the rituals following it give the traces of the meaning of the *Samskara* named *Samavarthanam* that represents the return after the completion of studies and setting up a life of ones own.⁷⁶

Upanayanam, the most important among *Samskaras*, was replaced by its Christian equivalent, the baptism.⁷⁷ The Nazranis performed the chief symbol of *Upanayanam*, the investiture with the *Brahma*, the sacred string, also. Ferroli describes that "...the *poonool*, or sacred thread, worn by Brahmins is blessed at the baptism of a male child and put on it. It is then removed, and it is given to the child again when he attains boyhood."⁷⁸ It was reported that the Nazranis wore *Poonool* even in the eighteenth century.⁷⁹ The traces of the same remain in other rituals even in the twentieth century.⁸⁰ The same theological background of being

⁷² Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 157.

⁷³ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 158.

⁷⁴ Kochuthomman Appothikkiri, *Parishkkarappathy, Op. Cit.*, P 122

⁷⁵ The word *Antham Charthel* means the finishing. Considering the first shaving and the marriage next day, it seems that it was the end of the *Brahmacharya*, or education and hence this name representing *Samavarthanam*.

⁷⁶ For the *Nampoothiri* practice, see Bashkaranunni, *Pathombatham...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 163-4. For the Nazrani practice see Kochuthomman Appothikkiri, *Parishkkarappathy, Op. Cit.*, Pp 122-7

⁷⁷ Any person is only became a member of the first three of the *Chathurvama* system, *Brahmin*, *Kshathriya* and *Vysya*, only by *Upanyanam* that is being born again. Hence, all of them are treated as *Dwija* that is, 'those have two birth'. The Christian doctrines about the sacrament of baptism also have the same meaning and perform with the same purpose. See Luke 3: 15 -16 and John 3: 5 -6. Without baptism, nobody is considered as a Christian.

⁷⁸ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 157

⁷⁹ Mar Baselius Geevarghese I, Catholicos of the East, reported in his unpublished Ecclesial autobiography that he had seen the *Tharissaykkal* of Thiruvamkodu, the least affected by the western influence, these visual symbols] in AD 1891. (Geevarghese I, Mar Baselius, *Sabhajeevitha Naalvazhi MSS*, P 20)

⁸⁰ During marriage and allied ceremonies, the Nazrani bride wear an upper clothe (*uthareeyam*) in the same manner of the *Poonool* or its substitute *Munduthareeyam*. This practice was existed even in the first half of

born again at baptism and *Upanayanam* along with the adaptation of its visual symbol, Poonool, was strong enough to avoid the introduction of any other ceremony for the initiation into the Nazrani *Jathy*.⁸¹

Marriage, locally known as *Vivaham*, was a sacrament for Nazranis according to the East Syrian theology and tradition. Even though many did not properly follow the sacrament of marriage, the real process of marriage with priests and rituals was enough for competing with the Brahmanic *Samskara* of *Vivaham*.⁸² Several *Nampoothiri* customs, adapted and modified into a Christian framework, were included in the Nazrani marriage. Ferroli gives the following description.

Minnu - which is blessed by the priest - round the neck of the bride. The Cross made of 21 small gold balls,⁸³ distinguishes the Christian from the Hindu (*Thali*). After the death of the husband or of the wife, the *Thali* goes to the church. Next, the boy presents the girl with a veil. In former times, the bridegroom's sister used to take both *Thali*, veil and sweets in solemn procession to the church, to be blessed by the priest.⁸⁴

The rituals related to the marriage according to the East Syrian rite, included with the local adaptations, had given a perfect Indian style for the Nazrani marriage. Other ceremonies related to marriage, ranging several days, according to Gouvea, was a simple expression of their royal privileges.⁸⁵ He wrote: "there is much feasting at the wedding when they have certain privileges granted by old Malabar Rajahs, which are granted to no body else."⁸⁶

The *Samskara* that is found absent in the Nazrani lifecycle is the *Oupasagni*, which is the sacred flame produced on the marriage of a *Nampoothiri*, and retained for their cremation. There was no need of a fire to be kept for the Nazrani funeral since they were buried.⁸⁷ In addition, there was no need of a sacred fire to be kept in houses since the marriage was performed at

the twentieth century. Since the *Poonool* is only a substitute for *Utareeyastanam*, the Nazrani practice is the same.

⁸¹ For details about baptism, see the topic 'Baptism' in Chapter IV

⁸² For more details about marriage, see the topic 'Marriage' in Chapter IV

⁸³ There is a difference of opinion about the number of balls as thirteen, representing Jesus Christ and twelve apostles. Traditional goldsmiths of Nazranis favouring this.

⁸⁴ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 158

⁸⁵ For more details on privileges, see the topic 'The Copper Plates and Privileges' in this Chapter

⁸⁶ Quoted by Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 206

⁸⁷ Even today, when the Nazrani dead are brought to the church for burial, it is obligatory to pour a certain measure of oil to the eternal lamp in the church by his/her family. Even though pouring of oil to the lamp can be done at any time as an offering, it is neither obligatory nor statutory for any other ritual except burial.

churches where the eternal lamp burning permanently.⁸⁸ Hence, this lamp should be taken as representing the *Oupasagni* of all properly married Nazranis.

Respect to *Agni*

Apart from the eternal lamp in the church, the burning light, *Agni*, played an important role in the Nazrani rituals. For every ritual, performed either at houses or at the churches, especially for those related to marriage, the presence of a lighted lamp was essential.⁸⁹ Leslie Brown suggests that this is the remaining of *Agni* worship. He writes "In many ceremonies, the senior woman of the house would bring a lighted lamp, which was a relic of *Agni* worship, and there is a special word, *tavikkuga*, used by Christians, which means to extinguish a lamp with a small ladle. Christians, like Nayers, would never blow out a flame with their breath, as this would be an insult to the fire god."⁹⁰ Beyond the traces of *Agni* worship, the Nazranis had several other factors that led them to give much respect to flame and lighted lamp. The Christian doctrines declare that the light represents God.⁹¹ The East Syrian theology, which was deeply indebted to the Zoroastrianism, had developed this concept. Even the lamp at the Jewish temple at Jerusalem might have influenced the Nazranis.⁹²

Ashrams

Out of the four *Ashrams* prescribed for the first three *Varnas*,⁹³ *Brahmacharyam*, (celibacy, the period of education in real practice) *Grahashtam* (married and family life), *Vanaprastham* (pilgrimages and restricted life) and *Sanyasam* (the life totally out of bound of the world). As stated above the Nazranis observed the first two, the *Brahmacharyam* and *Grahashtam* during their educational period and the married life with almost equal duration as of *Nampoothiris*. Even a kind of *Vanaprastham* existed among the Nazranis. Gouvea wrote that "Some older men and the widowers do not wish to remarry or

⁸⁸ Bashkaranunni, *Pathombatham...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 160-71

⁸⁹ For the role of lighted lamp in Nazrani marriages, see Kochuthomman Appothikkiri, *Parishkkarappathy*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 118-26

⁹⁰ Brown, *Indian Christians...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 173

⁹¹ "That God is light, and him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1 –5), "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1: 4-5)

⁹² 1 Kings 7: 49

⁹³ The Brahmanic religion demands four stages in every one's life for *Brahmin*, *Kshathriya*, and *Vysya*. (Bashkaranunni, *Pathombatham...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 165, 170-1)

have gone on a pilgrimage to St. Thomas,⁹⁴ and those who consider themselves more religious-minded, cut the hair (*Kudummi*) and crop it close.”⁹⁵

Nampoothiris considered removal of *Kudummi* as an act of initiation to *Sanyasam*.⁹⁶ Hence, this practice of the Nazrani old men should also be treated as a self-imposed celibacy.⁹⁷ By removing the symbol of their social status, they abstained themselves from the worldly affairs and withdrew to a shell of their own for prayers. The Nazranis also had observed a pure form of *Sanyasam*. According to Joseph the Indian “... they have the hermitages where the black monks live in perfect continence. And they have also many nuns...”⁹⁸ However the Portuguese found no monks and nuns living in common in the sixteenth century as mentioned by Joseph the Indian in AD 1500.⁹⁹ Perhaps some of such old, religious-minded people might have moved to certain churches to live together in *Sanyasam*, as described by Joseph the Indian.¹⁰⁰

Rituals for the Dead

Besides, the prayers held in the first eight days together for the dead, representing the *Udakakriya*¹⁰¹ in *Nampoothiri* religion¹⁰², they had *Sradha*¹⁰³ for the departed on every death anniversary.¹⁰⁴ Ferroli describes the post-burial services as follows:

No food is prepared in a house where a death has occurred. Paid low caste people do the public mourning. After the burial, a feast is held at which only vegetable food is taken. The priest blesses a tender coconut, drinks a little: and then shares the liquid with the mourners. Owing to death, pollution is incurred, which lasts for seven days. On the eighth day the *Pulakuli* feast is held (*Pula* - Pollution; *Kuli* - Bath)...On the anniversary of death, the *Shradha* ceremony is held at which fish and flesh meat are allowed. Evidently, these feasts are remnants of pagan ceremonies. Usually at these feasts, a number of poor people are fed. The priests are offered clothes and money.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁴ Here it means Mylapore

⁹⁵ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 206-7

⁹⁶ Bashkaranunni, *Pathombatham...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 171

⁹⁷ It is also reported that such men should also grow beard and retained it untrimmed forever.

⁹⁸ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 177 –8

⁹⁹ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, *Op. Cit.*, P 178

¹⁰⁰ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 148

¹⁰¹ Post-burial rituals for the dead

¹⁰² Bashkaranunni, *Pathombatham...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 169 –70

¹⁰³ Popularly known as *Chatham*

¹⁰⁴ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 210

¹⁰⁵ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II*, *Op. Cit.*, P 159

Purity Consciousness

The Nazranis fully adopted the concept of impurity just according to the *Nampoothiri* way regarding the death, birth, and menses. According to Gouvea, "When someone dies, many gather together. For eight continuous days they come together and eat together and after the meals they pray for the dead."¹⁰⁶ This is called *Pulakuli* that is just like of upper-caste Hindus.¹⁰⁷ During the period of Menses, the women never went to the churches or even did not touch anything considered as sacred.¹⁰⁸ The same type of impurity was observed during the birth also. According to Gouvea "When women gave birth... in the case of a male child, they did not step into the church before 40 days...in the case of a female child before 80 days, and meanwhile they held her too unclean to enter a church."¹⁰⁹ Even the touching of the objects by inferior *Jathy* was also treated as a means to lost purity.¹¹⁰

Untouchability

As a strict rule like any other upper-castes in Kerala, the Nazranis also strictly followed the practice of untouchability during the pre-Portuguese period. They also considered the touch of an inferior *Jathy* as a means of being polluted. Gouvea gives a perfect account of the practice, reasons and means of maintaining the untouchability as follows:

They avoid touching low caste men, and, if they happen to touch them, they wash themselves, not owing to the superstition of the pagans, who believe they become polluted by touching low castes, that means out castes, until they take a bath, but because they live among the Nairs, and, if they touch low castes, they themselves become untouchables, and thereby lose ordinary intercourse and communication in buying and selling, and the honour from their kings, because it is only with the Christians - and Brahmins - that the Nairs may have intercourse, both being high caste men. All other castes are considered low, and their number is large...in order not to touch or approach a Nair, they [the low caste] on meeting, allow free passage to the Nair or Christian and keep such a distance so that nothing of theirs may touch him...¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., P 174

¹⁰⁷ If any *Samskaras* fall in during that time, the Nazranis postponed till the end of that that period according to the *Nampoothiri practice*.

¹⁰⁸ Paret, Z. M., *Malankara Nazranikalude Pathaviyum Jathyacharangalum*, Kottayam, Jacob Mathews Chemmarppally (Pub.), 1967, Pp 270 -1

¹⁰⁹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 203

¹¹⁰ The third decree of the ninth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version confirms it. (Zacharia, Scaria, *The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diampar*, Edamattom, Indian Institute of Christian Studies, 1994, P 203)

¹¹¹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., Pp 210 -1

Francis Day have an opinion that "...in those days, Christians never touched a Sudra, nor even a Nair. Any of these castes, who refused to acknowledge their precedence, they were empowered to slay forthwith."¹¹² The Portuguese believed that the Nazranis were forced to observe untouchability because of local kings. The second decree of the ninth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version reflects this view.¹¹³ However, this judgment is not sustained in front of their observation of untouchability against Nairs. Hence, the only explanation for observing untouchability was that they were obeying the laws of the *Nampoothiri* religion to retain the caste dignity as *Vysya*.

It seems that the Nazranis had some Christian concepts even though they rigorously practiced the *Jathy* system. The attitude towards their slaves was the best example. Gouvea wrote that they were merciful and charitable towards their slaves and often the sons of their slaves became heirs to their masters in the absence of no legitimate sons, or even share with as adopted children.¹¹⁴ The thirteenth decree of the ninth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version acknowledges this statement and adds "...when they see parents... as to be ready to sell their children to infidels...they may buy them to keep the Christian children from coming under the power of heathens"¹¹⁵ These documents clarify that the slaves who later became heirs were also Nazranis who were sold out by their parents for several reasons, most probably for money. Such adoptions did not dilute their caste dignity since the adoptee slaves were also of the same castes.

Superstitions

The Nazranis shared the same type of superstitions held by the rest of the Kerala community. Decrees one, six, seven and eight of the ninth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version¹¹⁶ give the details of such beliefs. It should be treated only as the sharing of a common cultural pool of

¹¹² Day, Francis, *The Land of Perumals*, Madras, 1863, (AES Reprint 1990), Madras, Asian Education Services, 1990, P 219

¹¹³ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 202 – 3

¹¹⁴ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 210

¹¹⁵ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 208

¹¹⁶ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 202, 205 – 6

the Kerala society. Some Nazranis did witchcraft and black magic.¹¹⁷ Even some priests were also engaged in such acts.¹¹⁸ There is no record of what form of magic performed by such priests. However, the local traditions state that a priest from Kadamattom studied white magic from the Persian bishop Mar Abo, who arrived in AD 905, and the successors of the former were called as *Kadamattathu Kathanar*,¹¹⁹ one of the most legendary characters in Kerala tradition.¹²⁰ Perhaps both Hindu and Nazrani witchcrafters extended their services to both the communities just as in the case of education.

Local Festivals

The Nazranis actively participated in the local festivals, mistaken by the Portuguese as Hindu festivals, just like their Hindu neighbours. The fourth canon of the ninth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version confirms their active participation in *Ona* celebration in August.¹²¹ Besides *Onam*, both Nazranis and Hindus shared several other festivals. Beyond that, paying offerings or participating in the administration of sacred places together were not rare among Hindus and Nazranis then. Leslie Brown gives a detailed account of the assimilation of Hindus and Christians.

They [Nazranis and Nairs] joined in many of the ordinary celebrations of the country such as *Onam* and *Vishu* or New Year's Day. At Nilamperur,¹²² they engaged themselves in temple celebrations...Christians were accustomed to give offerings to the temples.... Many families still have certain privileges in the temples which are believed to have been granted in recognition of some service given or some present made in former times...at Putupalli Hindus used to come for the *Perunnal* or annual feast of St. George with offerings of fowls and cows... Many Hindus join them in the festival and bring offerings.¹²³

Susan Bayly evaluates that the Nazrani offerings to the temples were more a matter of honour rather than faith. She wrote, "the role of donor was a privilege and a sign of rank and honour for Hindus, as well as Syrians. Both Christian and Hindu festival donors were allocated the right to make offerings of goods, cash

¹¹⁷ Zacharia, *Udaymoeror...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 234

¹¹⁸ Fr. Joao Maria Campori reports about such a priest in his letter dated ninth January, AD 1604. (Ferrolli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 297)

¹¹⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 82, 125

¹²⁰ The priest in discussion in the letter mentioned above of Fr. Campori seems as from Kadamattom. There was a form of witchcraft named *Kadamattom Reethi* (the Kadamattom style) existed even in the twentieth century.

¹²¹ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 204

¹²² Neelamperur is in the boundary of Kottayam and Alappuzha districts and famous for its festival named *Padayani*. See also the topic 'Conversion of *Cheraman Perumal*' in Chapter II

¹²³ Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, 171 -2

and services according to a complex series of judgments about the rank and ritual entitlements of local clan and caste groups.”¹²⁴ Considering all these, the Nazrani participation in the local or even the Hindu festivals was a willing act according to the status of their caste.

Concept of Sacredness

The Nazrani concept of sacredness was not based on the Christian doctrines alone. It adapted many local traditions in its development. The mysterious nature of both Brahmanic and East Syrian worships made this synchronization easy. In both cases, the principal form of worship was almost totally a matter of the priests and the laity had little role in it.¹²⁵ Hence, the use of an alien language, Syriac, as their liturgical language did not bother the Nazranis just like the use of Sanskrit by the *Nampoothiri* religion.

Besides the theoretical level, such synchronization was more evident in the peripheral matters of worship. The fourteenth decree of the fifth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version confirms that musical instruments were played within the church during the time of the celebration of the holy Eucharist.¹²⁶ There were several other local customs, which were included in the Nazrani concept of sacredness. The fasts were believed worth only if they begin after washing the body.¹²⁷ People lived together in the churches during those days with special prayers just like *Bajanam Paarkkel* in the Hindu temples.¹²⁸

Social Status

Depending Jathys

According to the Nazrani legends, the Nazranis had their own depending *Jathys*. According to the said legends, *Cheraman Perumal*, who died in AD 348, granted seventeen *Jathys* as the servants to the Nazranis since the Nazranis supported him financially for the war preparations against Raja Krishna Rayar and donated a *Nazhi*¹²⁹ full of jewels to retain his kingship.¹³⁰ Francis Day states

¹²⁴ Bayly, Susan, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, P 289

¹²⁵ The East Syrian liturgy provides very little participation of laity in the celebration of holy Eucharist. It is very evident from their prayer book for Holy Qurbana itself.

¹²⁶ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 142

¹²⁷ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 203. and Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 188

¹²⁸ The thirty first decree of the eight session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version confirms it. (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 197.)

¹²⁹ *Nazhi* is a local measure

¹³⁰ Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 14

that the Nazranis were “the natural protectors of the silversmiths, brass-founders, carpenters, and goldsmiths.”¹³¹ Anathakrishna Ayyar regards them as the protectors of artisan classes.¹³² The list of seventeen castes available in the *Panan Paattu*¹³³ includes these artisans also.¹³⁴ The Nazranis were often called *Pathinezhinparisha* or *Pathinempazha Achenmar*¹³⁵ to mark their authority over those seventeen *Jathys*.¹³⁶

Even though there are several historical mistakes found in the present form of this legend, it could not be ruled out just as a folk tale. Such an authority may go into the hands of the Nazranis during the processes of formation of *Nampoothiri* centred life system of Kerala. All seventeen *Jathys* that became the dependents of Nazranis were also skilled professionals like Nazranis. Agricultural land was not directly involved with their profession. Perhaps a landless economic system ran parallel to the land oriented agrarian economy of Kerala.

Grievances of Nazrani Jathy

As sanctioned in the *Smrithis*, the Nazranis were allowed to go to the kings directly¹³⁷ with their grievances. However, they seldom used this right.¹³⁸ According to Gouvea, the local kings did injustice to Nazranis only in the cases of property or wealth. In the matter of their rights and privileges, “if any is broken or any offence done, they appeal to the king, who offers satisfaction, and generally as a retribution of the fault committed, he gets an arm or hand of silver as a gift to the church of the Christians aggrieved, or gets something else which satisfies them...”¹³⁹ According to Anathakrishna Ayyar, not only Nazranis, but their depending *Jathys* were also protected by this immunity of Nazranis. He further narrates the consequence of such violence against Nazranis.¹⁴⁰ However, in the case of the grievances of the Nazrani community, there was another system. The

¹³¹ Day, *Land of Perumals*, Op. Cit., P 219

¹³² Ayyar, *Anthropology...Op. Cit.*, P 54

¹³³ This is also called as *Veeradiyan Paatu*

¹³⁴ Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, Op. Cit., P 14, Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, Op. Cit., P 92. Both of them draw the list from *Panan Pattu*, a folk song sang by the caste *Panan*. This song describes how Nazranis get the authority over these casts. See Thomas, *Malayala Sahityavum ...*, Op. Cit., 1989, Pp 62 – 65. The Seventeen castes are *Pakkanar*, *Thiruvirangan*, *Villan*, *Thachen*, *Erevithandan*, *Vilakkithalayan*, *Veluthadam*, *Vanibhan*, *Chetti*, *Samkaran*, *Vishmandikkurukkal*, *Chvakan*, *Uravaran*, *Nankuvamapparishakai* (brass-founders, carpenters, blacksmiths and gold-smiths)

¹³⁵ = The rulers of the seventeen castes.

¹³⁶ Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, Op. Cit., P 14

¹³⁷ Vasudeva Bhattathiri, C. V., *Niyamam Annum Innum*, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 1982, Pp 73 –4

¹³⁸ Gouvea said so. (Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 210)

¹³⁹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 210

¹⁴⁰ Ayyar, *Anthropology...Op. Cit.*, P 54

Nazrani legends envisage a system to protect the rights and privileges of the Nazranis and their depending castes from the Brahmanic persecution. G. Curian narrates that as "By the power of temple or of the *Grama*,¹⁴¹ if any injustice was done to any one of those eighteen *Jathys*, and if they jointly complained, without restitution by the one who offended, shall not be pardoned."¹⁴² Ittoop gives a little more explanation to this legend. He wrote:

By the lords, or by the local chieftains, or by the power of temple or of the *Grama*, if any injustice was done to any of those seventeen castes, those seventeen castes stand jointly along with Nazranis and made them do the restitution according to the seriousness of the crime. If any lower caste man beats a Nazrani, he will either be killed or let be free after receiving ample compensation according to his status.¹⁴³

According to G. Curian, such meetings, called as *Vishayam Kooduka*, existed until the year 920.¹⁴⁴ There were sixty-four members in such a meeting including the military chief of Kollam, *Kondoor Ninar*, *Njolakka*, *Poothotta Cherthala Vadyattachen*, *Chitoor Bhattathiri*, *Caroor Bhattathiri*, *Manayoor Bhattathiri*, and the Crown Prince of Perumpadappu etc.¹⁴⁵ It is clear from the legends that the attacks to their privileges were expected from the *Nampoothiri* system itself. Perhaps such an appellate mechanism was created as a compromise while the Nazranis were absorbed into the *Chathurvarna* system after a series of violent attacks during the formation of *Nampoothiri* dominion.

The Copper Plates and Privileges

The existence and status of Malankara Nazranis are available from the *Chepped* or copper plate grants popularly known as the Syrian Christian Copper Plates.¹⁴⁶ They are four in number namely *Iravi Korthen Chepped*, *Knai Thomman Chepped*, *Tharissappally first Chepped* and *Tharissappally second Chepped*.

¹⁴¹ *Grama* is a level in the social organization of *Nampoothiris*.

¹⁴² Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 16

¹⁴³ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 92

¹⁴⁴ He did not mention whether it is Christian era or Kollam era. However, Ittoop specifies this date as Malayalam era. (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 92) Hence, it was existed till AD 1645.

¹⁴⁵ He received this information from a *Veeradiyan* song. (Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 16)

¹⁴⁶ According to the Kollam Panchayath judgment of AD 1840, the official custodian of these copper plates is the Malankara Metropolitan. However, at present, two out of the remaining five plates are in the possession of Malankara Marthoma church.

Iravi Korthen Chepped

The most disputed among these four is the *Iravi Korthen Chepped*. The first dispute is about its period. Nagam Ayya¹⁴⁷, K. N. Denial,¹⁴⁸ and Z. M. Paret¹⁴⁹ are of the opinion that this *Chepped* was granted in AD 230, whereas T. K. Joseph¹⁵⁰ and Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai¹⁵¹ are strongly advocating for AD 1320. Sreedhara Menon suggests AD 1225.¹⁵² There are minor arguments for AD 680 and AD 775.¹⁵³ All of them are primarily depending on the astrological calculation from the copper plate that is matching for all five years mentioned above.

The second dispute is about the religion of the receiver. Again, Nagam Ayya, Sreedhara Menon, K. N. Denial and Z. M. Paret and most other authors consider the receiver, *Iravi Korthen*, a Christian whereas Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai and K. M. Panikker try to prove *Iravi Korthen* a Hindu.¹⁵⁴ Joseph Chazhikattu tries to establish him a non-Christian.¹⁵⁵ However, he favours AD 230 as the period.

The third dispute is about the person of the receiver. Most of the historians agreed that *Iravi Korthen* is the name of the receiver, whereas T. K. Joseph considers *Iravi Korthen* not a name but a title. He argues that *Iravi* is nothing but *Rab-I* that means 'Chief' in Arabic. He also argued that *Korthan* is a corrupt form of *Cortar* in Italian,¹⁵⁶ which means broker. Then, according to him, *Iravi Korthen* is nothing but Chief Broker. He suggests that it may be a title given by the king¹⁵⁷.

Rev. G. Curian explains *Korthen* as the one who collects *Tharaku*, a form of sales tax. He also points out that *Iravi Korthen* was a title rather than a name. According to him, *Iravi Korthen* was a disciple of *Manikkavachaker*.¹⁵⁸ Joseph Chazhikattu argues that *Iravi Korthen* was a *Chetti* probably from Tamil Nadu.¹⁵⁹

¹⁴⁷ Nagam Ayya, V, *The Travancore State Manuel*, Vol. II, Trivandrum, The Travancore Government, 1906, Pp 126-7

¹⁴⁸ Daniel, K. N., *The Copper Plates of St. Thomas Christians*, Bombay, 1925, 17-30

¹⁴⁹ Paret, *Nazranikal ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 443-70

¹⁵⁰ Joseph, T. K., *Malabar Christians and Their Ancient Documents*, Trivandrum, 1929, Pp 26-7

¹⁵¹ Kunjan Pillai, Elamkulam, *Chila Kerala Charithra Presnangal*, Vol. II, Trivandrum, 1955, Pp 93-7

¹⁵² Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Charitram*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 95,156. He also suggests the donor as a *Perumpadappu* (later Kochi) King then residing at Kodungallor.

¹⁵³ Dr. Burnell is favouring AD 774. (Paret, *Nazranikal ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 451)

¹⁵⁴ However, Elamkulam stated elsewhere in the same book that a name looked like Hindu alone did not prove the religion of the person as Hindu or Christian. (Kunjan Pillai, *Chila Kerala ... Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 97)

¹⁵⁵ Chazhikattu, *The Syrian Colonisation...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 111-4

¹⁵⁶ T. K. Joseph stated elsewhere about the existence of Venetian merchants in Kerala during the pre-Portuguese period.

¹⁵⁷ Joseph, *Six St. Thomases... Op. Cit.*, P 120

¹⁵⁸ Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 11

¹⁵⁹ Chazhikattu, *The Syrian Colonisation...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 111-4. He put forward that argument to prove Nazranis were a suppressed community and they got all the privileges through Knai Thomman.

Fr. Bernard Alancherry treats *Iravi Korthen* as the chief *Kathanar* and hence as a bishop.¹⁶⁰

Knai Thomman Chepped

The next among the Syrian Christian copper plates is the Knai Thomman *cheppedu* which is believed to be given in AD 345 at Kodungallor to Knai Thomman, the legendary leader of Persian migration. This Copper plate no longer exists.¹⁶¹ According to the available secondary sources, Knai Thomman and his native Christian brethren were gifted a piece of land at Kodungallor to build a *Nakaram* named *Mahodayapuram* or *Mahadevapuram*. They also received certain privileges and tax exemptions with succession right.¹⁶²

Mar Jacob, wrote to the king John III of Portugal from Cochin in AD 1523 about the status of the land received by Knai Thomman *Chepped* as follows: "It is already a long time since these Quilon Christians¹⁶³ brought with their money a big piece of land in Cranganore with power to pronounce sentence of death and all the other rights, which the then ruling King have in it, of which we have a copper-plate sealed with his seal..."¹⁶⁴

Tharissappally Cheppeds

Gundert states the arrival of Mar Sabor and Mar Afroth along with Sabriso in AD 825 that led to the *Tharissappally Cheppeds*.¹⁶⁵ M. G. S. Narayanan evaluates the net result of the *Tharissappally* grants as follows:

Therefore it is seen that *Mar Sapir Iso* was the leader of a mercantile organization and that after taking permission from the rulers to settle down at Kollam he established a trade-centre, invited the *Anchuvanam* and *Manigrammam* to have their branches there, built and endowed the church of *Tarsa*, and step by step rose to the position of a local aristocrat by receiving the confidence and goodwill of the rulers and the people. The church was given the custodianship

¹⁶⁰ Bernard, *Marthoma Christenikal*, Op. Cit., P 216

¹⁶¹ The oldest available source of Knai Thomman *Chepped* is a manuscript in Portuguese language preserved at British museum. For the full text in English, see *Kerala Society Papers...*, Op. Cit. Vol. I, P 169-200. However, it is not the *Chepped* but only a description of the *Chepped* and the events relating the same. Joseph Chazhikattu giving the *Chepped* as received from an old palm leaf book. (Chazhikattu, *The Syrian Colonisation...*, Op. Cit., Pp 106-7)

¹⁶² Seventy-two and a half according to some sources. Others explaining *Ezhupathyrandara* as *Ezhupathyrandu Aracha* (Seventy-two royal) privileges. The list given by various authors have slight difference. See Chazhikattu, *The Syrian Colonisation...*, Op. Cit., Pp 108-9

¹⁶³ Mar Jacob here referring Nazranis altogether as the *Quilon Christians*. In the said letter, he was addressing himself as "Jacob Abuna, Armenian priest, who rules over the so-called Quilon Christians in India" Perhaps the Portuguese understanding in the early sixteenth century about Nazranis was in that way.

¹⁶⁴ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 112

¹⁶⁵ Gundert, *Keralolpathy ...*, Op. Cit., P 324. However, he mistook *Iravi Korthen Chepped* as Knai Thomman *Chepped*, and suggesting its period as AD 780. See also the topic 'The Migration of Maruvan Sabriso' in Chapter II.

of the weights and measures and permitted to enjoy weighing fee. These rights were granted earlier and renewed in the first and second sets of copper plates. This would show the trust that the local rulers placed in the church because these privileges were enjoyed exclusively by the Hindu temple-corporations in the normal course.¹⁶⁶

Manigramam

Another always-disputed terminology here to consider is *Manigramam*. The *Manigramam* is believed as the trade guild of Nazranis and perhaps in that name the Nazranis were identified at a time. However, K. M. Panikker and a few others tried to fix *Manigramam* as a Hindu trade guild. According to Leslie Brown "K. M. Panikker...thinking the *Manigramakkar* had Christian connections was [became] Col. McCauley's action in handing over the plate to the Christians when he discovered it at Cochin."¹⁶⁷ K. N. Daniel went on detailed study about *Manigramam* and proved that it was Christian at least in the Kerala context.¹⁶⁸ Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai made a vague attempt to establish that *Iravi Korthen* was converted to Christianity after he received the copper plate that granting him *Manigramam*.¹⁶⁹ According to Leslie Brown, the migration of *Vallala* Christians who were engaged in the trade of gold, precious stones and silk, to Kerala explains the use of the term *Manigramam*.¹⁷⁰ The comment of M. G. S. Narayanan that "In spite of all the later criticism, the original suggestion of Dr. Gundert that the *Anchuvaram* and *Manigramam* were corporations of Jews and Christians respectively stands vindicated by all the additional sources of evidence"¹⁷¹ seems fit as the suitable solution to this subject.

Irinjalakkuda Temple Inscription

One stone inscription at Irinjalakkuda temple, mentions about four members of *Manigramam*. The mention about the exemption from certain taxes, which are related to trade, points out that they were merchants. There is no mention about the religion of those *Manigramam* members in that inscription. However, from their names alone, which seem to be Hindu, one cannot conclude that they were Hindus. V. N. D. Nambiar and V. K. R. Menon, who first published its full text, comment that "The names of the four members of the *Manigramam*

¹⁶⁶ Narayanan, M.G.S., *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*, Trivandrum, Kerala Historical Society, 1972, P 37

¹⁶⁷ Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, Pp 78-9

¹⁶⁸ For the summary of the same See: Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 471-7

¹⁶⁹ Kunjan Pillai, *Chila Kerala ... Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, Pp 93-7

¹⁷⁰ Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 78

¹⁷¹ Narayanan, *Cultural Symbiosis...Op. Cit.*, P 35

guild are distinctly Hindu, but we cannot say whether they professed the Hindu or Christian religion.”¹⁷² Not even their association with the temples proved them as Hindus. Even in the post-Portuguese period, several practising Nazranis held offices, including ritualistic ones, in Hindu temples. Some of them, always as a right by inheritance, existed even in the twentieth century. It is reasonable to think that a specific duty in Irinjalakkuda temple was assigned to the members of *Manigramam*, who were Christians, just like in the entrusting of the protection of *Tharissappally* to *Anjuvaram* and *Arunootavar*, who were Jews and Hindus respectively.

The Result of *Cheppeds*

Gouvea recorded the impact of those privileges as follows:

“And owing to these privileges and honours, these Christians are liked by the gentio Kings and considered to be the best and oldest nobility of Malabar, even the first place therein being given to them, one more noble than have the Nairs, who are the fidalgos and nobles of their kingdom. With these privileges, added to those which Xarao Perumal had left, the Christians of Malabar kept gaining much more credit, being held in such account that even now in the kingdoms beyond the Serra of the Pande, they are called sons of Kings.”¹⁷³

The copper plate grants definitely provided dignity and business opportunities for Nazranis. However, the donor of those grants was also benefited. Z. M. Paret comments:

Nazranis attained higher position in war as well as in commerce. Their foreign connections supported them to advance in trade. Financial troubles were not rare for the kings, who were always in war or in war preparation. It was natural that they needed the cooperation of the Nazranis who were big merchants. Considering all these situations, there is no wonder if the King(s) had granted those privileges to their leaders just to please the Nazranis. It was just an act of the kings for the stability of their position and for the prosperity of the kingdom.¹⁷⁴

Even though the dates and contents are not of unanimous opinion, it is generally agreed that those copper plate grants put Nazranis in the upper circle of the Kerala society and insured their position as merchants. The net result of all four *Cheppeds* can be summarized as follows:

¹⁷² V. K. R. Menon, V. N. D. Nambiar and, "Two Vatteluthu Inscriptions from the Irinjalakkuda Temple"(Art.), *The Bulletin of the Rama Varma Research Institute, Vol. IX, Part- I, Trichur, Kerala Sahithya Academy, 1973, P 49*

¹⁷³ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit., Pp 74-5*

¹⁷⁴ Paret, *Nazranikal ...Vol. I, Op. Cit., P 459*

1. Nazranis owned two trade zones with certain privileges, protection and tax exemptions at Kodungallor and Kollam.
2. They became the masters of standard weights and measures
3. They became the official tax collectors
4. They got several social privileges that placed them at the highest end of the society.

Kodungallor and Kollam Nazranis

The privileges and the status of the two trade zones, namely *Mahodayapuram* or *Mahadevarpatanam* in Kodungallor and *Kurakkeny Kollam* explains the practice of Nazranis to attach themselves to either of them. All Nazranis were known either as *Mahadevarpattanam* Nazranis or as *Kurakkeni Kollam* Nazranis till the nineteenth century irrespective of their place of living. They included either of them with their names while preparing and registering their documents. This practice existed till the implementation of Travancore registration act in AD 1867.¹⁷⁵ This practice existed in Kunnankulam, the northern end of the Nazrani settlements, also.¹⁷⁶ There are certain geographical limitations to this usage. From Changanassery in Kottayam district northward, it was used as *Mahadevarpatanam* and southwards, as *Kurakkeni Kollam*. *Lappalam* or *Lahappalam*, bordering the southern end of the present day Changanassery municipality was the boundary.¹⁷⁷ Perhaps all Nazranis attached themselves to either of those two trade zones to get the immunity of them by the copper plate grants.

¹⁷⁵ Philip, *Indian Sabha...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 81. There are several documents in this effect are existing. (a). In Kaduthuruthy church documents it is stated as "*Makatheverpattanam muthalake, Kaduthuruthy Valiyapallyil Marthamariyathummayum Manushangal Kathangal koodu*" (The saint Mary, trustees and priests of Kaduthuruthy church of Mahadeverpattanam) (Mathew Cherusseril, *Kaduthuruthy Valiyapally, Op. Cit.*, P 17) Kaduthuruthy is in Kottayam District. (b). "*Thollayirathy onpathy randamandu thulamasam onninu Kaniyantra veetil kudiyrinkkum Korakkani Kollathe Chandi Nina Peril.*" (on *Thulam* 1, 984 ME. In the name of Chandi Nina of Kurakkani Kollam, residing at Kaniyathra) (Unnikrishnan Nair, P., *Thiruvalla Grandhavari Vol. I*, Kottayam, School of Social Sciences, 1999, Pp. 78-9) Kaniyantra family is residing at Maprai in Pathanamthitta Dist. (c). "*Pulikunnu desathe Chakkupurakkal Veetil Kudiyrinkkum Korakkani Kollathu Avran Uthuppinu*" (to Avran Uthup of Korakkani Kollam, who is residing at Chakkupurakal house in Pulikunnu Village). (*Kerala Society Papers...*, *Op. Cit. Vol. I*, Pp. 280-1) Pulinkunnu is in Alappuzha District. (d). "*Mahadevar Pattanam Muthel Muttathangadiyil Kudiyrinkkum Puthen Veetil Kurian*" (Kurian of Puthenveettil, residing at Muttatangady from Mahodayapuram) Muttam is near Thodupuzha in Idukki District. (e). "*Kurakkani Kollam Muthel Thazhakkara Theruvil Kudiyrinkkum Kurizummottil Mathen*" (Kurizummodu Mathen of Kurakkani Kollam, residing at Thazhakkara Theruvu) Thazhakkara is near Mavalikkara. (Kuruville, *Prakaranam, Op. Cit.*, Pp 10-1)

¹⁷⁶ Kunjathu, Panakkal C., *Aarthattu Pally Charithram*, Kunnankulam, Aarthattu Pally, 1946, P 36

¹⁷⁷ Podipara, *The Canonical ...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 54. and Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 18-9

Social Customs

Settlements and Demography

The Nazranis were found between Kodungallor and Kollam in the sixteenth century AD. According to Joseph the Indian, who left to Europe with Cabral in AD 1500, "there are many Christians in Caranganora"¹⁷⁸ ... Let it be known to all, therefore, that from the river Indus where India begins, toward the west to the island of Ormus, which is not far from the Persian Gulf, they obey only Christ. There are no Christians anywhere other than in the city of Caranganora."¹⁷⁹ It is very clear from his narrative that all the Christian communities in India other than that of Kerala ceased to exist by then. Tom Pires confirms the limits of Nazrani settlements as "the district from Chetwayi (*Chetua*) to Quilon (*Coulom*)." between AD 1512-1515. However, his estimate on population as fifteen thousand Christians does not tally with that of others during that period.¹⁸⁰ The Syriac letter of four Persian bishops in AD 1504 state the Nazrani habitat as follows:

Our country in which the Christians are found is called Malabar. It has about twenty towns, out of which three are renowned and powerful: Karangol, Pallur, and Kullam,¹⁸¹ with others that are near them. They contain Christians and churches, and are in the vicinity of the large and powerful city of Calicut, the inhabitants of which are idol-worshipping pagans.¹⁸²

The Persian bishops also confirm that Christians did not inhabit Calicut. According to them, the Nazrani population was of thirty thousand families.¹⁸³ However, it is not reasonable to think that all these are the inhabitants of the city of Kodungallor. In the narrations of Joseph the Indian, the city of Kodungallor referred to as *Milibar* includes its outskirts also.¹⁸⁴ Within the boundary of Kodungallor, described by Joseph the Indian, the present day Kunnankulam, Palayoor, North Parur, and Angamaly, are included along with Kodungallor. Perhaps Joseph and the Persian bishops are mentioning the whole

¹⁷⁸ =Kodungallor

¹⁷⁹ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, Pp 165-6

¹⁸⁰ Cortesco, Armando, (Ed.), *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires 1512-1515*, New Delhi, 1990, P 73

¹⁸¹ Kodungallor, Palayoor and Kollam

¹⁸² Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 39

¹⁸³ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 38

¹⁸⁴ "Milibar, some 15 milestones from the seashore. The city is not surrounded by walls, thirty miles in length, because houses close to one another as - in our, place are rare, but are far apart from one another so that it would seem that they live in villas. Many rivers flow through it and their houses are situated on the banks of the rivers. This town is inhabited by two groups of people, namely, Christian and gentile." (Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, Pp 153-4)

Mahodayapuram Nazranis in their descriptions. In the same way, Duarte Barbosa describes the Kollam Christians in the early sixteenth century.

Passing this place we come at once to another, the first in the Kingdom of *Coilam*, which they call *Gale Coilam*, whither come numbers of Moors, Heathens and Christians of the doctrine of the Blessed Saint Thomas and many of them also dwell in the inland country.¹⁸⁵...Many became Christians from Cochin to the great Kingdom of Coilam, which extends to the coast facing towards Ceilam, in which there may be well twelve thousand households of Christians scattered among the Heathen, and there are also some churches in the inland country.¹⁸⁶

Here also the statement is about the *Kurakkani Kollam* Nazranis altogether rather than of the inhabitants of Kollam city alone. The number of Nazranis and their settlements are also available from two documents in connection with the arrival of the Portuguese in India. The author of the 'Voyage to Calcoen' (Calicut), who accompanied Vasco de Gama on his second expedition, writes:

On the second day of November, we sailed from Calcoen¹⁸⁷ sixty Miles to a kingdom called Kusshain,¹⁸⁸ and between these two towns is a Christian Kingdom called Granor,¹⁸⁹ and there are many good Christians, and in this Kingdom live many Jews. On the third of January, we sailed thence (i.e., from Kusshain) for a town, which is called Coloon (Quilon)¹⁹⁰, and there came many good Christians and they filled two of our ships with spices; and there are nearly 25,000 Christians and they paid us a tribute like the Jews. There are nearly 300 Christian churches and they bear the names of the Apostles and other Saints.¹⁹¹

Manuel Faria V Sousa, in his '*India Portuguesa*' describes the interview, which Vasco de Gama granted to the Malabar Christians in AD 1502. He says: "Here [at Cochin] Don Vasco received Ambassadors who said they were to the number of 30,000."¹⁹² In general, all descriptions of Nazranis in the northern part give a number thirty thousand and about south twelve thousand. This may be the number of Nazrani families then. As stated above, this was not the population of Nazranis of Kodungallor and Kollam towns alone. They settled elsewhere also.

¹⁸⁵ Gangadharan, M., *Duarte Barbosa's The Land of Malabar*, Kottayam, Mahatma Gandhi University, 2000, P 91

¹⁸⁶ Gangadharan, *Duarte Barbosa...Op. Cit.*, P 94

¹⁸⁷ =Calicut

¹⁸⁸ =Kochi

¹⁸⁹ =Kodungallor

¹⁹⁰ =Kollam

¹⁹¹ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 99

¹⁹² Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 100

Ludovico di Varthema found Nazranis at Kayamkulam in AD 1505.¹⁹³ Joseph the Indian and Barbosa also hint about inland Nazrani settlements. However, the number of churches given by the author of the 'Voyage to Calcoen', as three hundred, is a mistake or exaggeration.¹⁹⁴

Language

As a community of Kerala, the Nazranis used Malayalam, Tamil, or whatever form of the Dravidian language of the Malayalees then as the language for their daily life. Malayalam language was used even for the ecclesial matters.¹⁹⁵ As a trader community, they may well versed in other languages with commercial value like Arabic, Gujrathi etc.¹⁹⁶

The eastern version of Syriac language, known also as Chaldean, Aramic and East Syrian, was used for all their religious affairs. All the pre-Portuguese liturgical texts available now are in the East Syrian language.¹⁹⁷ Even the basic prayers for the daily use were also in Syriac.¹⁹⁸ According to the Portuguese, they were much devoted to the Syriac language.¹⁹⁹ Gouvea confirms that the Christian doctrines were thought in Syriac alone.²⁰⁰ Some authors suggest that Syriac was established as the liturgical language of the Nazranis from the time of Saint Thomas since Aramic was the colloquial language of the Jews during that time.²⁰¹ The later Persian migrations and the affiliation to the East Syrian Church enhanced their affinity to the Syriac language. It is certain that at least from the ninth century AD onwards Syriac was well established as their liturgical language.

¹⁹³ Quoted by Panjikaran, J. C., *The Syrian Church in Malabar*, Trichinappally, 1914. As re-printed in Indian Church History Classics, Vol. I, *The Nazranis*, Ollur, 1998, P. 283

¹⁹⁴ During the Synod of Udayamperor, the number of churches was about seventy two. Out of that, twenty or more were established in between AD 1500 -1599. Therefore, the number of churches around AD 1500 might be less than forty.

¹⁹⁵ The *Padiyola* regarding Kothamangalam church of AD 1509 is written in Malayalam. (Kollaparambil, Kollaparambil, Jacob, *The Archdeacon of All India*, Rome, Pontifical institute of Oriental Studies, 1972, 81 – 2)

¹⁹⁶ It is confirmed by the letter of Mar Jacob to the king of Portugal of AD 1723 that Nazranis had good trade relations with the Arabs. (Ferroli, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 111). Joseph the Indian not only says about the Gujarat relations but he was well versed about them. (Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, Pp 205 –7)

¹⁹⁷ The first among them is Vat. Syr. 22 of AD 1301 written at Kodungallor.

¹⁹⁸ Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 215

¹⁹⁹ All attempts of the Roman Catholics to replace Syriac language by Latin or even Malayalam was failed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

²⁰⁰ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 204

²⁰¹ There argument is based on the theory that there were Jews in Kerala during that time and Saint Thomas, himself a Jew, preached to them first as like all other apostles. Since Old Testament was available with the Jews in Hebrew. Aramaic, that is Syriac, was easily established as the liturgical language for celebrating simple sacraments. (Placid TOCD, Dr., *Nammude Reethu*, Mannanam, St. Joseph's Press, 1997, Pp 19 – 24)

Beyond the liturgical framework, it is possible that Syriac functioned as the commercial language of Nazranis in the early centuries. The *Tharissa* network, spanning between China and the Middle East, was well versed in Syriac.²⁰² Perhaps the binding force of such a network was the common factor of Syriac language beyond their religious affiliation. Apart from that, Syriac was a flourishing language in the Middle East once. Patriarch Ignatius Aphram Barsoum narrates the glory of the Syriac language that once flourished all over "Iraq, the Jazira of Mesopotamia and Syria. It penetrated into inner Persia and spread among the peoples neighbouring the Syrians. For many years it remained the official language of the states, which occupied the Near East. It also extended to Egypt, Asia Minor and northern Arabia, and reached southern China and the Malabar Coast in India...It was still widely spoken until rivalled by Arabic at the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century, at which time it retreated from the towns and found refuge in the villages and mountains."²⁰³

The fall of the *Tharissa* network and the rise of Islam and Arabic language reduced Syriac language just as a liturgical language. The attachment of Nazranis towards the Syriac language was strong enough to name them as the Syrian Christians.

Education

The Nazranis had a system of education to suit their requirements. Joseph the Indian states to the Venetians in AD 1500, "they have very excellent and learned doctors. The study of letters thrives well there."²⁰⁴ However, it is uncertain whether he was talking about the priestly education or the secular one. Francis Day states that "their education being carried on in this science [martial arts], from their 8th to their 25th year."²⁰⁵ According to Gouvea their education begins at this age²⁰⁶ under the teachers called *panicals*,²⁰⁷ and "this training is common to Nairs and Christians, and the *Panicals* are highly considered throughout Malabar."²⁰⁸

²⁰² See the topic 'The *Tharissa* network' in this Chapter.

²⁰³ Barsoum, Patriarch Ignatius Aphram, *The History of Syriac Literature and Sciences*, Pueblo, Passeggiata Press, 2000, P 1

²⁰⁴ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., P 114

²⁰⁵ Day, *Land of Perumals*, Op. Cit., P 219

²⁰⁶ According to the *Nampoothiri* custom, the children were send for education at the age of eight after the Samskara named *Upanayanm*. (Baskharanunni, *Pathombatham...*, Op. Cit., Pp 168 –9) Perhaps Nazranis were also follows the same.

²⁰⁷ *Panicals* is Panikker, which used as the title of the *Master of Martial Arts*.

²⁰⁸ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 207

The study of letters along with that of martial arts²⁰⁹ is appropriate for their occupation as merchants. Gundert states that their *Kathanars* study the theology and the rest had enough if they study arithmetic and the *Kavyas* likes Ramayana.²¹⁰ Studying *Kavyas* was the ancient form of education in Kerala.²¹¹ It is obvious from the study of *Kavyas* that they studied the Sanskrit language also. It is also stated that they had another type of teachers besides *Panikker* named *Aasan* who were handling their study of letters.²¹² The respect to the teachers was very high among Nazranis.²¹³

There was also the *Samskara* named *Ariyilazhuthu*²¹⁴ existed among the Nazranis.²¹⁵ The canons of the Synod of Udayamperor confirm the inter-religious schooling of both Nairs and Nazranis. It also confirms that the Nazrani students also honoured the Hindu gods, perhaps war-gods and goddess of knowledge, and performs certain rituals related to education.²¹⁶ All such accounts confirm that all Nazranis studied the local curriculum as a rule.

Military Training

The early Portuguese records state that the Nazranis maintained an army of their own at every settlement of them. All male members were trained well in arms and they always used to carry them. Anathakrishna Ayyar, after giving the details of training and structure, comments: "A native prince was respected or feared by his neighbours according to the number of Syrians in his dominions."²¹⁷ Francis Day is giving a similar description and adds that they "were well trained in the use of weapons, their education being carried on in this science, from their 8th to their 25th year."²¹⁸ The statistics of the Portuguese period about Nazranis indicates that all able-bodied male members were considered as in the Nazrani

²⁰⁹ Thazhath, Andrews, *The Juridical Sources of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Vadavathoor, Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1987, P 30

²¹⁰ Gundert, *Keralolpathy ... Op. Cit.*, Pp 333 –4

²¹¹ In the past, the level of education was based on the number of *Kavyas* studied.

²¹² Thazhath, *The Juridical ... Op. Cit.*, P 30

²¹³ Even today, the *Aasan* is a respected person. During the ceremony of marriage, the bride and groom pay a certain tribute named *Dakshina* to their respective *Aasan* at their respective houses just before moving to the church for the marriage. They kneel down, kiss the ground in front of the *Aasan* (*Sashtanga Namaskkaram*) and received blessing from him irrespective of his religion. This is the only instant in a Nazrani lifecycle to pay such a respect to any person.

²¹⁴ = Writing in rice, which marks the beginning of education.

²¹⁵ Ferroli, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 157

²¹⁶ The twelfth and thirteenth decrees of the second session according to the Portuguese version of the Synod of Udayamperor give more light into the education system of Nazranis. The twelfth decree confirms that Christians were studied under Hindu *Panikers*. (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 96 –7)

²¹⁷ Ayyar, *Anthropology...Op. Cit.*, P 56

²¹⁸ Day, *Land of Perumals...Op. Cit.*, P 219

army. Apart from the Nazranis on call, they maintained a regular army of some other lower caste.²¹⁹

The military training of Nazranis, who were predominantly merchants and farmers, need an evaluation based on *Kuladhrma*. In the unsecured situation of the medieval Kerala, the Nazrani merchants needed protection for their merchandise especially en route. They also needed constant protection for their *Angadys*. The help of Nairs, the assigned *Jathy* as soldiers, need not be available always.²²⁰ According to the system in Kerala, every Nair, if he is in the military service, affiliated permanently to any one of the local chieftains. Therefore, their services were not available to Nazranis to protect their wealth and privileges while such insults came from the same chieftains. The Nazranis may even think that having an army of their own would safeguard their existence. Therefore, the training for self-protection leads to the formation of an army. They were available to the service of the local chieftains, but not seem as obligatory. However, according to the above-mentioned sources, when something arises against the Nazranis, they joined even beyond the political boundaries. This was a unique facility available only to Nazranis in the entire Kerala community. This organization perhaps ensured the existence of Nazranis from the humiliation of Brahmins.

Art and Architecture

Regarding the art and architecture of Nazranis before the western invasion, only a little information is available. The description of Joseph the Indian is the first among them. He gives only a vague description. "Their houses are supported by walls and have different floors...The Christians have their churches, which are not different from ours [the Venetians], but inside only a cross will be seen. They have no statues of the saints...On the foundation is seen a big cross."²²¹ This description could not explain much. Based on the Nazrani life style, it seems that they had three types of buildings at their use such as, the houses at *Angadys*, the houses at *Kudikal* and the churches.

²¹⁹ According to Anathakrishna Ayyar, the regular army of Nazranis formed by the *Channar* caste. However, *Channar* caste is very rare in the Nazrani settlements. Probably he mistook *Ezhevas* as *Channar*. (Ayyar, *Anthropology...Op. Cit.*, P 55)

²²⁰ In *Tharissappally* copper plates, *Arunootevar*, a Nair military organization, was assigned to the protection of the church and its *Angady*.

²²¹ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, Pp 167 –8. Vallavanthara also states that it is difficult to translate this paragraph

Considering the architecture of the *Angady* houses still existing at Kunnankulam etc., it is quite evident that the *Angady* houses of Nazranis were their homes, shops and storehouses together. In such a context, the description of Joseph the Indian that "their houses are supported by walls and have different floors"²²² is meaningful. The general layout of the *Angady* houses can be made out of its present remains. They have at least two floors, the ground floor is usually a shop and the top is the residential quarters.²²³ They were situated in both sides of narrow street touching the next house in both sides. Such a layout was not only beneficial for the trade and commerce, but it also provided certain level of protection from external enemies and robbers. It was also possible that such *Angadys* had a compound wall around it.²²⁴ The church came in between, mostly in the centre of, the *Angady*.

The houses at *Kudikal* were much different from those in *Angadys*. According to Mundadan "They had their homes usually around a church but those who lived in the remote forests lived in houses very much apart from one another so that the Portuguese called these houses and surroundings villas"²²⁵ According to Monserrate "They [the Nazranis] live in villages, some honoured people in country houses"²²⁶ According to Andrews Thazhath, such houses in *Kudikal* were also an expression of the privileges of Nazranis since it included the restricted constructions of gate-house, granary, courtyard etc.²²⁷ He also points out that such houses are not different from those of upper-caste Hindus.²²⁸ It is realistic since the same artisans constructing both, using the same technology and building materials.²²⁹ As Monserrate suggests, only the rich and influential were having houses with such structure. In the case of others, it could not be different from those of their Nair counterparts.

Even though the Venetians understood from Joseph the Indian that the churches of Nazranis are not much different from their churches, indeed there

²²² Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, Pp 167 –8.

²²³ The present author visited the Kunnankulam *Angady*, the largest remaining specimen, in 1998 and conducted a personal survey.

²²⁴ The description about the Dutch attack on Pallikkara *Angady* in AD 1751/2 gives such an impression. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 87)

²²⁵ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 122

²²⁶ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 121 –2

²²⁷ "Only Brahmins and Syrians, (besides Jews) might have covered porches before their doors" (Day, *Land of Perumals, Op. Cit.*, P 219)

²²⁸ Thazhath, *The Juridical...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 31

²²⁹ According to Portuguese documents "The houses were made of wooden walls and not of brick or stonewalls, and were thatched with plaited palm leaves" (Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 122)

were several differences. According to Gouvea "The churches were always very dirty and unadorned ...The old churches were all built in pagodah-fashion, but all full of crosses like those of St. Thomas' miracle...For the ancient Christian churches, built long before the coming of the Portuguese, were all ornamented with them, both painted and graven."²³⁰

This description shows that Nazrani churches were not much different from local temples. This is not supporting the description of Joseph the Indian. However, the accounts of Fr. Fenicio, the Roman Catholic missionary, who reconstructed the old Palayoor church around AD 1607, states that it was previously just like a Hindu temple built with wood. He constructed the new church around it and the old one was demolished later.²³¹ The foundation of the old church excavated in the new church proves it. It is not larger than the *Sreekovil* of a medium Hindu temple in Kerala.²³² Even at the end of the eighteenth century, the Nazranis considered the construction of a sanctuary alone as the construction of the church.²³³ Even today, *Anthimahalan Kavuvu* at Kunnamkulam, a small temple gifted to Nazranis to convert into a church by Sakthen Thampuran of Kochi in the early nineteenth century, is being used as a church without reconstruction.²³⁴ A chapel in the compound of Saint Lazarus old Church, Kunnamkulam remained just like a *Sreekovil*, till its renovation in 1950's and still have the same dimensions.²³⁵

Such temple-like structures, according to Andrews Thazhath, were the second stage in the development of the Nazrani churches. According to him, "the primitive Thomas Christian community might have followed the Buddhist *Viharas* or Pagodas. They were simple constructions with leaves of trees"²³⁶ In the light of Buddhist past and the history of Brahmanic religion, this observation seems as realistic. It is reasonable to think that the temple-fashioned churches developed

²³⁰ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 204

²³¹ Antony, C. L., *Bhasha Padanangal*, Thrissur, Kerala Sahitya Academy, 1989, P 25

²³² The present author visited the Palayoor church on September 8, 1998 and observed this foundation personally.

²³³ While describing the construction of Puthenkavu church, the author of *Niranam Grandhavari*, gives elaborate details of the construction of the sanctuary. It was consecrated on *Kumbham* 2, 970 ME with highest celebration. Then *Niranam Grandhavari* states without much importance that "after this, [the consecration] the nave is being constructing at the expense of *Achen* [Mar Dionysus I]" (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 98).

²³⁴ Kunjathu, *Aarthattu Pally...*Op. Cit., P 4

²³⁵ A photograph of the old chapel prior to reconstruction is available (Kunjathu, *Aarthattu Pally...*Op. Cit., in between Pp 56 & 57)

²³⁶ Thazhath, *The Juridical...*, Op. Cit., P 46

during the domination of *Nampoothiri* religion, which was also the period of the fixing of Nazranis into the *Chathurveda* system. The availability of craftsmanship in the new temple-oriented society made this process easy.²³⁷ Perhaps the Portuguese comparison of Nazrani churches as “Pagoda fashioned” chiefly occurred because of the application of the same craftsmanship in the construction of both.²³⁸

The third stage, According to Andrews Thazath, of the Nazrani church architecture was one with the Persian influence.²³⁹ According to Monserrate, this processes of Persianization existed even in the sixteenth century. He wrote that “Their [of Thomas Christians] churches, of which there are still many, were built in the same manner as the “houses of the idols’ of these parts; the present Archbishop [Mar Abraham] says to it that they are built in our style”²⁴⁰ While considering the facts that the Persian immigrants built a church at Kollam in the ninth century and the presence of the East Syrian bishops then onwards along with the adaptation of East Syrian liturgy, it is possible that the East Syrian influence on the art and architecture was much older than the sixteenth century. All churches of Nazranis were always built towards the east,²⁴¹ and were not mere sanctuaries when the Portuguese saw them first. In most cases, they were long - strongly built - rectangular buildings with sanctuary, nave and a porch. Ananthakrishna Ayyar gives the following details also.

The chancel lacks an east window²⁴²...The porch is sometimes fifty feet long, and is a place of general assembly and conversation²⁴³...There is a cross on every gable, and one rising from the centre of the four-roofed chancel tower; often it is of wrought iron in the Celtic shape. In high relief on the eastern and western walls of the church may be seen a cross supported by peacocks accompanied by various emblems, such as wheels...Outside stands

²³⁷ The architecture and craftsmanship of all old church building in Kerala clearly indicates that the same school of artisans constructed churches and temples by using same form of art. There are several examples remaining, which show similarity even in minute details in the art forms and architecture

²³⁸ The same building materials, granite, latrite and wood were used for the construction of churches and temples.

²³⁹ Thazhath, *The Juridical...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 46

²⁴⁰ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 159

²⁴¹ This is an oriental practice and a rule for the East Syrian Church with theological background. (MacLean, *The Catholicos...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 235-6)

²⁴² Not only the eastern window, the Nazrani churches had no window at all. The sanctuary was just like the *Sreekovil* of the Hindu temples. The twenty eighth decree of the eighth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version confirms this. (Zacharia, *The Acts...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 196)

²⁴³ In the local usage, it is called as *Nadakasala*. It is most likely a corrupt form of *Nadasala* (step façade) since the front of the churches were also called as *Nada* just like temples. However, this portion is lacking in most of the old churches in the south. However, porches are found here for the north, south or for both the doors.

usually a large granite cross often 20 feet high on a basement²⁴⁴ containing small cups cut in the stone to serve as lamps on days of saints when it may be illuminated. A lofty wall of dark-red laterite with good coping surrounds the churchyard... A gatehouse stands at the entrance of some churches²⁴⁵, and there are often clergy-houses against the surrounding wall inside. At the west end of most of the churches, if not of all, is a gallery in which most of the bishops or clergy are expected to sleep, and there is a bed²⁴⁶. There is also a small detached wooden room for the chief guest. In a few of the old churches, the lamps used are similar to those in the synagogues of the Jews.²⁴⁷

While observing old churches of this third generation, it seems that they were built so strongly with thick walls²⁴⁸ and minimum, yet strong, doors.²⁴⁹ This was perhaps because they were used as shelters during wars etc.²⁵⁰ As in terms of the East Syrian theology, the Nazranis allowed no images except cross in their churches. It all leads to the conclusion that the Nazranis adapted the local craftsmanship for constructing sacred places along with the East Syrian usage regarding church architecture at their convenience. However, it is difficult to establish when the exact transfer took place from mere *Sreekovil*-like churches to more East Syrian format.

Women

The pre-colonial Nazrani women enjoyed certain degree of freedom and privileges. According to Gouvea: "The women are exceedingly modest both in life and dress. They wear white cloaks, or cloaks dyed in indigo which makes them blue: these cloaks cover their whole body; and are wound round the face, and fall from the head to the feet - which is a mark of great modesty."²⁵¹ All Portuguese

²⁴⁴ This basement, always made of granite, is just similar to the *Balikkallu* in front of the temples in respect of shape, structure, and engravings except the crosses engraved. In the personal observation of the present author, it is found that such crosses mostly have the figure of peacock. In addition, the cross is fixed to an inverted lotus.

²⁴⁵ Gatehouse is a status symbol for Nazranis, found in the privileges granted to them.

²⁴⁶ This gallery used for sleeping only when there is no other room available or existed. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 95)

²⁴⁷ Ayyar, *Anthropology...Op. Cit.*, 150 -1 For a comparison with old East Syrian churches in Persia, see Maclean, *The Catholicos...Op. Cit.*, Pp 290 -304

²⁴⁸ For example, the walls of Arthattu church, built by laterite, have 3.5-4 feet thickness except on the western side where it is 9 feet. (Kunjathu, *Arthattu Pally...Op. Cit.*, P 17) The walls of Chengannor church, built by granite in two lairs and filled in between with sand.

²⁴⁹ Till the nineteenth century, none of the old churches had more than three doors and no windows except those were added in the colonial or post-colonial period.

²⁵⁰ The narration of the visit of Archbishop Menezes to Alangad confirms this. (Maiekandathil, Pius, *Jornada of Dom Alexis De Menezes*, Thrikkakkara, LRC Publications, 2003, Pp 136 -7). According to the letter of Fr. Joao Maria Campori dated twentieth August, 1618, The great door [Western] of Kayamkulam church was remained closed for five years due to a rich and influential caste of nearby village who had strong opposition against Nazranis. (Ferroli, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 420)

²⁵¹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena... Op. Cit.*, P 211

documents of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries agreed in the 'chastity and modesty' of Nazrani women. The Christian women were much more modestly dressed than the Nair women were.²⁵² According to Monserrate, their dress at home was not very modest, probably in comparison with the European standards, but on the streets and when they went to the church they covered themselves in some white sheets with which they looked very modest. All, both men and women, went barefooted except the priests.²⁵³ As like other upper-castes the Nazrani women remained at home while men were thus occupied in commerce, military service etc. Monserrate further states, "These people are of high rank and greatly reputed, well formed and of good behaviour. The men are warriors; the women being honourable and rich, do the household works."²⁵⁴

An event related to the Portuguese conquest of Kollam justifies the statement of Monserrate that the women were honourable and rich. Gundert states that a certain Nazrani woman named *Kochikkali*, a friend of the queen of Kollam, went to the Portuguese captain as the delegate of the queen of Kollam to plead cease-fire in AD 1520. She seems rich enough to offer food and supplies to those in the Kollam fort.²⁵⁵ According to Jacob Kollaparampil, women were not allowed to be brought to the court of the bishop or Archdeacon. Men should represent them in such cases.²⁵⁶ However, Gouvea contradicts and gives a clear example of the women's right to argue in the bishop's court. According to him, "once in Angamale, a woman spoke for three successive days, morn and eve, before the Archbishop in a matter with others she brought before him."²⁵⁷ Perhaps Kollaparampil is speaking that the Nazrani women should not be brought in to the court as defendants as in the case of *Nampoothiri* women. It is clear that the Nazrani women enjoyed certain degree of freedom and rights.

Inheritance

Nazranis had their own laws of inheritance. Only males were considered as successors. Joseph the Indian gives the following description about Nazrani practice of inheritance.

²⁵² Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 192

²⁵³ Quoted by Mundadan, *Traditions... Op. Cit.*, P 122

²⁵⁴ Quoted by Mundadan, *Traditions... Op. Cit.*, P 122

²⁵⁵ Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama... Op. Cit.*, P 128

²⁵⁶ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon... Op. Cit.*, P 195

²⁵⁷ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena... Op. Cit.*, P 206

They generally make their last will and testament. The testament of the dead is honoured with much devotion. When somebody dies without executing the will, the one who is closest to the dead is the heir. Their wives, at the death of the husbands, go back to their paternal house taking the dowry with her. But, she cannot marry again for one year.²⁵⁸

Gouvea gives more details about their system that no daughter can inherit. Even if there are daughters, the inheritance passes to a male relative in third, fourth, or remoter degree, even of collateral line. A number of them used to adopt others who were not theirs and shared the inheritance with legitimate sons. They adopted the children of their women slaves whom they reared up as a rule.²⁵⁹ The twentieth decree of the ninth session, according to the Portuguese version of the Synod of Udayamperor also confirms the above²⁶⁰

It is not correct to say that women had no right to their fathers' property. The dowry given was treated as their share.²⁶¹ It was related to the Nazrani concept of family. Their custom considers the female as a part of the husbands' family from the date of marriage just like *Nampoothiries*.²⁶² Leslie Brown evaluates this concept, as "The wife normally becomes a part of her husband's family, and their children heirs of that family...If there was no male heir in the wife's family her husband might be adopted into her family, and become the legal heir...if a young wife were to die at her first confinement, a quarter of the marriage expenses and the dowry must be given back to the bride's family."²⁶³ While considering the statement of Joseph the Indian regarding the return of the bride after the death of their husbands²⁶⁴ on this background, it is obvious that that this statement is applicable only in the case of the premature death of the husband. She was allowed to return to her parent's house with her share for another marriage since marriage of widows were permitted.²⁶⁵ That is, dowry was

²⁵⁸ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, P 174

²⁵⁹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 206

²⁶⁰ Zacharia, *The Acts...* *Op. Cit.*, Pp 212-3, for Malayalam Version see, Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 241-2

²⁶¹ The fifteenth decree of the ninth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Malayalam version confirms it. While dealing the subject, denial of inherence to female, it reads as "Not only the females left with their dowry during marriage, those who are yet to married or still a child, denied the succession right" (Daniel, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 202)

²⁶² *Nampoothiries* have a ritual named *Kudiveppu* after marriage. Then onwards, the bride is treated as a part of the groom's family even in religious aspect. A ritual was existed among Nazranis with same name and concept.

²⁶³ Brown, *Indian Christians...* *Op. Cit.*, Pp 178 – 9

²⁶⁴ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, P 174

²⁶⁵ Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 177

the share of a bride in her parent's property transferred to the groom's family to which she was made a member.

The greedy male relatives perhaps manipulated the existing law that denied any further share after the receipt of the dowry, to deny the right of the unmarried daughters too. They conveniently forgot their responsibility to marrying out such daughters with dowry while inheriting some deceased relative's properties. This could not be treated as a part of the law, but just as a pollution. Perhaps this was the reason that lead the prelates to raise funds through donations to get the orphans married.²⁶⁶ Since the women's right was protected in the form of dowry, it could not be said that they were neglected or the system was fully male-dominated.

The civil authorities also entered into the inheritance of the Nazranis for their own benefits by imposing death duty. According to Gouvea "When Christians die, the Rajahs take a share of the inheritance like any of the sons, and as division is made by their officers, the larger portion always falls to the Rajahs. Some of them did not use this violent means; the first to introduce it was the Rajah of Cochin some years ago, and some others have followed suit."²⁶⁷ Gouvea states at the end of the sixteenth century, that such claims were recent. Perhaps it was imposed during the period of the decay of Nazranis after the collapse of Kodungallor in the fourteenth century. It was not imposed where Nazranis were still powerful. Adriaan Moens, the Dutch Governor of Kochi, confirms the same:

Under the kings of Cochin, they hardly had to endure persecutions, but rather enjoyed a sort of protection, which is still accorded by the king of Cochin on condition that they pay to him, besides the ordinary taxes, the *Perusandum* [*Purushantaram*],²⁶⁸ being a certain sum of money, estimated according to the inheritance being large or small, which must be paid by the heirs when the head of a family dies. But this relates only to the Syrian Christians of *Odiampar*, while there are very many Christians scattered about under other princes.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 200-1

²⁶⁷ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 210

²⁶⁸ = Death tax

²⁶⁹ The Rev. P. Groot, s.s.J. and A. Galletti I.C.S., *The Dutch in Malabar*, Madras, Government Press, 1911, P 174

It is very clear that Nazrani system of inheritance was male-dominated. It was derived from both the East Syrian canons and the *Nampoothiri* practices but had a separate identity of its own to suit for a trader community.

Dress and Appearance

The Nazrani men in general were not different from other upper caste Hindus in dress, ornaments and appearance.²⁷⁰ They had *Kudummi*, and *Kadukkan*, the ear ornament of a male, just like other *Chaturvarna* men. Gouvea narrates:

The dress is the same as of the Malabar people. They are bare from the waist upwards, and on the upper arms, they wear gold or silver armlets. From waist down to the knees they wear a cloth of silk ornamented; some cloths are very rich, and tied up with silk ribbons or chains of wrought gold and silver.²⁷¹

According to Monserrate, "All, both men and women, went barefooted except the priests."²⁷² However, Barbosa states that even the priests 'go barefoot'.²⁷³ As a rule, all men kept a *Kudummi*, a tuft of hair, as other upper caste Hindus.²⁷⁴ However, even in such similarities, according to Gouvea, the Nazranis were distinguishable; "among thousands of Nairs, one Christian can be identified."²⁷⁵ The Nazrani men used to have earrings just like other upper caste Hindus. Not only just had simple ornaments, they grew the ear hole to fit bigger ornaments²⁷⁶. Gouvea states: "Their ears are pierced through and pendent as of Malabarians... a sign among them of great dignity..."²⁷⁷ As a mark of their *Jathy* dignity²⁷⁸ and as the symbol of the royal privileges, it was essential for the Nazrani men to have the ear ornaments.

Food

The Nazranis were not different in food habits from other Keralaites then. According to Monserrate "their daily meals consisted of rice and caril (curry). This

²⁷⁰ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, Op. Cit., P 122

²⁷¹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 206

²⁷² Quoted by Mundadan, *Traditions...*, Op. Cit., P 122

²⁷³ Gangadharan, *Duarte Barbosa...* Op. Cit., P 92

²⁷⁴ In the letter of Mar Jacob to the king of Portugal of AD 1526, he states that the Nazrani men "wore the *Coudoumbi*." (Ferroll, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, Op. Cit., P 297)

²⁷⁵ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 206

²⁷⁶ Zacharia, *The Acts...* Op. Cit., P 210

²⁷⁷ Quoted by Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 207

²⁷⁸ Since *Kamavedha* was a *Samskara* in Brahmanic system, it was supposed to have earrings for all those who had *Kamavedha*. In a society, where wearing ornaments are punishable or taxable if not privileged to do so, it was necessary for community to express some symbols to show the holding of their charter of privileges.

was a mixture of different kinds of herbs and spices." ²⁷⁹ They do eat meat, fish and eggs but abstained from cow meat.²⁸⁰ According to Gouvea, "Meat they rarely eat, except when they come to Portuguese territory or when they entertain the latter in their houses, but not because they abhor it as heathens and Nairs, but because it disagrees with them, and the other foodstuffs are more in use in their country." ²⁸¹ Here Gouvea refers to cow meat as meat since he reported elsewhere as "They ate meat on Saturdays and Wednesdays, and fish on Fridays." ²⁸² Ferroli gives a detailed description about the daily food habits of the Nazranis.²⁸³

Apart from the daily food at houses, there were several occasions of banquets. All *Samskaras* mentioned above were followed by banquets at different degrees. In the case of *Pulakuli*, Only vegetarian food was served.²⁸⁴ Besides this, there were banquets at the churches in connection with its festivals. Gouvea confirms it as "the dinner being either offered by the Church Fabrica, or some wealthy men ... rich and poor eat of the same food. The dinner is called *Nercha*." ²⁸⁵ Such *Nerchas* were a visual symbol of the Christian doctrine of universal brotherhood. Such practices vanished from the Christian churches worldwide after the first few centuries but remained among Nazranis alone.²⁸⁶ It also had a local background of *Utsava Sadyas* of the Hindu temples and further back to the communal feeding at Buddhists *Viharas*.

Alcoholism

According to Gouvea, "The common people and the lower classes are much addicted to palm spirits, by reason of which there are among them many murders."²⁸⁷ However, James How states that the Nazranis in general abstained from liquor.²⁸⁸ The canons of Synod of Udayamperor confirm that the liquor was one of the commodities traded at Nazrani *Angadys*.²⁸⁹ Gouvea further states that

²⁷⁹ Quoted by Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 122

²⁸⁰ One of the difference of opinion between the Portuguese and the Nazranis in the sixteenth century was regarding the use of cow meat

²⁸¹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 207

²⁸² Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 203

²⁸³ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, Pp 159-60

²⁸⁴ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.* P 160

²⁸⁵ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 210

²⁸⁶ Even today, such *Nercha Sadyas* exist at least in a few churches like Aarthat (September 8), Putuppally (May 6) in connection with the festivals. Even today, in those occasions, all except the priests and deacons are served at the churchyard without any discrimination.

²⁸⁷ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 210

²⁸⁸ Hough, *History of Christianity... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 325

²⁸⁹ Zacharia, *Udaymoeror...*, *Op. Cit.*, 242

a strong beverage named *Arrack* was made out of Toddy from coconut trees and further strong *Nimpa* from *Arrack*.²⁹⁰ As the owners of coconut plantations and protectors of the toddy making *Ezhavas*, it was possible that the Nazranis developed processed liquor as a commodity with commercial value.

Medicine and Healthcare

It seems that the Nazranis were highly health conscious. They were on equal terms with upper caste Hindus in the matter of hygiene and cleanliness. According to Monserrate, "all, men and women, smeared themselves with oil and went to the river to wash themselves. This they did twice a week: Wednesdays and Saturdays. On such occasions they were very scantily dressed."²⁹¹ Gouvea gives a detailed account of the Nazrani healthcare.

They have no physicians²⁹², but treat themselves with herbs and simples, with which they get cured. On Saturday afternoons all rub coconut or sesamum oil on the body, and thus covered with oil they remain two or three hours on a bed, after which they bathe²⁹³ either in the house or at public tanks, which are very common in Malabar. Then they put on clean clothes or robes, and come out at sunset, when they begin the Sunday celebration. Till this time, after their dinner, they act no business nor speak to anyone out of the house, devoting the time to this oil friction and bath. They also wash the head hair with some herbs, which make lather like the black soap of Europe, and serve the same purpose. The bathing places are kept, as they are brought up in them and use them all their life, when they miss them, they fall ill. The same is done to nursing babies.²⁹⁴

Even if the Nazranis did not have their own physicians, it seems that they were served by the physicians of the *Nampoothiri* society as in the case of barbers and washer men. The canons of the Synod of Udayamperor confirm that diseases like smallpox, leprosy etc. also affected the Nazranis.²⁹⁵ Faith was also used along with medicines for healing. The Jesuit documents state, "The sick were anointed with oil, which was supposed to possess a certain healing power."²⁹⁶ Fr. Joao Maria Campori in his letter dated twentieth August AD 1612,

²⁹⁰ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 208

²⁹¹ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, Op. Cit., P 122

²⁹² Though it was true in general, there were exemptions. The *Vaidyan* family of Thevalakkara in Kollam district was, according to the legends, study ophthalmology from a Persian bishop Mar Abo. They were the official ophthalmologists of the Travancore royal family till AD 1947. According to *Niranam Grandhavari*, Mar Abo arrived in AD 905. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 82)

²⁹³ It is interesting to note that the East Syrians had a custom of taking great bath on Saturdays and calling Saturday as 'the great washing day'. (Maclean, *The Catholics...*Op. Cit., P 340)

²⁹⁴ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., Pp 207 -8

²⁹⁵ Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, Op. Cit., Pp 174, 181,185

²⁹⁶ Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, Op. Cit., P 177

states about a religious practice of the Nazranis as reading passages of the Gospel over the sick, "and also to have sentences from the Gospel written down and placed in little gold or silver cylinders or lockets, which they carry tied to their arm"²⁹⁷ He also states that the Nazranis shared this practice with the Hindus. It may be taken as a Christian adaptation of a local practice.

Civil Administration

In the fifteenth century, the Nazranis lived in numerous princely states under different rulers. However, the dimension of the authority of the kings over Nazranis is not certain. It is also yet to know whether any kind of centralized administration in civil matters ever existed among Nazranis. Penteado reports that he heard the story that one of the two sons of Knai Thoma was put in charge of the administration of property and income and the other in charge of the administration of justice.²⁹⁸ Bishop Francis Roz reported that there was a local tradition, that the Nazranis were also offered a kingdom of their own while the last *Cheraman Perumal* divided his land into several kingdoms, but not fulfilled.²⁹⁹ However, a strong tradition was there that the Nazranis had a king of their own. The Kodungallor Nazranis stated about their civil administration to Vasco de Gama that they had a king of their own.³⁰⁰

Christian Dynasty

The Portuguese documents say about the existence of a Christian Dynasty called *Villarvattom* to whom Nazranis were the subjects. Francis Day summarize their temporal administration as follows: "Though governed in temporal cases by the Prince of Udayamperor, under the control of the Cochin Rajah, they were subject in civil, spiritual, and moral matters, to their Bishop of Angamale, Metropolitan of India"³⁰¹ Adriaan Moens gives a slightly different and elaborate version of this story. According to him, the end of that Dynasty owing to the lack of successors.³⁰² Bishop Francis Roz gives a comparatively reasonable explanation for the "Christian Dynasty":

The power of the Christians was and is in the lands of *Byliarte Muttecovil*³⁰³...at present that kingdom and its lands are in the

²⁹⁷ Ferroli, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 418 – 9

²⁹⁸ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 124

²⁹⁹ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 129

³⁰⁰ Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 24-5

³⁰¹ Day, *Land of Perumals, Op. Cit.*, P 218

³⁰² Galletti, *Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 174

³⁰³ = Senior King of *Villarvattam*

possession of the king of Cochin...The lands were given by the *Xoran Perumal* to a Brahmin but the successors of this Brahmin ruler were very bad administrators...Hence, the Biliarte family was called upon to take charge of the administration. In course of time the Biliarte rulers became the special protectors of the Christians of St. Thomas...The Biliarte king helped the Christians who were molested by Muslims. As remuneration for this help, the Christians collected a sum of money from among themselves and offered it to the king. But the king would not accept it and instead would receive a *fanam* every year from their leaders. Thus, the Christians became his subjects, and subsequently those of the king of Cochin who inherited the lands of the Biliarte family.³⁰⁴

The author of *Oriente Conquistado* states that the king of *Villarvattom* was not a Christian but a Hindu. He declared his title as the defender, protector and the king of Saint Thomas Christians. He collected a tax as the price of his support to them in the fight with Muslims.³⁰⁵ Penteado testifies that no one among the Christians was superior to others except on the grounds of lineage and wealth,³⁰⁶ which is a clear denial of the existence of a Christian dynasty. According to Mundadan, the Christians had the *Villarvattam* royal family of Udayamperor as their special protector at first and then the King of Cochin who appropriated the kingdom of Udayamperor.³⁰⁷ Achutha Menon not only confirms the Hindu identity of the *Villarvattam*, but explains how the protection of Nazranis went to the Raja of Kochi also.³⁰⁸ Anathakrishna Ayyar also supports Achutha Menon.³⁰⁹ According to the author of the 'Voyage to Calcoen,' who accompanied Vasco de Gama on his second expedition, Nazranis were not subject to any king.³¹⁰ The narrative of Joseph the Indian supports this. According to him, the Christians of Kodungallor pay tax to the gentile king, and they hire their houses on annual rent, besides which they pay tribute.³¹¹ With all the evidences above, it may be concluded that the Nazranis, at least lived in the territory of Kochi, had no king of their own³¹² but they were under the protection of the king of *Villarvattam* and then of the king of Kochi.

³⁰⁴ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 128

³⁰⁵ Quoted by Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, Pp 13-4

³⁰⁶ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, 124

³⁰⁷ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 129

³⁰⁸ Achutha Menon, C, *The Cochin State Manuel*, Ernakulam, Government of Cochin, 1911, P 96

³⁰⁹ Ayyar, *Anthropology...Op. Cit.*, P 57

³¹⁰ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 99

³¹¹ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, P 167

³¹² For more details of *Villarvattam*, see: 1). Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, 2) Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, 3). Paret, *Nazranikal Vol. II...*, *Op. Cit.*, and 4). Joseph, *Villarvattom...*, *Op. Cit.*

Self Government

Even though the Nazranis did not have a king of their own, they had the privilege to have self-government. In a *Jathy*-bound society, the disputes occurred mostly in the same *Jathy* since the transactions and interactions were mostly limited among them alone.³¹³ Gouvea states that they were self-governed even though they were the subjects of local kings.³¹⁴ However, in the letter to the king of Portugal in AD 1523, Mar Jacob states that the Nazranis had the administrative right over criminal matters also. He states as follows:

It is already a long time since these Quilon Christians³¹⁵ bought with their money a big piece of land in Cranganore with power to pronounce sentence of death and all the other rights, which the then ruling king had in it, of which we have a copper-plate sealed with his seal.³¹⁶ This land is now usurped by many Lords.³¹⁷

Fr. Placid Podippara states that the Nazranis "rendered obedience directly to the kings in whose territory they lived with no regard for the intermediary officers. All their civil cases were decided by their ecclesiastical authorities while they could inflict even capital punishment in a certain locality in Cranganore."³¹⁸ According to Adriaan Moans, Nazranis got the consent of the king of Kochi to create one of their priests as an Archdeacon and this office was confirmed by the king with the rank of a Rajadore with power to decide all civil disputes³¹⁹ of Nazranis.³²⁰

The self-government of Nazranis over civil and criminal matters existed with them and it was lost before the arrival of the Portuguese. The treaty of AD 1503 between the queen of Kollam and Alfonso de Albuquerque had a clause restoring the self-government of Nazranis over civil and criminal administration.³²¹ It was the right for the trial and for pronouncing punishments by their own caste.³²² Since the right for the self-government existed in Kollam and Kodungallor during the pre-Portuguese period, it might be a privilege received

³¹³ Vasudeva Bhattathiri, *Niyamam Annum Innum*, Op. Cit., Pp 73-4

³¹⁴ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 205-6

³¹⁵ Several of early Portuguese documents referring Nazranis as "Quilon Christians". Hence, here it means Nazranis at large

³¹⁶ Here mentions the copper plate grants

³¹⁷ Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. 1, Op. Cit.*, P 112

³¹⁸ Podipara, *The Canonical...*, Op. Cit., Pp 64-6

³¹⁹ The Hindu code of canons permitting the king to delegate the authority of the judge to one of his high official. (Vasudeva Bhattathiri, *Niyamam Annum Innum*, Op. Cit., P 74)

³²⁰ Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, Op. Cit., P 174

³²¹ Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. 1, Op. Cit.*, P 100

³²² Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, Op. Cit., Pp 34-5

before the division of Kerala. Perhaps the Nazranis bought the protection and the right for self-government since the local chieftains encouraged the Nazranis to settle down in their territories on the expectation of revenue from the tax on trade.³²³ The local custom was also in favour of self-government since every caste had its own prelate and set of laws.³²⁴ The local chieftains insisted every *Jathy* to abide by its own law.³²⁵

The Administration of Justice

The Nazranis had their own way of the administration of justice. The right to hear the case and pronounce punishments vested with each *Pally Yogam*. The bishop heard more important cases and appeals. For serious issues, the bishop would set up a jury on mutual consent. Fr. Dionysio gives the following description about this process:

The crimes against the state were punished by the king of each country; the crimes against the commandments of the Church were punished by the bishop if they were grave; if not, by the Cathenar and the parish council composed of the principal Christians of the place. The punishment usually consisted in paying some money to the church, and when the culprit refused to pay it, he was excommunicated, and the other Christians were asked not to communicate with him. When the offender was a Cathenar, he was refused the *kasturi* in the church, and this meant that he was not admitted to the common prayer of the church. If the Cathenar did not amend even after this, he was denied incense in the Liturgy at the time of the purification with the thurible. And if he still refused to correct his conduct, he was excommunicated.³²⁶

Gouvea confirms the description of Fr. Dyonysio regarding the judicial system that required a jury of at least four people. The petitioner had the right to argue and the defendant to counter-argue. Appeals were made to the court of the bishop with the same nature. According to him, once the bishop pronounced the verdict there was no further appeal, reference, or revision.³²⁷ However, Mundadan assumes that though it was called as the court of the bishop, in reality

³²³ Shaykh Zaynuddin states that there was no tax was imposed over crops or land from the farmers, even if they are big. However, ten percent tax was imposed over the profit on trade irrespective of caste and religion. (Panikkassery, Velayudhan, *Keralam Pathinanjum Pathinarum Noottandukalil* (Eranlation of *Tufat-Al-Mujahidin* of Shaykh Zaynuddin in Arabic), Kottayam, Current Books, 1997, P 69). In that context, the major income of the kings was derived from the traders.

³²⁴ Narayanan, M.G.S., *Kozhikkodinte Katha*, Ottappalam, Chettur Sankaran Nair Foundation, 2001, Pp 40

³²⁵ Shaykh Zaynuddin states that *Samoothiri* was punishing the Muslims who were not following the Islamic practices. (Panikkassery, *Pathinanjum Pathinarum...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 69)

³²⁶ Quoted by Thazhath, *The Juridical...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 43

³²⁷ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 205 -6

it was that of the Archdeacon.³²⁸ Nobody dared to appeal to the kings since “Even if there is any dispute between them and anyone complains to the Rajah, he appropriates as much of the property of both as he can by way of punishment, without any order, or just agreement, or right.”³²⁹

The Nazrani practice of justice had its Christian roots. The old Mosaic law required at least two witnesses to plead one guilty.³³⁰ Jesus Christ accepted this and taught that at least two judges were required.³³¹ Apostles also insisted the witness of at least two in the trial.³³² The trial by the *Yogam* or by assessors fulfils this demand. The canons of the East Syrian Church instruct that the disputes between Christians should be settled in front of the persons appointed by the bishops. The sixth canon of the Synod of Mar Geevarghese Catholicos of AD 674 directs that the legal disputes of Christians should be argued in front of the persons appointed among the priests and deacons by the bishop with the consent of the people.³³³ These canons did not permit laymen to become the assessors whereas lay assessors existed in the Nazrani practice.

The Nazrani practice of the execution of justice can easily be explained under the Hindu practice of the same. According to *Smritis*, the Hindu code of canons, there are four stages in the judicial hierarchy. *Kulam*, the next of kin, stood at the bottom. *Srany*, the local community of the same profession, stood next. *Poogam*, a body of different castes of merchants on the next level and the king himself was at the top.³³⁴ In case of Nazranis, *Srany* represented the local *Pally Yogam*, and *Poogam* the court of the bishop (or the Archdeacon), which consisted of the representatives of all *Pally Yogams*. The same *Smrithis* demands the presence of assessors.³³⁵

Punishments

Fr. Dionysio reports that the punishments are generally in the form of fines to the church. In cases of grave crimes or in case of refusal of paying the fine imposed, the capital punishment of excommunication was pronounced. Gouvea

³²⁸ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, Op. Cit., P 125

³²⁹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 210

³³⁰ Numbers 35 – 30, Deuteronomy 17 – 6, 19 – 30

³³¹ John 8 - 17

³³² I Timothy 5 – 19

³³³ Chediath, G, Joseph. K. V., *Synodicon Orientale* (Malayalam translation), Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1996 Pp 376 – 7

³³⁴ Vasudeva Bhattathiri, *Niyamam Annum Innum*, Op. Cit., Pp 73 – 4

³³⁵ Vasudeva Bhattathiri, *Niyamam Annum Innum*, Op. Cit., Pp 73 – 4

states that even the violation of church laws such as breaking the Lent etc. were treated with excommunication.³³⁶ Perhaps the maximum punishments for such offences were fixed as excommunication but apply only if the minor punishments like fines were not met as stated by Fr. Dionysio.

There is a *Nampoothiri* equivalent for this called *Njaythysasyam*. Under this, if any *Nampoothiri* willingly or unwillingly breaks religious laws, his respective authority would punish him. If he disobeyed such a verdict, he would be excommunicated by denying all kind of cooperation from everywhere.³³⁷ According to the canons of the Synod of Udayamperor, even though it was the last and most rigorous punishment of the church, excommunication was so common among Nazranis since they had no other means of punishment.³³⁸ According to Paoli, "Their priests were accustomed to employ excommunication, known under the name of *Maharon*, and which is very severe against offenders."³³⁹ At least on rare occasions, the priests used excommunication as a tool to settle the personal scores.³⁴⁰

The eleventh decree of the sixth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version gives a detailed picture of the excommunication and its impacts.³⁴¹ Unlike other Christian communities, the Nazranis had greater impact by the punishment of excommunication. This was because of the *Jathy* structure and the *Kuladhrma*. Kanippayoor explains the impact of *Njaythysasyam*, the *Nampoothiri* equivalent of excommunication as follows:

Nobody will go to his [the culprit's] house or allow him to enter into their house...He will be totally isolated...Even if he will go to other places, he could not escape...It is also called *Eettum Mattum Mudakkuka*³⁴²...Nobody dared to resist the punishments.³⁴³

Padmanabha Menon gives a gruesome picture of the impact of excommunication, *Karavilakku*, in the Nair community that was as grave as the

³³⁶ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 202

³³⁷ Sankaran Namboothirippadu, Kanippayoor, *Aryanmarude Kudiyettam Keralathil Vol. III*, Kunnankulam, Panjagam Pusthakasala, 1966, Pp 166 -7

³³⁸ Zacharia, *The Acts...*Op. Cit., P 151

³³⁹ Quoted by Day, *Land of Perumals*, Op. Cit., Pp 218 -9

³⁴⁰ According to the early Portuguese documents, the people honoured the priests. They feared their punishment, chiefly excommunication, also. (Ferrolli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, Op. Cit., P 178)

³⁴¹ Zacharia, *The Acts...*Op. Cit., P 151

³⁴² *Eettu* means the assistance in childbirth and *Mattu* means the ritually washed cloth, without which the purity will not be received. This phrase representing the withdrawal of life supporting system since in a *Kuladharm* bound society; nobody except the assigned *Jathy* can perform a particular function.

³⁴³ Kanippayoor, *Aryanmarude...*Vol. III, Op. Cit., Pp 166 -71

above.³⁴⁴ Paulinus in his book *Viaggio alle Indie Orientali* of AD 1796 states that "Such excommunication was called *palliku purathakkal*, i.e. to send out of the Church. The excommunicated could not receive the sacraments of confession and communion...They had no voice in the community nor could they sit in Yogam."³⁴⁵ According to Gouvea "they could not be absolved of it even by death, such as deliberate murder and others."³⁴⁶ The effect of excommunication is much higher than death sentence in Kerala community due to the *Kuladhrma*. Once a person is excommunicated, he becomes an outcaste, which means he has no more *Kuladhrma*. Since nobody is permitted to do anything beyond his *Kuladhrma*, excommunication means nothing less than the withdrawal of life supporting system.

According to Gouvea, the bishop had the right to absolve one from excommunication.³⁴⁷ However, the circumstantial evidences suggest that in the cases of excommunication pronounced by the *Pally Yogam*, the local priests had the right to absolve one from excommunication. Hence, Gouvea might have said about the excommunication pronounced by the court of the bishop (or the Archdeacon). Paulinus gives a detailed description of the process of absolution from excommunication after making satisfaction for the offence or sin committed by them and by giving certain penalties like fines, a pilgrimage to *Malayattur*³⁴⁸ etc. According to him "after verifying that the penance imposed was fulfilled, the bishop, or the missionary³⁴⁹ or the parish priest, would absolve the penitents by beating them mildly with a small bundle of sticks at the entrance of the church in the presence of all."³⁵⁰ According to Gouvea, the first act of absolution from

³⁴⁴ "Those who are under *Karavilkku* should not receive anything needed for livelihood. Everybody kept them away as obscure. They should neither cooperated nor extend cooperation for any ceremonies like, birth, marriage and funeral. The people like *Cheethikan*, *Veluthaden* etc. should not perform their functions for them...Should not permit them to enter into the temples or not accept their offerings...Since they were also fall under excommunication if associate with them, friends and relatives keep him away...Even if he flees to somewhere else, the excommunication will follow him to there. The *Karayogam* of that place also execute the excommunication. Alas, there were only two ways remains in front of him either to die or to surrender. In such case, he will decide to surrender" (Padmanabha Menon, *Kochi ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 645-8)

³⁴⁵ Quoted by Anikuzhikattil, Mathew, *Ecclesial Response to the Negativity in Human Life*, Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1996, Pp 358-9

³⁴⁶ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 203

³⁴⁷ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 202

³⁴⁸ This may include during the post Portuguese period since then only *Malyattoor* came into limelight. Previously the pilgrimage may impose to Mylapore since it was an old pilgrim centre for the Nazranis.

³⁴⁹ Missionaries were entered into Nazrani system only after the Portuguese rule came into effect.

³⁵⁰ Quoted by Anikuzhikattil, *Ecclesial Response...*, *Op. Cit.*, 358-9

excommunication was giving and receiving of *Casturi*, This marks the re-entry of the culprit into the body of the church and hence to the community.³⁵¹

It was a local practice to perform such functions as a mark of acknowledgement of the accused as a full member of the community without black marks.³⁵² Even though the East Syrian liturgy have a right to absolution,³⁵³ the rituals like giving and receiving *Casturi*, which symbolize the local practice like *Kudikkuneer Veezhthuka* of *Nampoothiris*, were more effectively practised.

Occupation

Trade

The positioning as *Vysya*, the trader *Jathy*, in the *Chathurvarna* system of Kerala gives a specific *Kuladhrma* to Nazranis. This *Kuladhrma* was an insurance and a limitation at the same time to them. The allotment of *Kuladhrma* provides the monopoly in their occupation, commerce, whereas it limited their activities to trading alone.

Every bit of information testifies to the fact that the chief occupation of Nazranis was trade and commerce till the sixteenth century. The best evidence for their main occupation as trade and commerce is the term determining their settlement, *Angady*, which means the permanent market in Malayalam language. This is nothing but a justification for their *Kuladhrma* as *Vysya*. The author of the 'Voyage to Calcoen' (Calicut), who accompanied Vasco de Gama on his second expedition, writes about the Nazrani tradesmen as follows "They neither sell nor buy anything during the consecrated days and they neither eat nor drink with anybody but Christians... and there [Kollam] came many good Christians and they filled two of our ships with spices."³⁵⁴ The main merchandise of Nazranis was pepper. Mar Jacob wrote to the King of Portugal about the occupation of his subjects in AD 1523 that "the Christians whom I am ruling, got all the pepper from the hands of the farmers who collect it."³⁵⁵ Monserrate reported about the

³⁵¹ Quoted by Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, 203

³⁵² The one who escaped unharmed in the immersion of hand in boiling Ghee at Sucheendrem temple.(*Sucheendram Kaimukku*) was treated as innocent. They privileged to not only eat jointly with other *Nampoothiris*, but also have the right to do the *Kudikkuneer Veezhthel* on that day. (Vasanthan, Prof. S. K., *Kujikutten Thapurante Gadya Lakahanagal*, Kottayam, D. C. Books, 1983, Pp 64 -5.) In the case of *Smrtha Vicharam*, the *Nampoothiri* form of Inquisition, those who had pronounce as innocent and those who are related to the culprit, after his or her excommunication, are also privileged to do the *Kudikkuneer Veezhthel*. (Kanippayoor, *Aryanmarude...Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, Pp 128 -9) According to Kanippayoor, this means that their sin is over and they are accepted and mingled with own community.

³⁵³ Quoted by Anikuzhikattil, *Ecclesial Response...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 354 - 5

³⁵⁴ Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 99

³⁵⁵ Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.* P 110

occupation of the Christians as “Generally, they deal in merchandise for which there are among them different usurious contracts and they have always something to give as loan.”³⁵⁶ Gouvea describes the occupation of Nazranis, after mentioning a few property owners with coconut plantations, that “The others live on local trade, and many of the most substantial on trade with pepper, which they handle...and they deal with all the Malabar pepper by weight from Quilon to Cochin.”³⁵⁷ While describing the history of Thiruvalla, V. Raghavan Nambyar gives the following information about the Nazranis.

The Syrian Christians of *Kariyanattukavu* Street are mostly descendants of those brought there from Niranam for trade in ancient times. There are two churches in this street, and also two Hindu temples very close to it...These are said to have exported pepper and other products to Arabia and China and received gold and silver in exchange.³⁵⁸

T. K. Joseph, as a footnote to this statement, states about the *vaniyar* found in Tiruvalla temple copper plates of the 11 -12 centuries assigned with some duties but granted no land. He assumes that these merchants were the Nazranis of *Kariyanad Kavuvu* street.³⁵⁹ All the above descriptions lead to the conclusion that the main occupation of Nazranis in the sixteenth century was the trading of pepper. However, it is unrealistic to think they dealt only in pepper and other spices. Monserrate adds that some of the Nazranis were “oilmen and made oil from different things.”³⁶⁰ Oils are also commercial products. Even in that case, it was only a one-way trade. The Portuguese documents are silent about their trade reciprocals.

Dimension of the Trade

Traces are there of a wider dimension of their merchandise. According to local tradition, *Northists* of Nazranis were designated to trade on silk, gold and silver.³⁶¹ None of the Portuguese documents speaks about these commodities. Perhaps Nazranis may not dealing it extensively while Portuguese discovered them. However, Joseph the Indian gives the dimension of Nazrani trade in the past.

³⁵⁶ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, Op. Cit., Vol. I, P 157

³⁵⁷ Quoted by Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., Pp 209 - 10

³⁵⁸ *Kerala Society Papers...*, Op. Cit. Vol. II, P 77

³⁵⁹ *Kerala Society Papers...*, Op. Cit. Vol. II, P 77

³⁶⁰ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, Op. Cit., Vol. I, P 121

³⁶¹ *Naalagamam MSS.*, Pp 115 -7

There were more businessmen there [in Calicut] when the people of China used to go there for trade. The people of China are Christians and are white-coloured as we are. They are very dynamic people who at one time were having much trade in Calechut... These people are called Malasines. They trade in many goods, namely silk of every kind, copper, zinc, lead, aromatics and several perfumes. Things which they export from the place are the following namely, corals of all varieties and aromatics. They say that their region is distant from the city of Calechut by about 6000 miles.³⁶²

As a footnote to this description, Gundert narrates maritime trade of Nazranis in his *Keralappazhama* as follows:

Ships from great China arrived Kerala regularly. The *Tharissa* Christians of China brought silk, zinc, lead, musk etc. with them and did the trade here. When *Samurin* had dislikes towards them by the help of Arab Muslims, they [the Chinese] took anchor and left. After some time, they came fully equipped and attacked Calicut and did a lot of damage there. Thereafter they never returned here. Now Chinese ships are coming only up to Mylapore in *Chozhamandalam*...³⁶³

The merchandise of the Chinese in both the descriptions are just similar to that in the *Naalagamam*.³⁶⁴ Gundert describes the Chinese merchants as *Tharissa* Christians, The word *Tharissa*, derived from the Syriac word *Trisaishubho*, was used to identify Nazranis. Venetians, from the narration of Joseph the Indian, feels that those Chinese Christians "are white-coloured as we are" that is not possible for those with Chinese ethnic origin. Hence, it could be another group of people with different ethnic origin, residing in China for generations just like Chinese, and yet Christian.

The *Tharissa* Network

The possibility for the existence of a trade network, ranging from the Middle East to China, including Malabar, could not be ruled out. With the establishment of Sassanid rule in Persia in AD 224 by Ardashir, the traders from the Persian Gulf regions began to dominate the maritime trade of Malabar and the entire west coast of India. Many of these traders, who used to make

³⁶² This narration about Calicut follows that about Kodungallor. (Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, 198 -9) Joseph the Indian here comparing both and comments on the bigger size of Calicut. Considering the shift of the business of Kodungallor to Calicut, The businessmen and trade of Calicut should be a replica of that of Kodungallor in the past.

³⁶³ Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 18-9

³⁶⁴ *Naalagamam MSS.*, Pp 115 -7. According histories, the imports pottery, copper, mercury, tin, lead, camphor, silk and musk. (Raghava Varior, *Kerala Charithram, Op. Cit.*, P 225)

commercial trips to Indian coasts frequently, were Christians.³⁶⁵ The Persian connection and its trade relations were established by successive Persian migration to the Malabar coast and by the affiliation of Nazranis to the East Syrian Church. Joseph the Indian confirms the Persian presence in the Malabar coast in AD 1500.³⁶⁶ On the other end, China had a huge Persian migrant community. The stone monument at *Hsi-An-fu*, in north China confirms the existence of Persian Christianity there in the seventh and eighth centuries AD.³⁶⁷ They were called as *T'chin* in Chinese during that period.³⁶⁸ *T'chin* can easily be identified as the Chinese linguistic equivalent of *Tharissa*. According to Ferrolì, Blessed Oderic of Pordenone had seen the Nestorians in China during AD 1320-1.³⁶⁹ It is also stated that Sri Lanka, Java and Japan also had Nestorian Christianity.³⁷⁰ The Indian Intercourse with Nestorians in China is evident from the tomb of 'Sazik the Indian' in the Semiryechensk cemetery of southern Siberia.³⁷¹ Gundert gives the following description about this network in *Nazranikalude Pazhama*.

In this way, Jews and Nazranis grew and attain a lot of prosperity during the period of Perumals. Their trade was expanded in Keralam, Dravidam, Karnatakam, the East coast up to river Narmada and western sea, and to the eastern islands like great China also. Nestorian missionaries preached in China with the permission of the rulers (AD 636) and established several churches. During the period of Emperor *Kansum*, (AD 780-805) an illuminator called *Usu* reached Malayalam and preached. The king respected him well and appointed him as a minister. Not only did Nazranis go to China, but Bishop David (around AD 800) sent the priest named Thoma from there as per the order of Mar Timothy... Several travellers state that the Chinese ships reached Kerala from Kollam to *Eazhimala*...³⁷²

All these factors justify the narration of Joseph the Indian and its Interpretation by Gundert in *Keralappazhama*. There is no wonder if there was a trade network of East Syrian Christians, bound by same religion, Nestorian

³⁶⁵ Malekandathil, *Jornada, Op. Cit.*, Pp XXXVIII – IX. Even the Sassanid ruler Yazdirgird I (399- 421) deputed Catholicos Ahai around AD 415 to Fars to investigate the piracy of the ships returning from India and Ceylon.

³⁶⁶ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, P 197

³⁶⁷ Stewart, John, *Nestorian Missionary Enterprises*, Madras, The Christian Literature Society, 1928, Pp 167-72

³⁶⁸ Stewart, *Nestorian Missionary...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 184

³⁶⁹ Ferrolì, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 65

³⁷⁰ Aprem, Mar, *Nestorian Missions*, Trichur, Mar Narsai Press, 1976

³⁷¹ This graveyard has hundreds of tombstones with East Syriac inscriptions from AD 1249 to AD 1345. (Stewart, *Nestorian Missionary...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 200-1)

³⁷² Gundert, *Keralolpathy ...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 345 -6

Christianity, and by a common language, the East Syriac, known as *Tharissa*, existed from the Far East to the Middle East in which Malabar was a part.

The Decay of Nazrani Trade

At the time of the Portuguese discovery of Nazranis, their trade was not so flourishing as in the past. They were in rigorous competition with Muslims in the maritime trade. A combination of several local and international factors led the Nazranis to a defensive position in international trade. The first among them was the collapse of the *Tharissa* network. According to John Stewart; the Ming dynasty persecuted and eliminated the Nestorian Christianity of China by AD 1369.³⁷³

The spread of Islam in Arabia and Persia was a great blow to the Nazrani trade network. During the period of Marco Polo at the end of the thirteenth century, the Nestorian Christianity flourished at least in some pockets of Arabia.³⁷⁴ However, the fall of the government of the Muslim world to the Turks reduced Christianity to the minimum level in the Middle East. It also established ultimate control over the maritime routes in the Arabian Sea. The pattern of expansion of Muslim control over the trade in the Arabian sea is well explained in the narratives of Joseph the Indian, while speaking about Gujarat.³⁷⁵ Perhaps in the similar way, the control of the entire western ports of the Arabian Sea fell to the hands of the Muslims.

Agriculture

Even though the Nazranis were chiefly engaged in trade and commerce, they were also engaged in some sort of agriculture. John de Marignolli reports in AD 1348 that the proprietors of pepper plantations were the Christians of Saint Thomas.³⁷⁶ Even in the early Portuguese period, they had control over pepper. Gouvea states about the coconut plantation of Nazranis: "They have many wealthy men...for very few have farms, ... palm groves which in the east are the most substantial kind of property, ... This is, therefore, the best property in which some of these Christians are very rich, but very few of them."³⁷⁷

³⁷³ Stewart, *Nestorian Missionary...*, Op. Cit., P 196

³⁷⁴ Abraham Mattam, Mar, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas and Her Missionary Enterprises Before Sixteenth Century*, Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1985, Pp 46 - 8

³⁷⁵ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., P 211

³⁷⁶ Ferrolli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, Op. Cit., Pp 66-7

³⁷⁷ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., Pp 208 -9

Gouvea's description confirms that the Nazranis indeed had the coconut cultivation but only a few were engaged in it. These two, pepper and coconut, are commercial crops and directly related to the trade. Hence, it can be assumed that such plantations were developed by Nazranis as an extension of their principal occupation, trading. No traces of other kind of agriculture of Nazranis, especially that of food grains, are found in the sixteenth century Portuguese documents or in the canons of the Synod of Udayamperor. The Nazranis might not have engaged in such agriculture since their *Kuladhrma* as merchants did not permit them to do so.

Money Lending

As a mercantile community, Nazranis obviously had periods of surplus and shortage of cash, which led to some sort of banking or money lending. Even though there was no trace of any organized money lending activities, it existed among Nazranis during the pre-Portuguese period. Monserrate states: "Generally they deal in merchandise for which there are among them different usurious contracts and they have always something to give in loan."³⁷⁸ According to the canons of the Synod of Udayamperor, "the greatest part of the Christians of this diocese entangled therein [money lending]."³⁷⁹ The rate of interest was higher, according to the Portuguese, than the normal rate of ten percent per annum³⁸⁰ and it was treated as a decent source of income.³⁸¹

The loan was given against mortgage. In most cases, immovable properties were pledged. Even the churches lend-out money against the land mortgage. In several cases such dealings were inter-religious.³⁸² Perhaps mercantile commodities were also treated as good security.³⁸³ On certain occasions, money was lent-out without collateral security. However, in such cases the interest rates were higher even up to double of the normal rate.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁶ Quoted by Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 121

³⁷⁹ Ninth decree of the ninth session (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 206 –207)

³⁸⁰ According to Malayalam version of the canons, it was twelve percent per annum. (Daniel, *Udaymoeror...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 193 –5)

³⁸¹ Ninth decree of the ninth session (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 206 –207)

³⁸² The Palayoor copper plate of 781 ME (AD 1606) is a typical example of such dealings. (Antony, *Bhasha Padanangal...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 27 –9)

³⁸³ Even in the twentieth century, the Nazranis treated commodities like pepper as good security similar to movable properties like gold ornaments and bronze vessels. Even the pledging of an years harvest of pepper or similar commercial crops was also had the same effect.

³⁸⁴ Daniel, *Udaymoeror...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 195

Military Service

The early Portuguese documents disclose that the Nazranis, at least a part of them, were professional soldiers. Monserrate states while discussing the occupation of Nazranis: "Some of them serve the gentile kings as soldiers and live by it."³⁸⁵ Anathakrishna Ayyar evaluates the relation between the Nairs, the professional soldiers in the *Nampoothiri* oriented society, and the Nazranis as follows:

The Nayars who were of the military clan regarded them as brethren, and loved them exceedingly. All communities had special men-at-arms called *Amouchi* who were bound on oath to safeguard the people or places under their protection even at the cost of their lives. They were loving, faithful and diligent. They respected the Christians before whom they never ventured to sit unless invited to do so. They were very strong and powerful, and their bishops were respected and feared like kings.³⁸⁶

This observation not only confirms the military power of the Nazranis, but also their *Jathy-wise* superiority over the Nairs,³⁸⁷ the fourth *Jathy*, *Sudras*, in the *Chaturvarna* system of Kerala. Gouvea gives the following details about the Nazrani militia: "All go about with swords and shields, and some with guns and lances, which they leave when go to church...and the main strength of the Rajah's armies at war consists in the Christians of St. Thomas they have."³⁸⁸ However, their behaviour was not aggressive. Anathakrishna Ayyar comments: "They were always esteemed and patronised by their rulers as much for their general fidelity and regard for truth, as for their skill and military prowess. But notwithstanding their warlike appearance, their disposition was very peaceable, and it was their character at that time that quarrels much less, murders were rarely heard of among them."³⁸⁹ The Nazrani army was stated as loyal and faithful to the kings in whose territory they lived. Apart from an army of their own, probably all able-bodied Nazrani men, they had a military force formed with other *Jathys*.³⁹⁰ They used this army to protect their privileges as Nazrani caste.

³⁸⁵ Quoted by Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 121

³⁸⁶ Ayyar, *Anthropology...* *Op. Cit.*, Pp 54 –5

³⁸⁷ According to Mundadan, some Portuguese documents called Nazrani soldiers also as 'Nairs'. According to him, in some documents, "Nairs" is used just with the meaning as soldiers. "...and we know that Christians were also among these soldiers..." (Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 130)

³⁸⁸ Quoted by Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 206 – 7)

³⁸⁹ Ayyar, *Anthropology...* *Op. Cit.*, P 56

³⁹⁰ "The Syrian Christians were almost on a par with their sovereigns. They were allowed to have a military force of their own, which was composed chiefly of *Shanars*, the caste that cultivated the palm tree... In front of their girdle they were accustomed formerly to carry a large knife like a poniard, highly tempered, and

Francis Day states that "They united together when the infringements were made upon their rights, or one of them was subject to insult..In those days, Christians never touched a *Sudra*, nor even a *Nair*. Any of these castes, who refused to acknowledge their precedence, empowered to slay forthwith."³⁹¹ He points out an incident of the Raja of Parur in the sixteenth century as a typical example of the collective bargaining power of the Nazrani forces to safeguard their privileges.³⁹²

All the above testimonials confirm that the Nazrani army had a common call beyond the political boundaries. Even though they were loyal to their respective kings, they united to protect their privileges or for any of such common cause. The Archdeacon had the right to invoke the Nazrani army as the *Jathikku Thalavan*. It seems that the bishops also used this power during their presence. In his letter to the king of Portugal of AD 1723 from Kochi, Mar Jacob confirms "further I have won all these Christians of this country for thy service, so that when thou shalt be in need of them, thou shalt find in it over 25,000 warriors."³⁹³ Even though the Nazranis had much in common with Nairs regarding the military service, training, brotherhood etc., they were distinguished from the Nairs at least in the battlefield. According to him, "[they] do not smear their heads nor do they paint their bodies with the ashes of cow-dung blessed by the "cursed jogues", which' the Nairs make very much"³⁹⁴ It seems that the Christian doctrines influenced the Nazranis in abstaining from such things. It also indicates that the Nazranis had adherence to their own faith and did not follow the religious practices of the *Nampoothiri* religion.

The Collapse of Maritime Trade

The Rise of Calicut

The entry of *Zamorin* into the political scenario of Kerala was a blow to the Nazrani trade. The *Zamorins* captured Calicut and developed it as the best port in the western shore of the Indian peninsula.³⁹⁵ The Arab Muslims, who were also eager to expand their trade but failed to set foot in Kodungallor, which was

having a long metal handle; sometimes the handle was made of gold and beautifully worked..." (Ayyar, *Anthropology...Op. Cit.*, 55)

³⁹¹ Day, *Land of Perumals, Op. Cit.*, P 219

³⁹² Ayyar, *Anthropology...Op. Cit.*, P 55

³⁹³ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 111

³⁹⁴ Quoted by Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 122

³⁹⁵ For the rise of Calicut and of *Zamorins*, see: (a) Logan, *Malabar Manuel, Op. Cit.*, Pp 293 -316 and (b) Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Charitram, Op. Cit.*, Pp 158 - 66

dominated by Nazranis and Jews, were warmly welcomed to Calicut. The culmination of the interests of *Zamorin* and the Arab Muslims led to the development of Calicut. Gundert in *Nazranikalude Pazhama* summarizes that course of action:

...By the settlement of the Arabs [at Calicut], Nazrani trade was diminished. That because when *Zamorin* thought ... the trade benefits should reach him instead of Kodungallor. It was because he had little land³⁹⁶...He invited a lot of *Chonakar*, granted many privileges and established the city of Calicut by them (around AD 1300, 575 *Kollam* era). While he acquired wealth by the trade at Calicut, He went by sea... attacked Perimpadappu also and hence it became a rivalry without reconciliation between them. The *Chonaker* and Nazranis also fought each other to establish the monopoly over trade. It is heard that 5,000 Nazranis, who were experts in use of bows and arrows, fought for Perumpadappu by the order of *Paliyathu Achen*. Calicut became the centre of the trade from China to Africa since in one rainy season, the mud formation closed Kodungallor port...The Arabs and Egyptians affiliated to *Chonkars*. *Chonakas* preached Islam in the Far East. *Samurin* did not permitted Nazranis to settle in Calicut.³⁹⁷

It was easy for the Arabs to establish a monopoly at Calicut rather than Kodungallor and Kollam, where Christians and Jews were established for ages. According to him, "The political changes of Kerala during the beginning of the twelfth century increased the standards of the trade relations between the south India and the Arab world... The three hundred years between AD 1200 and AD 1500 was the period of development not only of the city of Calicut and *Zamorin*, but of the Arab-South India trade relations also... The sect *Puthu-Islam* [new Muslims] was formed when the conversion took place among them [fishermen] with royal permission...Around AD 1120, some Arabs landed at this shore along with the last *Perumal* caused the establishment of Calicut."³⁹⁸

It is very clear that *Zamorin* had given all encouragement to the Arab merchants for the prosperity of Calicut. They were permitted to create a local Muslim community to support this trade relation.³⁹⁹ It all created a coalition of

³⁹⁶ According to M.G.S. Narayanan, the lack of temples, fertile land and the blessings of the Brahmins made the *Zamorins* turn into international trade. (Narayanan, *Kozhikkodinte Katha*, Op. Cit., Pp 15)

³⁹⁷ Gundert, *Keralolpathy ...*, Op. Cit., Pp 347 -8

³⁹⁸ Narayanan, *Kozhikkodinte Katha*, Op. Cit., Pp 28-9, 41

³⁹⁹ Shake Zaynuddin in his history *Tufat- Al- Mujahidin* confirms that the Kerala Muslim community was not formed by force, as happened elsewhere. *Zamorin* had given all support for the conversion into Islam. (Panikkassery, *Pathinanjum Pathinarum...*, Op.Cit., Pp 22-3)

three mutually supporting factors that provides the monopoly of maritime trade of Kerala towards Calicut. They are:

1. The friendly nature of Calicut, one of the best ports in South India and the political power of *Zamorin*.
2. The supremacy of Arab Muslims over the Arabian sea and over the West coast of Arabian Sea.
3. The emergence of a local Muslim community to support the Arab Muslim merchants in the territory of Kerala.

The Collapse of Kodungallor

Kodungallor, once the most famous port in southwest India, and the most prominent settlement of Nazranis took most of the blows from the *Zamorin's* advancements. When he was powerful enough, *Zamorin* captured Kodungallor and placed one of his vassals as the ruler of Kodungallor. The former rulers of Kodungallor, the Kochi, Dynasty, fled from there to Kochi.⁴⁰⁰ The frequent wars between *Samurins* and Kochi, which were held around Chottuwa, the river mouth near Kodungallor, which also marked the political boundary of those two, was a constant trouble for the Nazranis.⁴⁰¹ During this period, the river mouth of Periyar at Kodungallor, the outlet towards sea from Kodungallor, slowly been silted and in AD 1345 it was fully closed and a new river mouth was opened at Kochi. This nullified the importance of Kodungallor in maritime trade. Even though the new outlet of Periyar to sea, Kochi, was far south and in the territory of Kochi Dynasty, Nazranis were not able to utilise it since Kochi was forced to enter into a treaty with the winning *Zamorin* that all export of pepper and other produce will be done through Calicut only.⁴⁰² In his letter to the King of Portugal in AD 1523, Mar Jacob confirms that the Nazranis were selling their pepper to Muslims and the latter exported it through Calicut.⁴⁰³

Thus, the maritime trade of Nazranis from Kodungallor was virtually finished. However, the domestic trade and commerce south of Kodungallor remained with them. By the above-mentioned treaty of the fourteenth century, *Zamorin* stopped his advancement towards south and hence checked the expansion of a local Muslim trade network in the Nazrani heartland. Nazranis

⁴⁰⁰ Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Charitram, Op. Cit.*, Pp 159 –60

⁴⁰¹ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, Pp 279 –80

⁴⁰² Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Charitram, Op. Cit.*, Pp 161 –2

⁴⁰³ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 111 - 3

collected the pepper and sold it to the Muslim wholesalers.⁴⁰⁴ The alleged quarrels between Muslims, Nazranis, and Jews at Kodungallor⁴⁰⁵ should be evaluated on these grounds. With the rise of *Zamorin* – Arab - local Muslim Axis, Nazranis lost their intercontinental trade but retained the domestic one. However, the Jews, who had no domestic network of their own, lost almost all opportunities. This perhaps forced them to quarrel with the increasing Muslim merchants just for survival. Nazranis who also suffered great loss, perhaps, favoured the Jews to prevent the entry of Muslims into domestic trade in their territory. Shayk Zaynuddin states that the last of such wars that led to the collapse of Kodungallor was in AD 1524.⁴⁰⁶ He also confirms that the Nazranis had good relations with Muslims by then.

The other major Nazrani settlement and trade centre, Kollam, was not affected by any local political turmoil as happened at Kodungallor. However, the two other adverse factors affected the Nazrani trade at Kollam. Perhaps The Collapse of *Tharissa* Network might have affected Kollam more than Kodungallor since it was a major transshipment port between the Middle East and the Far East. The rise of Calicut and Arab domination over the Arabian sea indeed affected the business at Kollam.⁴⁰⁷ By the time of Barbosa, the maritime trade from Kollam mostly fell into the hands of Arabs and Gujarathis. Barbosa wrote, “[There are] Heathen and Christians in great numbers. The Moors and Heathens⁴⁰⁸ are great traders and possess many ships dealing in goods of diverse kinds, in which they sail in all directions, to *Charamandel* and *Ceilam*, to the *Isles*, to *Benguala*, *Malaca*, *Camatra* and *Peeguu*, but they trade not with Cambaya.”⁴⁰⁹ This may be a result of the Muslim domination over the Arabian Sea and over the sales outlets in the Middle East. However, there was no trace of a local Muslim community so prominent to replace Nazranis in Kollam. Therefore, even though they lost the maritime trade, the domestic network was still in the hands of Nazranis then at Kollam.

⁴⁰⁴ In the letter of Mar Jacob to king John III of Portugal from Cochin in AD 1523, confirms the trade relation of Nazranis with *Moors* (Arabs or Muslims). (Ferrolli, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 110-1)

⁴⁰⁵ Kruvilla, *Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 21-2, and Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 19-20

⁴⁰⁶ Panikkassery, *Pathinanjum Pathinarum...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 93

⁴⁰⁷ Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. III*, Madras 1924 (AES Reprint), Madras, Asian Education Services, 1982, P 523

⁴⁰⁸ Barbosa mentions only as *Heathens*. According to Joseph the Indian, the major Hindu community deals with Kerala in the fifteenth century was Gujarathis from Suret. (Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, Pp 211 -3)

⁴⁰⁹ Gangadharan, *Duarte Barbosa... Op. Cit.*, P 92

Conclusions

The Persian connection of the Nazranis made them depend on trade and commerce for their major livelihood. Hence, the expansion of their settlements was directly linked with the trade routes. These settlements provide reasonable revenue for the local chieftains and kings, as taxes and levies, in whose territory the Nazranis lived. The domestic and intercontinental trade network of Nazranis opens the window of the local kingdoms into intercontinental trade. This situation forced the local kings and chieftains to defend the Nazranis and their religion for their own sake by giving them privileges and immunities in the form of copper plate grants etc.

This economic and political environment during the formation of *Nampoothiri*-centred Kerala society forced the Brahmanic religion to accept the Nazranis and their religion into their *Chathurvara* system as *Vsyas*. They were also protected by the immunity of *Kuladhrma* under the *Chathurvarna* system in their profession. This enabled the Nazranis to create monopoly in trade and commerce in their territory. On the other hand, their occupation was limited to trade and its allied professions alone by the same *Kuladhrma*.

The acceptance of Nazranis as *Vsyas* in the Brahmanic system made the Nazranis develop a lifestyle that suits the Brahmanic religion. They adopted a lifestyle that was acceptable to the *Nampoothiris* like *Samskaras*, *Ashrams*, food restrictions, concept of sacredness, untouchability etc. They were either the direct adaptation of the *Nampoothiri* practices or the replacement by the Christian sacraments. This Brahmanic lifestyle enables them to safeguard their upper berth in the caste-system and hence they were able to protect their occupation and the life supporting system along with their religion. In a way, the pre-colonial Nazranis were an integral part of the *Nampoothiri*-centred *Chathurvarna* system, yet with Christian faith. They were not distinguishable from other members of the *Chathurvarna* system even in the peripheral view

The adaptation of Brahmanic lifestyle also made the Nazranis structure their organization and administration of justice in the same way as of the *Nampoothiri Grama*. The Nazranis were organized as *Angadys*. All Nazranis were classified either as *Mahodayapuram* or as *Kurakkaeni Kollam Nazranis*.

This provided the immunity and privileges to all Nazranis that were granted to the *Mahodayapuram* and *Kurakkaeni Kollam* Nazranis.

Kodungallor and Kollam ports were the openings of the international and maritime trade of the Nazranis. With the collapse of the *Tharissa* network against the rise of Islam in the Middle East and in the Far East began the decay of the Nazrani trade. The formation of Calicut- centred *Zamorin*- Arab-native Muslim axis became a serious threat to the Nazrani trade. The domination of Arab Muslims over the trade routes through Arabian sea made the independent maritime trade of the Nazranis difficult. The political control of Kochi by the *Zamorin* and the destruction of Kodungallor port put an end to the maritime trade of the Nazranis. Even then, the domestic trade network remained with the Nazranis. Even though the Nazrani trade had declined by the arrival of the Portuguese, it did not totally collapse. In addition, they were not facing any religious persecution then.

Chapter – IV CHRISTIANITY OF THE PRE-COLONIAL NAZRANIS

Religion of the Nazranis

All available sources confirm that the Nazranis were associated with the East Syrian Church¹ at least from the fourth century of the Christian era.² Joseph the Indian testifies that they were under the Catholicos of the East in AD 1500 and followed Nestorian theology.³ Paoli, the French traveller of the eighteenth century, says about the religious condition of Nazranis in the beginning of the sixteenth century as follows:

All these Christians, in 1502, at which period Vasco de Gama came a second time to Malabar, were Nestorians, Some of them denied the divinity of Christ, and could not endure images, but on the other hand, they showed a greater reverence for the holy cross. They had no other sacraments than baptism, the last supper and the consecration of priests. They believed that the souls of the just, were not admitted into the presence of God before the final judgment, and that until that period, they were to remain in Eden. They employed a kind of baptism quite different from ours [the Roman Catholics]...⁴

Not only Paoli mentions the term 'Nestorian', he also states some of their doctrines that prove their Nestorian affiliation. In such a context, the Nazranis should also abide by the traditions of the East Syrian Church. But evidences are strong enough to prove that the *Marthomayude Maargam* was not a true import of the East Syrian tradition in all respect like sacraments, hierarchy, daily life, ecclesiology etc.

Religious Affiliation

Like most other Christian Churches, the Nazranis were also a purely native Church in the beginning⁵. However, during the post-apostolic period, when other Churches centralized its administration around bishops and became more powerful, the condition of Kerala Christians was on the reverse trend according to the legends.⁶ The Christianity in different parts of Roman and Persian empires

¹ 'Church of the East' often called as 'the East Syrian Church', 'the Persian Church', and 'the Nestorian Church' for various reasons.

² The first available Syriac document of Indian origin, Vat. Syr. 22, copied at Kodungallor in AD 1301, is a lectionary of Pauline epistles for whole year according to the East Syrian Church. (Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, Op. Cit., P 188-9)

³ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., P 169-70

⁴ Quoted by Day, *Land of Perumals*, Op. Cit., Pp 218-9

⁵ Except a possible few Jews

⁶ See the legends regarding *Manikkavachaker* and the arrival of Knai Thomman in Chapter II

were not only politically organized, but mutual support was extended especially in the case of priesthood and doctrines also. Such a natural support was impossible for Kerala due to the geographic separation from the rest of the Christendom.

According to the legends, bishop Mar Joseph of Edassa, who came along with Knai Thomman in AD 345, established the relation between Nazranis and the Church of the East. It is true that the Nazranis were not under the Persian Church in the second century AD since there is no reference about India in the book of the laws of Bardaisan.⁷ However, the Syriac writers knew of the existence of the Christians in India in the third century. The author of the *Malfanooso D'Sleehe* (Doctrines of the Apostles), who wrote not much later than A.D. 250, was at least vaguely aware of the existence of a Christian community in India⁸ though he does not speak of any Persian connection of the same.

In the fifth century, Cosmos Indicopleustes reports the presence of a bishop appointed from Persia at Kollam.⁹ Therefore, one can conclude that the Persian connection began between the third and the fifth centuries. Perhaps the Nazrani legends about Mar Joseph of Edassa in AD 345 may be true in this context. However, some authors think that the relation of Nazranis was not directly with the primate of the Persian Church, the Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, but it was through the Metropolitan of Riwardashir in Fars.¹⁰

The place mentioned in the letter of Patriarch Isho-'Yahb III, *Kalah*, which is at a distance of one thousand and two hundred *parasangs*, is considered as Kollam due to several reasons. The practice of Nazrani priests of wearing white robe may also be a proof of their very old attachment to Fars.¹¹ However, Mar Timothy the Great (AD 779 – 823), the Catholicos of Seleucia, had settled all the oppositions with Fars and made them subordinate to the Catholicate of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in the ninth century AD. From the above stated letter of Patriarch Isho-'Yahb III, it is very clear that a hierarchy existed in India before his period¹². Some even think that this hierarchy included the bishops of Indian origin.¹³

⁷ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 16-7

⁸ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 17

⁹ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 64

¹⁰ For more details see Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 31-2

¹¹ According to Barhebraeus: " It is said that down to the time of this Timothy, the bishops of the provinces of Fars were wearing white garments like the secular priests, were eating meat, and marrying and were not under the jurisdiction of the Catholicos of Selucia." (Quoted by Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 34-5)

¹² Mingana giving several Syriac documents referring Christianity in India in the first Millennium. (Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 33 -6)

¹³ Mundadan, *History of Christianity... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 104

There is no other trace of indigenous bishops seen in the early and the medieval history of Nazranis. From the time of Timothy the great, a constant flow of bishops of Persian origin is there¹⁴. *Niranam Grandhavari* gives a list of these bishops starting from Mar Sabor and Mar Afroth in AD 825.¹⁵ Ferroli adds Mar Dudi or David (AD 295), Mar Joseph of Edassa (AD 345), Mar Thomas (AD 795-824), Mar Yohannan (AD 1122-29)¹⁶. None of these lists included Mar Jacob Metropolitan referred to in the book copied at Kodungallor in AD 1301.¹⁷

The book copied at Kodungallor in AD 1301 is a lectionary for the readings of Saint Paul in the Eucharistic liturgy of Sundays, feasts and commemorations of the whole ecclesiastical year according to the Church of the East.¹⁸ It clearly indicates that the religious affiliation of Nazranis was with the Persian Church.

The Roman Claims

The Roman Catholic Church claims that the Nazranis were under the Roman Catholic Church even during the pre-Portuguese period.¹⁹ Their claim is primarily based on the on the alleged universal supremacy of the Pope of Rome. This is not an accepted fact by theologians other than those of the Roman Catholic Church and hence need not be taken as a claim.²⁰

Some authors took the receipt of *Palium* from the Pope of Rome by a bishop named Mar Yohannan (John) who left from Mylapore as an evidence of the subjection of Nazranis to the Roman See. According to Ferroli, Raulin and Lequien speak of a Bishop John in the year AD 1122-29, but no mention of him is there in any Syriac document.²¹ Some others state that he first went to

¹⁴ "In another letter there is an interesting dialogue between Timothy and a newly ordained metropolitan. The Patriarch urges the metropolitan to hasten his journey to his appointed see of Sarbaziyah (which was situated in the present south Baluchistan region). The good bishop, simple monk that he was, reminded Timothy: "But I need something for my expenses." The patriarch retorted: "Many monks voyage to India and China with only a stick and a purse. Consider yourself to have gone by sea with as much money as they had." The words of Timothy are revealing. Many missionary monks were in the habit of travelling to Indian sea spending hardly anything on their journey. The letter is good evidence of the renewed intensification of Christian activity in India under the Great Timothy..." (Mundadan, *History of Christianity... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 103-4)

¹⁵ According to the list in *Niranam Grandhavari*, (i) Mar Sabor and Mar Afroth – AD 825, (ii). Mar Denaha Episcopa – AD 905, (iii). Mar Yohannan Metropolitan – AD 988, (iv). Mar Joseph Episcopa – AD 1056, (v). Mar Jacob Episcopa – AD 1122, (vi). Mar Joseph Episcopa – AD 1221, (vii). Mar David Episcopa – AD 1285, (viii). Mar Yaballah Episcopa – AD 1407. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 82). This list is similar to one seen by Fr. Hosten S. J. in a Syriac book at Adoor in early the twentieth century (*Kerala Society Papers...*, *Op. Cit. Vol. II, P 237*)

¹⁶ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 77-8

¹⁷ Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...* *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 3-5, 187 - 9

¹⁸ Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...* *Op. Cit.*, Pp 187 – 9

¹⁹ Bernard, *Marthoma Christianikal, Op. Cit.*, Pp 244-7

²⁰ For details See: Meyendorff, John, (Ed.), *Primacy of Peter*, New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992

²¹ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 77-8

Constantinople and proceeded from there to Rome. Cardinal Tisserant did not take him seriously.²² There is no trace of his return from the court of Pope Callistus II.²³ He may be a Persian bishop assigned to India, who went on a voyage at his own will and that cannot be taken as an evidence of subjection of Nazranis.

The visit of John de Marignolli to Kollam in AD 1348 and his description of the Saint George church there and the perquisites received by him as Pope's Legate²⁴ is taken by some as the symbol of Roman authority. However, he spoke about a church in Latin communion and different from that of Nazranis.²⁵ It proves nothing in favour of Roman Supremacy. In general, there are no solid evidences to prove affiliation of Nazranis to anybody other than the Church of the East.

The Sacraments

Regarding the presence of the sacraments among Nazranis, Gouvea states: "As for the sacraments, which are the remedies left to us by Christ Our Lord; they acknowledged none other than Baptism, Holy Orders, and the Eucharist,"²⁶ whereas the Venetians understood from Joseph the Indian that besides baptism, Holy orders and Holy Eucharist "...They confess as we do... They do not have extreme unction. But, in its place they bless the body..."²⁷

The Portuguese authors tried to find seven sacraments set out for their Roman Catholic Church²⁸ by the council of Trent²⁹ in the pre-colonial sacraments of Nazranis. Out of that, the holy Eucharist, baptism, ordination and matrimony were found out in some form among Nazranis. However regarding the remaining three, their attempts failed to place any of the sacraments practised by Nazranis to fit with the Roman Catholic formula. This is clear from the descriptions of Gouvea, who states that "Of the sacrament of confirmation they had no knowledge whatever, nor of the extreme Unction... Of the divine sacrament of

²² Tisserant, *Indiayile...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 20

²³ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, P 119

²⁴ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 66-7

²⁵ For more details, see Chapter II.

²⁶ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 199

²⁷ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, Pp 173 -5

²⁸ Pianius, *Samkshepa Vedartham, Op. Cit.*, Pp 243 -5

²⁹ "They knew Baptism, the Eucharist and Holy Orders, though there were traces of the other Sacraments as well..." (Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 177)

Extreme Unction, they had no news.”³⁰ He also points out that they had no confession.³¹

All ancient Churches believe that the sacraments³² are the fundamentals of Christian life. It is believed that Christ ordained sacraments for nurturing the faith of the Christians.³³ It is defined that “the Sacraments are the visible means of the invisible grace for the salvation of humanity, which is commanded and established by our lord Jesus Christ.”³⁴ Regarding the number of sacraments, Churches have different opinions. The Council of Trent (AD 1545- 1565) officially declared the number of sacraments as seven³⁵. According to the Roman Catholic tradition, those seven sacraments are the holy Eucharist, baptism, confirmation, ordination, matrimony, confession and extreme unction.³⁶

Even though saint Dionysius VI of Malankara states the number of sacraments are as seven³⁷, the West Syrian tradition did not give any specific number for sacraments.³⁸ However, Mar Abdisho of Suwa states in AD 1298 that the East Syrian Church has seven sacraments namely the priesthood, which is the ministry of all the other sacraments, holy baptism, the oil of unction, the oblation (*Qurbana*) of the body and blood of Christ, absolution, the holy leaven and the sign of the life giving cross.³⁹ The sacramental practices of Nazranis must be evaluated on this basis.

Baptism

Baptism is the primary requirement to be a Christian. All churches in the world will accept one as Christian only after baptism even if one is born of

³⁰ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 200 -1

³¹ According to Ferrolli “...They had no auricular confession; and the introduction of it at the Synod of Diamper caused trouble...” (Ferrolli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 177)

³² “The term ‘sacrament’ is a translated word for the original Greek word ‘mysterion’. The term ‘mysterion’ is found in the Old Testament where it has varied meanings. In the religious sense the term refers to God’s plan of creation and the purpose he has assigned to the history of the world, in so far as God communicates his plans to those he has chosen, those who believe in him (Wisdom 2,22; Daniel 2,18f; 27,47). The communication of the mystery is not a piece of information from God but a realization of it in those to whom God reveals himself.” (Paper of M. Vellanickal in Rev. Dr. John Panikker, Rev. Fr Xavier Koodopuzha and, (Ed.), *Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic and The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church*, Kottayam, Joint International Commission for Dialogue, 2001, P 84)

³³ Aprem, Mar, *Sacraments of the Church of the East*, Mar Narsai Press, 1978P 9

³⁴ Geevarghese Kathanar, Maipan Vattasseril, *Mathopadesha Sarangei*, Kottayam, 1940, P 9

³⁵ Gregorios, Dr. Paulose Mar, (Ed.), *Sabha Vijananakoshem*, Kottayam, Orthodox Theological Seminary, 1993, Pp 249 – 51

³⁶ Pianius, Fr. Clement, *Samkshepa Vedartham*, Rome, 1772, (Reprint) Thivananthapuram, Carmel Publishing House, 1980, Pp 243 –5

³⁷ The seven sacraments of the Malankara Orthodox church, according the West Syrian tradition, are baptism, confirmation (holy *Mooron*), holy Eucharist, ordination, matrimony, confession and anointing of sick (Geevarghese Kathanar, *Mathopadesha Sarangei*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 9 –10)

³⁸ *Sabha Vijananakoshem*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 249 – 51

³⁹ Audisho Metrapoliha, Mar, *Margyaneetha* (Malayalam translation), Trichur, Mar Narsai Press, 1982, P 51

Christian parents. The Persian Church, like all ancient Churches, followed the baptism of infants.⁴⁰ According to Mar Aprem, even though the East Syrian Church practise infant baptism; there are big baptismal fonts for the older people who accepting Christianity. The Nestorians usually baptise babies of about forty days in case of boys and of about fifty six days in case of girls.⁴¹

Joseph the Indian confirms that this practice existed in AD 1500 among the Nazranis. He says, "The children are not baptized before forty days, except in danger of death."⁴² Gundert states that the Kollam Nazranis informed the Portuguese in AD 1500 that children are baptized on the fortieth day.⁴³ However, the real practice of this time limit was very sceptical. Several sixteenth century documents state that the East Syrian bishops reserved baptism for them exclusively and they do it only for a fee. According to Penteado, no one was baptized before three years of age.⁴⁴ Barbosa observed that the majority of the Christians lacked both doctrine and baptism.⁴⁵ Similar narrations about that period are plenty. According to the report of M. Carneiro in AD 1557, even adults were remaining unbaptised and they used to pay a fee for the administration of sacraments.⁴⁶ This confirms Gundert's description about the meeting of Kollam Nazranis with the Portuguese commander Alphonse Albuquerque in AD 1503.

Among the twenty people who stayed in the fort along with captain De Sa⁴⁷ [who was appointed] by Albuquerque, there was a Dominican monk called Rodrigo.⁴⁸ He rebuilt that church [of Saint Thomas], prayed, preached and baptized the locals into the Church... On hearing it, even the people aged thirty or forty went to him and said happily that "we are Nazranis, but we don't know we were baptized in our childhood. We are just like other natives due to the absence of priests for a long time. Upon your arrival, the persecution and ignorance are over. Praise the lord"... They received baptism and joined the ceremonial prayers of the Portuguese.⁴⁹

In this context, the need of big baptismal font of old churches, to be re-evaluated. According to Mar Aprem, they were made for the rare grown up

⁴⁰ The modern protestant sectarian churches rejects the child baptism and following the practice of mature baptism

⁴¹ Aprem, *Sacraments... Op. Cit.*, Pp 17 – 18

⁴² Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, P 172

⁴³ Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama... Op. Cit.*, P 18

⁴⁴ Quoted by Mundadan, *History of Christianity... Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, P 291

⁴⁵ Gangadharan, *Duarte Barbosa... Op. Cit.*, Pp 96-7

⁴⁶ Mundadan, *Traditions... Op. Cit.* P 169

⁴⁷ Antonio De Sa, the Portuguese factor of Kollam

⁴⁸ Fr. Rodrigo Thoman

⁴⁹ Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama... Op. Cit.*, P 35

converts.⁵⁰ However, it is more apt to consider that such big fonts were always in need, because the adults were baptized so often since they were waiting for the East Syrian bishops. Mundadan evaluates the whole situation as follows:

After, from the foregoing testimonies, it would appear that the sacrament of baptism was not given the same importance relevant to salvation as we attribute to it. The payment of a sum of money for being baptised was a deterrent and people postponed it indefinitely in a careless manner...The administration of the sacrament was the reservation of bishops... They could not at once baptise all the unbaptised, especially those who lived in the interior and in mountainous regions.⁵¹

After a century of the Portuguese connection, this system was not changed much. Gouvea describes the practice of baptism during the time of the Synod of Udayamperor:

Almost every Casanar baptised as he thought fit...they were entirely senseless and ignorant,⁵² many of them received no sacrament, as was found out by the Archbishop, who secretly had a whole district of the largest of the diocese re-baptised, baptising them from house to house in their own homes, to prevent public scandal in Christianity. Many Christians were not baptised at all, in particular those who lived in the forests, and many poor folk partly for their great indifference in matters of Christianity, and partly not to pay the price for the simony, which the Casanars received for it; and without baptism they went on frequenting the churches and receiving the sacrament of the Eucharist. And this was the case not only with individuals, but also with the whole populations who were not baptized. As a rule, they did not baptise children eight days old⁵³

From Gouvea's description, it is clear that the sacrament of baptism existed among Nazranis. However, they did not consider it in the way the rest of the Christianity viewed. In a deeper sense, Nazranis did not treated baptism as an essential element to remain as a Christian.⁵⁴ Paoli is certain that the want of baptism was due to the compulsory fees requires for that.⁵⁵ Even if the postponement of baptism is not justifiable according to any Christian doctrine, this cannot be taken as a negligence of Nazranis alone. Formerly, several

⁵⁰ Aprem, *Sacraments...Op. Cit.*, Pp 17 – 18

⁵¹ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.* P 170

⁵² The Roman Catholic missionaries consider the sacraments executed according to any rite other than Latin as not better than none.

⁵³ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 200

⁵⁴ In all Christian traditions, one is become Christian only by baptism. Without baptism, none is permitted to receive other sacraments.

⁵⁵ Quoted by Day, *Land of Perumals*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 218 –9

members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, one of the primitive Christianities in the world, postponed baptism until their deathbed to avoid committing any sin after baptism.⁵⁶ Under this circumstance, the Nazrani practice should not be blamed as non-Christian.

Confirmation

Even though Gouvea denies the existence of the sacrament called confirmation, he admits the use of oil in the administration of baptism. According to him "Neither in baptism nor in any other sacrament did they [the Nazranis] use holy oil⁵⁷ ...they anointed the whole child after baptism with coconut oil or sesamum oil unblest, and this anointment they thought a holy thing ...⁵⁸ The Roman Catholic Church requires the holy oils blessed by the bishop for baptism and confirmation.⁵⁹ Whereas for the East Syrian Church, the holy oil itself is a sacrament and no further blessing of the bishop over it is necessary. They increase the existing holy oil by adding fresh olive oil to it from time to time.⁶⁰ The use of coconut oil perhaps adopted due to the lack of olive oil in Kerala.⁶¹

Confirmation is a sacrament administered separately in the Roman Catholic Church⁶². In the East Syrian Church, it is done as a part of the baptism and not treated as a separate sacrament. According to Mar Aprem, "The Baptism service [of the East Syrian Church] is completed only with the imposition of hands which is the confirmation service at the later stage as the Anglicans or the receiving the first Qurbana as it is the custom in the Roman Catholic Church"⁶³ The East Syrian practice of confirmation is 'The priest is directed to lay his right hand, at least during the first of these prayers, on them; he makes his right hand to pass over the heads of all of them.' It is remarkable that among the Eastern

⁵⁶ It was a common practice in all Christendom in the early centuries to postpone the baptism until deathbed to avoid committing sin afterwards. Even Emperor Constantine, who declared Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, did the same. Eusebius, the church historian contemporary to Emperor Constantine, gives more details (Eusebius, *The history of the Church*, Op. Cit.)

⁵⁷ Here he means 'holy oil'

⁵⁸ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 200

⁵⁹ The fourteenth canon of the fourth session according to the Portuguese version of the Synod of Udayamperor insisted the use of holy oils blessed by the bishop (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 118)

⁶⁰ Audisho Metropolitana, *Margyaneetha*, Op. Cit., Pp 59 -61. All priests can increase the holy oil during the baptism, if sufficient quantity is not available. (Rappai, Rev. Fr. V. T., *Thaksa Prathanakal Part I*, Thrissur, 1973, Pp 15 -9)

⁶¹ The actual East Syrian practice in Persia regarding the use of holy oil (*Kama*) in the baptism as follows "So in baptism, ordinary olive oil is used, and a very small portion of the holy oil, also descended from St. John, is added from the horn, which is specially reserved for it" (Maclean, *The Catholics...Op. Cit.*, P 269)

⁶² A baptized person should become a full member of the Church by confirmation only. According to the Roman Catholic custom, the person should know the basic doctrines before receiving the confirmation. (Pianius, *Samkshepa Vedartham*, Op. Cit., P 259)

⁶³ Aprem, *Sacraments...Op. Cit.*, Pp 25 -6

Syrians, (1) the apostolic laying on of hands at confirmation has survived; (2) there is no anointing at this time (3) the minister is the priest, who does not use oil consecrated by the bishop, as Greek priests do."⁶⁴ All the above confirm that the Nazranis had the confirmation along with the baptism as per the East Syrian formula and hence need no separate confirmation as in the case of the Roman Catholics.

Holy Eucharist

As the centre of the Christian life, holy Eucharist is considered as the "queen of sacraments." Nazranis had the sacrament of holy Eucharist during the pre-Portuguese period. Joseph the Indian confirms it as follows:

They receive the Eucharist sacredly... They consecrate the Body and Blood of Christ, if possible, in azymis *i. e.* with unleavened bread; as we do. And there they do not have wine, because vine does not grow in those regions; they immerse raisins in water and then squeeze the juice, which they use for wine, for many raisins are brought there from China.⁶⁵

The East Syrian connection brings their Anaphora to Nazranis. The canons of the Synod of Udayamperor confirm that the Nazranis were using the Anaphors of the Apostles (Mar Adai and Mar Mari), Nestorius, Theodorus and Diodorus.⁶⁶ Gouvea confirms that "The mass said by their priests, was in many things added to by Nestor, who included in it many an error."⁶⁷ All testimonials about the practices during the celebration are matching with those of the East Syrian Church.⁶⁸

Even though the Venetians understand from Joseph the Indian that the Nazranis were using unleavened bread for the celebration of holy Eucharist, there is no other record to support that. It is generally considered that the Nazranis used leavened bread⁶⁹ according to the canons of the East Syrian Church.⁷⁰ From Gouvea's description, it is clear that the perpetration of bread and

⁶⁴ Maclean, *The Catholics...Op. Cit.*, Pp 269 –70

⁶⁵ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, Pp 173, 175

⁶⁶ Zacharia, *Scaria, The Acts...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 137

⁶⁷ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 202

⁶⁸ The East Syrians have three Liturgies (Maclean, *The Catholics...Op. Cit.*, P 245.) Even though the Synod of Udayamperor mentions about an Anaphora according to Diodorus, researchers failed to find any copy of it so far, even from the heartland of the East Syrian Church. Perhaps there was such an Anaphora was in the East Syrian Church and it was vanished from the rest of the world by the time of the Synod of Udayamperor.

⁶⁹ Several reports of the Roman Catholic missionaries in the sixteenth century confirm the use of leavened bread. (Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 165)

⁷⁰ East Syrian Church considers *Melka* (the leaven) as a sacrament. (Audisho Metrapolitha, *Margyaneetha, Op. Cit.*, Pp 65 –8)

wine for the celebration of holy Eucharist by Nazranis was as per the canons of the East Syrian Church⁷¹. According to him, palm spirit was used instead of wine.⁷² He also states that the mass was said only a few times in a year.⁷³

The Roman Catholic historians like Monesrate had an opinion that the Nazrani celebration of holy Eucharist was invalid because of the large quantity of water used in the process of making wine.⁷⁴ However, even in Persia, raisins-soaked water instead of grape wine used in extreme need.⁷⁵ There are some reports about the use of palm wine instead of grape wine or resins-soaked water in Kerala. Ferroli, based on the Jesuit documents of the sixteenth century rejected it.⁷⁶ Barbosa also endorses with the use of juice from raisins instead of wine. His description about the celebration of holy Eucharist confirms the East Syrian nature.⁷⁷ All these information leads to a conclusion that the Nazranis had the celebration of holy Eucharist according to the East Syrian tradition, even though they made some adjustments according to the environment, which too was according to the practice of the East Syrian Church.

Joseph the Indian states "the people receive the most blessed Eucharist thrice a year."⁷⁸ Since the Eucharistic celebration itself was infrequent⁷⁹, it is natural that there was the infrequency of communion. According to Gouvea "they heard mass on Sundays, but not as a matter of obligation... In most localities only one mass was said in a year, and many there were in which none had been said or heard for six, seven, and even ten years."⁸⁰ Perhaps the lengthy preparations of Nazranis for receiving the Holy Communion were also a factor that reduced the frequency. Mundadan summarized such preparations as follows:

Before going to church the Christians washed their bodies and put on freshly washed clothes...it was believed that only those who were

⁷¹ For the East Syrian tradition to prepare the bread for the holy Eucharist in Persia, see Maclean, *The Catholics...* Op. Cit., Pp 249 - 50

⁷² Except Gouvea, only Soledade, a Portuguese historian of AD 1705, argues that the Nazranis used 'cakes of rice and wine of palm' for holy Eucharist. (Mundadan, *Traditions...*, Op. Cit., P 166) However, everybody else disagrees with it and reporting that Nazranis used grape wine at least in vogue form. Since an alternative of use of raisins existed, there was no need for using palm wine.

⁷³ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 202

⁷⁴ Quoted by Mundadan, *Traditions...*, Op. Cit., P 166

⁷⁵ For the details of the wine preparation for the holy Eucharist in the East Syrian tradition, see MacLean, *The Catholics...* Op. Cit., P 250

⁷⁶ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, Op. Cit., P 177

⁷⁷ Gangadharan, *Duarte Barbosa...* Op. Cit., P 96

⁷⁸ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., P 179

⁷⁹ Mundadan refers several such statements, even though he sceptically views its validity. (Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, Op. Cit., Vol. I, Pp 195 - 8)

⁸⁰ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 202

clean of body and clothes were worthy of entering the church.⁸¹ On their way to the church, they would not allow themselves to be touched by persons of any other castes.⁸² At the entrance of the church, they washed their feet in a well and such wells could be seen at the entrance of every church.⁸³

According to Gouvea, "For the sacrament of Communion, they had devotion, and all approached the communion table on Maundy Thursday and many solemn days of the year, without any other preparation than a fast."⁸⁴ Since the Roman Catholics consider the sacrament of confession as an essential preparation for Holy Communion, Gouvea's accusation regarding the lack of "any other preparation than a fast" is just the lack of the sacrament of confession. Andrews Thazhath adds the following points regarding the pre and post-communion practices of Nazranis:

The Eucharistic fast had to be observed from the previous midnight, After Communion they would not sleep during daytime, nor spit except after having tasted some food or drink.⁸⁵ The priests would not speak to the non-Christians for hours before the Mass; they would even avoid travelling on vehicles driven by the non-Christians.⁸⁶

From all the above, it may be concluded that the Nazranis had the Holy Communion. They practised it according to the canons of the East Syrian Church within their permissible limits and with maximum devotion.

Confession and Penance

Historians generally agree that the Nazranis had no auricular confession till the arrival of the Portuguese,⁸⁷ even though Venetians understood from Joseph the Indian that they had confession.⁸⁸ The absolution from sins is one of the minor sacraments of the East Syrian Church⁸⁹ and an order and prayers

⁸¹ According to the canons of the East Syrian Church, "...On Sundays and feasts of our lord, we must wash ourselves and put on special clothing, and cleanse our souls from sin..." (Maclean, *The Catholicos...Op. Cit.*, P 340.) Since the *Nampoothiri* concept of purity to approach the sacredness was not much different, it is difficult to say which tradition Nazranis adapted.

⁸² See the topic 'Untouchability' in chapter III

⁸³ Mundadan, *History of Christianity... Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, 196

⁸⁴ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena... Op. Cit.*, P 200

⁸⁵ Compare this with the East Syrian canon - "If a man bathes after the sacrament, he counts it as an unclean thing" (MacLean, *The Catholicos...Op. Cit.*, P 340)

⁸⁶ Thazhath, *Juridical ... Op. Cit.*, P 54

⁸⁷ "They had no auricular confession; and the introduction of it at the Synod of Diamper caused trouble." (Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 177)

⁸⁸ in Malayalam language, confession is known as *Kumapsaram*. This word is derived from the Portuguese word *Confessao*. It indicates that this terminology is not older than the Portuguese period. (Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, Pp 279-80)

⁸⁹ Aprem, *Sacraments...Op. Cit.*, Pp 35 - 8

constituted for the same.⁹⁰ There is no proof that the present-day East Syrian rite for absolution existed among Nazranis during the pre-Portuguese period. However, a service of penance with an interesting nature existed among Nazranis. According to Gouvea, "they used to place on Sundays in the middle of the church a furnace, where they threw a lot of incense, and all, coming up to it, used to divert with hand some of the smoke to their chest, saying that with this smoke absolve their sins left in their souls."⁹¹ According to Mathew Anikuzhikkattil, this service had no Christian parallel in the world and has a Jewish origin. He writes:

[This] service existed independently of the East Syrian tradition...it is typically a service of the St. Thomas Christians. This service was a heritage of their culture and in the form of Jewish "*Yom Kippur*." It is an established fact that there were Jewish converts in the mission of St. Thomas in India. They also might have contributed their influence in its formation. It was performed in the middle of the Eucharistic liturgy. This service had its own-originality and Malabar colour. Nowhere in the world, we find such a service. Of course, it has aspects, which we find in other religions⁹²... As it is explained; we can understand that it is an incensing service like that of the Jewish sacrifice of incense (Lev 2:1-14; 16:11-13)...⁹³

This ritual seems only as a mark of the absolution from sins.⁹⁴ According to the reports, some form of general confession existed among Nazranis named as *Pizhamoolal*.⁹⁵ According to Penteado "the Nazranis confessed to God in a clear voice altogether"⁹⁶ Mathew Anikuzhikkattil describes the nature of *Pizhamoolal* as follows:

The sinner of not grave sins or even grave sins approaches the priest in the sacristy, sanctuary or in the place which is convenient for the penitent, and prostrate at the foot of the priest or the bishop with humility and weeping. The penitent says that he is a sinner and violated the commandments of God and the laws of the Church. He never says the particular sins, which he committed, or the law, which he has violated. He beats on his chest and expresses his remorse and compunction. Then the priest or the bishop asks some questions related to the commandments and the laws of the Church. When the

⁹⁰ Rappai, *Thakse ... Part I. Op. Cit.*, Pp 109 -12

⁹¹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 200

⁹² Here he referred Hinduism and Buddhism in his foot note No. 332

⁹³ Anikuzhikkattil, *Ecclesial Response...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 335

⁹⁴ it is a "symbolic ceremony instead of confession." (Ferroli, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op., .Cit.*, P 177)

⁹⁵ The word *Pizhamoolal* was used in the decrees related to Confession in the decrees of the Synod of Udayamperor (Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 170-1, 175)

⁹⁶ Quoted by Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 173

question affects him or is about his sins committed, he responds with a sound equal to "yes." This is known as *Pizhamoolal*.⁹⁷

Since the Portuguese introduced auricular confession in front of the priests⁹⁸, the role of the priest and bishops in the above mentioned description became irrelevant. Considering the narration of Raulin in AD 1745 regarding an observation made by archbishop Menezes at Kaduthuruthy along with the above description gives a clear picture of the Nazrani practice of *Pizhamoolal*.

It was the public and general confession made by the people before the main altar and sanctuary. In his description of the rite, we can read that the people, coming with profound humility and in a prostrated position confessing their sins and giving each other the kiss of peace and paying obedience to the metropolitan, begged for his blessing and general absolution, according to the custom.⁹⁹

From all the above, it may be concluded that the Nazranis developed the service of absolution by adding both East Syrian rite and some local rituals.

Marriage

Just like all ancient churches, marriage was a sacrament for the East Syrian Church.¹⁰⁰ Considering the statement of Joseph the Indian about divorce of Nazranis as "Those who believe in Christ very seldom divorce, whether the marriage is good or bad. It is perennial up to the last day,"¹⁰¹ it seems that they were observing the Christian concept about marriage as an 'indissoluble knot'.¹⁰² However, Joseph the Indian did speak nothing about the sacramentary of marriage.

Even though the Nazranis obeyed the Christian doctrine of 'united till death', the sacramentary of their marriage is dubious. According to Mundadan, "Matrimony was pre-eminently a social celebration and was conducted with many ceremonies."¹⁰³ According to Gouvea, "There is much feasting at the wedding

⁹⁷ Anikuzhikattil, *Ecclesial Response...*, Op. Cit., P 346

⁹⁸ Feroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 177. Mathew Anikuzhikkattil admits that he developed the above mentioned model from the post-Portuguese practices. Hence, possibilities are there for the interpolation of Roman Catholic practices.

⁹⁹ Anikuzhikattil, *Ecclesial Response...*, Op. Cit., P 342

¹⁰⁰ Even though the holy matrimony was not included in the seven sacraments of the East Syrian Church, it is treated with equal importance. (Audisho Metrapolitha, *Margyaneetha, Op. Cit.*, Pp 74 - 76.) For the comparison of the status of holy matrimony in the East Syrian Church and western Churches see Aprem, *Sacraments...Op. Cit.*, P 15

¹⁰¹ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, P 179

¹⁰² St. Mathew 5: 32

¹⁰³ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, Op. Cit., Vol. I, P 209

when they have certain privileges granted by old Malabar Rajahs, which are granted to nobody else."¹⁰⁴ According to Raulin, "They were permitted to wear gold tresses in the hair locks in marriage feasts, to ride on elephants and to decorate the floor with carpets"¹⁰⁵ According to Bishop Francis Roz, some of the privileges which the Christians had obtained from the local kings were related to the marriage ceremonies. In accordance with these privileges, on the day of marriage, the bride and the bridegroom with crowns on their heads were carried on men's shoulders or on elephant's back, besides going through numerous other ceremonies.¹⁰⁶

Ferrolì, based on Jesuit documents, states that "Marriage was monogamic and indissoluble; it was allowed to priest, deacons and widows. Usually the marriage was blessed by the Cassanars, and the tenth part of the dowry belonged to the church."¹⁰⁷ According to Penteado, "Giving a veil in the church was practised by a few...generally the parents of the bride and of the bridegroom contented themselves by giving their children in marriage together with dowries and by each giving a feast for one day."¹⁰⁸ Gouvea gives an impression that the Nazrani marriage seldom had religious functions to as suits his Roman Catholic point of view. He wrote that "many married themselves, especially those who dwelt in forests merely by passing a thread from the neck of the groom to that of the bride, without any other ecclesiastical ceremony or any prayer with that intention; and many when they were wedded, used to make a superstitious circle in which they placed themselves,¹⁰⁹ and upon it depended the duties of the matrimony together with other rites and prescriptions of paganism."¹¹⁰ Perhaps Monserrate gives the most elaborated description of the practices in connection with the Nazrani marriage:

When they are married, they use ceremonies common to the whole land and ceremonies particular to the Christians... for when the couple go to promise in the church, they give a *fanam* which is equal to one real of silver; afterwards the *casanar* marries them without proclamations [of bans]... This...being over, they go home and the

¹⁰⁴ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 206

¹⁰⁵ Quoted by Ayyar, *Anthropology...* Op. Cit., P 54

¹⁰⁶ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, Op. Cit., Vol. I, 210

¹⁰⁷ Ferrolì, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 177

¹⁰⁸ Quoted by Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, Op. Cit., Vol. I, P 209

¹⁰⁹ For the social customs in connection with marriage, see: the fourteenth decree about holy matrimony in the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version (Zacharia, *The Acts...* Op. Cit., P 178)

¹¹⁰ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 202

women make something like rice milk and with it paint the place where the couple are to be seated and a cloth being spread on the top, they are seated in ceremony. After the lapse of three days, they go to wash themselves and when they wash, many people assemble...and to the priest a sum [of money] for giving his assent to the washing; and after the washing [ceremony] they can enter the house, which they could not before; and after they are in the house for two or three days they go to wash themselves in the river...¹¹¹

All these sixteenth century documents confirm that marriage was a social function though it had some religious elements. It was not alike with any western Christian matrimonial standards. By adding a role to the priest, some of the local customs were Christianised. According to Ananthakrishna Ayyar, this did not nullify the Christian validity of Nazrani marriages. He explains his argument based on the theory of Havelock Ellis.¹¹² Considering the ancient origin and isolation from rest of the Christendom of Nazranis and East Syrian approach towards matrimony along with the above mentioned development of Christian marriage, it is clear that the Nazranis developed the local tradition of marriage with some East Syrian adaptations. However, its monogamic nature, essential according to Christian doctrines, is not unchallengeable.

Polygamy and Polyandry

Even though the statement of Joseph the Indian that Nazrani marriages are for life without divorce¹¹³ should be taken as an evidence for monogamy,¹¹⁴ there are several other documents, which reveal that at least a few Nazranis had practised polygamy. The thirteenth decree about holy matrimony in the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version confirms the existence of polygamy.¹¹⁵ However, it did not confirm that they lived with more than one wife at a time. On the contrary, the eleventh decree states that the separation without a formal divorce was common among the Nazranis for several reasons including the non-payment of promised dowry.¹¹⁶ Evaluation of

¹¹¹ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 1, Pp 209 – 10. In the sixteenth decree about holy matrimony in the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version, condemn the custom of the new-married couple's not going to church till after the fourth day from their marriage. (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 179)

¹¹² Ayyar, *Anthropology...Op. Cit.*, 66

¹¹³ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, P 179

¹¹⁴ Goes also confirms the lack of divorce among Nazranis as " in the matter of matrimony, there could be among them, in no case, separation, except at the death of the man or wife; otherwise they have to live together for good or bad..." Quoted by Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 151

¹¹⁵ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 178

¹¹⁶ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 176

both together leads to the conclusion that the Nazranis remarried with their usual ceremonies after the separation and lived a normal life.¹¹⁷ However, while considering the statement of Joseph the Indian as "Their wives, at the death of the husbands, go back to their paternal house taking the dowry with her. But, she cannot marry again for one year,"¹¹⁸ it may be assumed that only death of the spouse was treated as proper separation. According to Gouvea, even their priests remarried, which, according to him, was polygamy.¹¹⁹ Perhaps the low age of the marriage¹²⁰ and the selection by the family, leads to the later separations. The breach of contract between both the families¹²¹ was one of the reasons for separation.

The Nazranis seldom practised polyandry. There was a report about the marriage of brothers to a single lady. In his letter dated January 9, AD 1604, Fr. Joao Maria Campori describes a case polyandry at Kolancherry. According to him "There were four St. Thomas Christians... There exists among them a beastly custom; only one of the brothers gets married, but the wife is common to all."¹²² All brothers taking a single wife were common among several castes in Kerala. According to Kanippayoor Sankaran Nampoothirippadu, it even existed among *Nampoothiries*.¹²³ Since no other case except the above was reported during that period, it can be assumed that polyandry, perhaps the continuance of a local practice was at the vanishing point in the sixteenth century.¹²⁴

As observed by Monserrate, the Nazranis did not strictly observe the degree of kinship prohibiting marriages according to western Christian law.¹²⁵ The horoscope and other superstitious practises existed for marriages. The good time for marriage was superstitiously consulted.¹²⁶ Besides, they were abstained

¹¹⁷ According to the sixteenth canon of the Synod of Mar Geevarghese of AD 674 of the East Syrian Church, those who are practicing polygamy must be alienated from all respects as Christians. (Chediath, *Synodicon Orientale*, Op. Cit., Pp 284 -5)

¹¹⁸ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., P 174

¹¹⁹ "They married once, twice, and thrice, the illegality of bigamy being unknown among them." (Zacharia, *Randu Praacheera...*, Op. Cit., P 201)

¹²⁰ In the tenth decree about holy matrimony in the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version confirms the low age of marriage (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 176)

¹²¹ In the tenth decree about holy matrimony in the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 179)

¹²² Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, Op. Cit., P 297

¹²³ Kanippayoor, *Aryanmarude ... Vol. I*, Op. Cit., Pp 137 -63

¹²⁴ There is no mention about such a practice in the decrees of the Synod of Udayamperor.

¹²⁵ The degrees of kinship prohibiting the marriage according to the Greco-Roman Christianity is available in the sixth decree about holy matrimony in the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version. (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 174 - 5)

¹²⁶ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, Op. Cit., P 203

from marriage ceremonies in certain periods every year.¹²⁷ From all the above, it may be concluded that the Nazrani marriage was a social function rather than a Christian sacrament. However, they never denied its religious side though they seldom used it elaborately.

Extreme Unction

The sacrament of extreme unction, is one officiating for 'the healing of the body and soul of the sick' according to the Roman Catholic theology.¹²⁸ Even though Joseph the Indian and Gouvea deny the existence of the same among Nazranis, Ferroli states that "The sick were anointed with oil, which was supposed to possess a certain healing power."¹²⁹ Even though the East Syrian Church has the practice of anointing the sick with oil,¹³⁰ it is not considered as a sacrament.¹³¹ The decrees of the Synod of Udayamperor confirm that extreme unction did not exist among Nazranis.¹³²

According to Joseph the Indian, the extreme unction was substituted by the blessing of the body.¹³³ The extreme unction was known as *Oudkkathe Opprusma* in Malayalam.¹³⁴ *Opprusma* is a polluted form of *rusma* that means the sign of cross in Syriac language.¹³⁵ Hence, it is possible that Joseph the Indian speaks about the sign of the cross that is a sacrament according to the East Syrian Church.¹³⁶ Gouvea confirms: "The sign of the cross they made, not from left to right but from right to left, and said we were mistaken in doing the reverse."¹³⁷ This is according to the practice of the East Syrian Church.

Burial

The ancient Christian funarel method was the burial of the dead. It is believed that the Nazranis also buried their dead from the early period. They know burial since it was the Dravidian practice during the establishment of Christianity in Kerala. Cremation of body was an Aryan concept and became

¹²⁷ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 176

¹²⁸ Pianius, *Samkshepa Vedartham, Op. Cit.*, P 463

¹²⁹ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 177

¹³⁰ Rappai, *Thaksa ... Part I Op. Cit.*, Pp 112 - 3

¹³¹ Aprem, *Sacraments...Op. Cit.*, Pp 9 - 45

¹³² Zacharia, *Udayamperor... Op. Cit.*, P 181

¹³³ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, Pp 173 -5

¹³⁴ Zacharia, *Udayamperor... Op. Cit.*, P 180 - 2

¹³⁵ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, P 281

¹³⁶ Audisho Metrapolitha, *Margyaneetha, Op. Cit.*, P 51, According to Mar Aprem, it is the 'Sign of the life giving Cross.' (Aprem, *Sacraments...Op. Cit.*, Pp 41 - 5)

¹³⁷ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena... Op. Cit.*, P 204

popular only after the domination of Brahmin religion in Kerala.¹³⁸ Joseph the Indian confirms that the dead were buried during his times.¹³⁹ In AD 1578, Dionysio states that Nazranis buried near their houses till about forty years back. He further states that none were buried inside the churches.¹⁴⁰ The statement of Kollam Nazranis to the Portuguese at their first meeting in AD 1500 regarding the burial of Mar Sabor and Afroth at the Kollam church¹⁴¹ may be taken as a proof for their practice of burial at churchyard. However, this needs reconsideration because several evidences of the pre-Portuguese period suggest that the burial was not held at church premises alone. *Niranam Grandhavari* gives the following description of the arrival of the Persian Bishop Mar Denha in AD 905.

In the year of our lord 905, which is 80 of Kollam era, a bishop named Mar Denaha arrived. Along with him persons named Raban, Younan and Mar Avan, altogether four persons, came. Out of those four came to Malayalam; Younan was buried at Udaymperor church. Raban was buried at the house of Kuruvilla of Thekkaveettil, Chennithala Muri, under Niranam parish. Denaha was buried at the house of Kannamkulam Mappilai at the place Kodassery in the fort¹⁴² [*kottakkupurathu*]. Mar Avan was buried at Thevalakkara church.¹⁴³

Out of the four persons, including a bishop, two were buried at private residential premises. Those two places were not too far from a church to bring them there and bury. One of them is even stated as in the jurisdiction of Niranam church.¹⁴⁴ This indicates that both the practices, burial at church as well as at private properties, were common during that time. There are several other examples to prove the burial at residential properties. At Kuravalingadu in Kottayam District, five tombs, now found as built by latrate, still exist at the family property of Pakalomattom. A chapel was constructed nearby in the 1950's only. The above-mentioned property is believed as the original *tharvadu*¹⁴⁵ of Pakalomattom family, and the tombs are believed as those of the Archdeacons

¹³⁸ One of the disputes, according to the legends, arisen during the work of *Manikkavchaker* among Nazranis was mode of funarel that is in between burial or cremation. Nazranis favoured the burial as in the past whereas those who followed *Manikkavchaker* demanded cremation. (*Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 103 - 7) According to the description of Whitehouse, the *Manigramam* Hindus buried their priests even in the nineteenth century. It all confirms that the Nazranis were practiced burial of the dead.

¹³⁹ "They bury the human bodies as we do." (Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., P 174)

¹⁴⁰ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, Op. Cit., P 174

¹⁴¹ Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, Op. Cit., P 35

¹⁴² In *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Purthu* is used with the meanings 'with in' or 'belongs to'. Example *Puthenkootumpurathulla* (=those who belongs to *Puthencoor*)

¹⁴³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 82.

¹⁴⁴ Even today, the said tomb is found at Chennithala as not associated with any church. Except a small building to cover the tomb, built recently, no trace of any religious places in the vicinity.

¹⁴⁵ (= Main Family). The original house of a family

from that family who governed the Malankara Nazranis.¹⁴⁶ If the rulers of the church, who were priests, were buried at a residential property, which is within one kilometre from the Kuravalingadu church, indeed the laymen also have been buried in the same manner.

Similar examples are found elsewhere also. At Thalanadu, near Pandalam in Pathanamthitta district, five tombs remain at a plot not associated with any church. This property is believed as the *tharavadu* of Sankarathil family and the said tombs are as of the founders of the family. These tombs too are made of latrate with a Saint Thomas cross and an inscription in old Malayalam on the western side.¹⁴⁷ At Kaduvetoor, near Chengannor another single tomb remains.¹⁴⁸ Prof. K. M. Abraham, after describing the tombs at several *tharavadu* properties in and around Kadappoor in Kottayam district, states that the Nazranis did not bury their dead in the cemeteries adjacent to churches but at their own properties till the Portuguese period. According to him, common cemeteries were suggested at all churches during the period of Bishop Mar Jacob (1503-49), which did not come into effect.¹⁴⁹

The decrees of the Synod of Udayamperor also show that the burials at churches were not statutory till then. The absence of pre-Portuguese tombstones also points to the lack of burial at churches then.¹⁵⁰ The thirty second decree of the eighth session, according to the Portuguese version of the Synod of Udayamperor insists on the burial at cemeteries adjacent to the church.¹⁵¹ From all the above, it may be assumed that the practice of burial at church premises, was not common among the Nazranis till the Portuguese period.

The East Syrian Heritage

Considering all the above, it is very clear that the Nazranis had all the sacraments of the East Syrian Church namely the priesthood, baptism, holy oil, holy Eucharist, absolution, holy leaven and the sign of the life giving

¹⁴⁶ Kottayil, Fr. Jose, *Pakalomattom Mahakudumba Yogam Samkshiptha Charithram*, Kuravalingadu, Pakalomattom Mahakudumba Yogam, 2000, Pp 21-2

¹⁴⁷ Sankarathil Nedyavila Kudumba Yogam (Pub.), *Pandalam Sankarathil Kudumbacharithram*, Pandalam, 1997, Pp 36-7. Here also, a chapel was constructed very recently.

¹⁴⁸ This person is venerated as *Kaduvetoor Avuppan* (=Grandfather of Kaduvetoor) by the local people

¹⁴⁹ Abraham, Prof. K. M., *Thomasleehayum Kerala Nazranikalum*, Kuravalingadu, Deepa Books, 2000, P 129

¹⁵⁰ The first available tombstone of Nazranis at any church is found at Niranam. It dated as *Medom* 9, 742 ME (AD 1567) only. Alexander, *Kanianthra Kudumbam Op. Cit.*, Pp 92-3

¹⁵¹ Geddes, Michael, *The History of the Church of Malabar*, London, 1694 as re-printed in Indian Church History Classics, Vol. I, *The Nazranis*, Ollur, 1998, P. 94:

cross.¹⁵² However, in its usage, they had a lot of alternations made according to the environment.

During the arrival of Portuguese colonial powers in the sixteenth century, the Nzaranis were subject to the Catholicos of the East and hence were Nestorian by theology.¹⁵³ The decrees of the Synod of Udayamperor confirm that the Nazranis had followed the Nestorian theology of the East Syrian Church.¹⁵⁴ According to the pre-Portuguese documents, all their sacraments were as per the formula of the East Syrian Church.¹⁵⁵ However, the doctrines which Nazranis followed were not strictly according to that of the East Syrian Church or even with basic Christian concepts. The fourth decree of the third session according to the Portuguese version of the Synod of Udayamperor confirms that the Nazranis had also believed in some Hindu doctrines along with their Christian faith.¹⁵⁶ Such interpolations were possible for Nazranis due to the deep-rooted relations with Brahmanic religion within the *Jathy* framework. Since the Nazranis were far away from the rest of the Christendom and were attached only to the East Syrian Church, there was never a possibility for the theological disputes and hence it nullifies the possibilities of the upcoming of any Indian theologian or the development of any Indian theological interpretation.

The Christian Life

Even though the sacraments like baptism, holy Eucharist etc., which are essential to the Christian life, had little role in their daily life, Nazranis were pious Christians in certain other respects. All available testimonials point out some of their strong practices of early Christian doctrines. From the narratives of Joseph the Indian, it is clear that the Nazranis had churches, priests, baptism and holy Eucharist; He further gives the following information about their Christian life.

They have no statues of the saints.¹⁵⁷ The churches are vaulted like ours. On the foundation is seen a big cross just as in our place.

¹⁵² Audisho Metrapolitha, *Margyaneetha*, *Op. Cit.*, P 51

¹⁵³ According to Joseph the Indian, "These people have a great Pontiff... the great Armenia... to greet their most reverend great Pontiff Their Pontiff is called Catholica." (Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 167 –9). According Gouvea "They were deeply attached to the schismatic Patriarch of Babylon, head of the Nestorian sect... Their prelates were Chaldean by race, sent by the Patriarch of Babylon, of Nestorian sect, whom they obeyed." (Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 202)

¹⁵⁴ The influence of the East Syrian Church over Nazranis is mentioned everywhere in the canons of the Synod of Udayamperor,. However, the twentieth decree of the third session according to the Portuguese version, specifically deals with the Nestorian Theology. (Zacharia, *The Acts...**Op. Cit.*, Pp 107 –8)

¹⁵⁵ For the list of such MSS and its content, see Van Der Ploeg, *Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.* Pp 12 ff

¹⁵⁶ Zacharia, *The Acts...**Op. Cit.*, Pp 90 -1

¹⁵⁷ According to Gundert, Nazranis informed the Portuguese at their first meeting in AD 1500 that "We have no idols in our churches but have cross." (Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 18) Gouvea confirms the

They have not any bells.¹⁵⁸ To call the people to the divine service, they use the system of the Greek... They confess as we do ... They do not have extreme unction, but in its place, they bless the body.¹⁵⁹ When they enter the churches, they sprinkle the body with blessed water as we do¹⁶⁰ ... They have four Evangelists and they venerate the same number of Gospels. They observe the Lent and Advent with fasts and prayers, with very great diligence.¹⁶¹ Among other things, from Good Friday until the day of Easter they abstain from all food. In the night of Good Friday, they insist on prayers and sacred gatherings without interruption...¹⁶²

The East Syrian tradition prohibits the use of any kind of images in the church.¹⁶³ Nazranis followed this practice strictly.¹⁶⁴ Penteado reported in AD 1518 that Nazranis abstained from images, "because they say that St. Thomas had prohibited them."¹⁶⁵ The Portuguese accused them of being uncivilized since the Nazranis affiliated to the East Syrian Church and practised its liturgy and theology along with its code of canons up to certain extent. Gouvea observed the Christianity of Nazranis as "Few Christians knew the Christian doctrine, beyond blessing themselves, and a few the our Father and the Hail Mary."¹⁶⁶ However, early Portuguese authors, who were not with such religious interests like Gouvea, disagree with it.¹⁶⁷ Melchior Nunes Barreto, after a visit to the Christians in AD 1563 along with the Bishop of Cochin, writes to Europe about the faith, devotion and piety of the Nazranis:

When St Thomas had been in these parts, as it is believed, have kept faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ in spite of the fact that they had been deprived of instruction, sacraments and other means which are preserved among us by the divine goodness, and even though they

statement of Joseph the Indian as "heresies they had several others such as of images, which they did not admit except the cross" (Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 199)

¹⁵⁸ The East Syrians did not use bells, which are used to announce the church service. "...but the men before and after their day's work assemble, often as a matter of course, when summoned to prayer by the beating of the semantron. 'As Noah',... beat wood on wood to warn people to enter the ark, so we beat the semantron. It is a type of the trumpets of the day of judgment." (Maclean, *The Catholicos...Op. Cit.*, P 213)

¹⁵⁹ For more details, see the topic 'The Sacraments' in this chapter

¹⁶⁰ Gouvea describes the Nazrani way of preparing this holy water (Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 203-4)

¹⁶¹ For more details, see the topic 'Lents and Feasts' in this chapter

¹⁶² Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 173-8

¹⁶³ For the real East Syrian practice regarding this, see MacLean, *The Catholicos...Op. Cit.*, P 236

¹⁶⁴ The twenty first decree of the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Malayalam version confirms that the Nazranis had no images because of the East Syrian influence. (Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 222)

¹⁶⁵ Quoted by Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 1, P 195

¹⁶⁶ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 202

¹⁶⁷ The author of the 'Voyage to Calcoen (Calicut)', who accompanied Vasco de Gama on his second expedition, writes about the Nazrani tradesmen as "They are good Christians. They neither sell nor buy anything during the consecrated days and they neither eat nor drink with anybody but Christians." Quoted by Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. 1*, *Op. Cit.*, P 99

have been living among an infinite number of infidels, not only molested by the gentiles but even persecuted by the Moors and Jews, who are living among them, in spite of all this they have always preserved the veneration, obedience and faith of the Holy Cross and the memory of the mysteries of the Catholic faith. And on all days before sunset they assemble in the church to recite the psalms and the lessons in Chaldean, and in the morning they do the same¹⁶⁸, the *Casanars*¹⁶⁹ reciting their matins at the altar and the people answering their *allelyas*¹⁷⁰ and other words with such impetus of the spirit that, although I do not understand the words, they provoke in me devotion.¹⁷¹

While considering the narration of different authors of the sixteenth century, it seems that the Nazranis attended the church services twice every day.¹⁷² Several authors describe the role of the priests and their devotion to the daily prayers. Gouvea describes it as "Priests do not fail to say the divine office in Chaldean in a loud voice, singing it in their fashion twice a day, once at three in the morning, and again at five in the evening, and in neither did they make a mistake."¹⁷³ From the description of Barbosa, it is clear that the Nazranis received this practice from their East Syrian prelates.¹⁷⁴ Ferroli, based on Jesuit documents evaluates the Christianity of Nazranis as "Though interspersed with errors, their faith was comparatively pure, and their moral standards were high. It is marvellous how they kept the faith so many centuries, though far away from the great Christian centres, and surrounded on all sides by luxuriant Hinduism."¹⁷⁵ From all the above, it is clear that the Nazranis had a Christian life at their standards which is suitable to the canons of the East Syrian Church and their local environment. It is certain that the religious life of those who were dwelling in *Kudikal* was much different and perhaps very small. At least in *Angadys*, a church centred Christian life existed.

¹⁶⁸ The East Syrian practice of the daily office is worth to note. "Every morning and evening before sun rise and sunset, all Syrians who are alive to their religious duties assemble at the church for their daily prayers...They do not consider they have done enough if they attend a midday and perhaps an evening service on Sundays; even on ordinary weekdays many a village church is filled with a devout congregation of people dressed in their everyday clothes. Even if they are in rags, it is no shame for them to be seen standing in the church and offering their daily prayers and praises to their Creator." (Maclean, *The Catholicos...Op. Cit.*, Pp 212 - 3)

¹⁶⁹ = *Kathanar*

¹⁷⁰ = Hallelujah

¹⁷¹ Quoted by Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, P 194

¹⁷² Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, Pp 197 -8. It seems as the practice of the Nazranis of Amgadys.

¹⁷³ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 201

¹⁷⁴ Gangadharan, *Duarte Barbosa...Op. Cit.*, Pp 96 -7

¹⁷⁵ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 178

Feasts and Lents

Since the Nazranis were associated with the East Syrian Church, their feasts and lents can be traced back to the East Syrian tradition. As like other ancient Churches, the East Syrian Church also gave high priorities for feasts and Lents in their Christian life. The first Syriac document of Indian origin, a lectionary of Pauline epistles for the whole year according to the East Syrian tradition copied at Kodungallor as early as AD 1301,¹⁷⁶ confirms the East Syrian background of Nazrani feasts and Lents.

The Nazarenes had lents and feasts during the pre-Portuguese period. According to Gundert, they confirmed it to the Portuguese during their first meeting as "we have a lot of lent. The feast of Thoma in the first July is the most important."¹⁷⁷ The Venetians understood the following about the Lents and feast of Nazranis from Joseph the Indian:

They observe the Lent and Advent with fasts and prayers, with very great diligence. Among other things, from Good Friday until the day of Easter they abstain from all food. In the night of Good Friday, they insist on prayers and sacred gatherings without interruption. During the year, they celebrate the following feasts. First, the sacred day of Resurrection with the following two days. They observe the octave of Easter with more festivity than any other, for they affirm that on that day St Thomas, about whom they are very zealous, put his hand in the side of our Lord and recognised that he was not a phantom.¹⁷⁸ After that, the day on which Christ ascended into heaven is observed very specially.¹⁷⁹ After this the feast of the Trinity,¹⁸⁰ of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin,¹⁸¹ her Nativity¹⁸² and Purification,¹⁸³ the Nativity of our Saviour¹⁸⁴ and the Epiphany¹⁸⁵ and of all the apostles¹⁸⁶ and the Sundays. And, the first day of July¹⁸⁷ is celebrated with great solemnity by Christians as well as by the gentiles in memory of St Thomas...¹⁸⁸

¹⁷⁶ Van Der Ploeg, *Syriac Manuscripts...*, Op. Cit., P 188

¹⁷⁷ Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, Op. Cit., P 18

¹⁷⁸ John 21: 24 - 29

¹⁷⁹ This is the fortieth day from Easter. In Syriac, it is called as *Sulokka* and in colloquial use, it is called as *Nalppatham Perunnal* (the feast of the fortieth day).

¹⁸⁰ This is the feast of transfiguration on August sixth according to the new calendar

¹⁸¹ On August 15

¹⁸² On September 8

¹⁸³ Probably it is about the annunciation which is on March 25

¹⁸⁴ On December 25

¹⁸⁵ On January 6

¹⁸⁶ This is a movable feast, which have no date. It falls on the first Sunday in the *Qaita* (summer period arrives in the first half of August) and called as *Nusardail* in Syriac. (*Aprem, Mar, Nestorian Lectionary and Julian Calendar*, Thrissur, Mar Narsai Press, 1982, Pp 38, 99)

¹⁸⁷ Actually, it was on the third day of July and still is. Even though the Venetians consider all these feasts on the dates in Christian era, Nazranis observed it according to the Malayalam and East Syrian calendar. For more details, see the topic 'Calendar' in this chapter.

¹⁸⁸ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., Pp 175 -7

This list does not cover all the feasts celebrated by the Nazranis like Pentecost, which is on the second Sunday from the ascension Thursday.¹⁸⁹ Gouvea gives a little more information regarding the feasts of Nazranis. According to him "Besides Sundays and the feasts of Apostles, they observed some of Nestorian heretics...very solemnly the day when the cross of the glorious Apostle St. Thomas begins to sweat, i.e. on 18th December.¹⁹⁰ On, the 3rd July they celebrate a solemn feast in honour of the same apostle...these Christians from the remotest times have been celebrating the feast on the day when the church celebrates its translation to Edessa"¹⁹¹ Based on the Jesuit documents, Ferroli gives a little more elaborated list as follows:

Besides Sunday, they celebrated Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Low Sunday, and the Death and Transference of St. Thomas, the apostle. They celebrated also the feasts of the other apostles. They had great devotion to Our Lady, and honoured her Nativity, Purification and Assumption. They honoured also some Nestorian saints.¹⁹²

According to the Malayalam version of the nineteenth canon of the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor, *Vrishikam* one¹⁹³ was celebrated as the feast of Mar Sabor and Mar Afroth.¹⁹⁴ This all indicates that the Nazrani list of feast was not a mere copy of the East Syrian Church calendar, but had their own additions and perhaps had the deletions.

Celebration of the Feasts

The available sources reveal that the Nazrani festivals were a mixture of both East Syrian and local practices. The fourteenth decree of the fifth session as per the Portuguese version of the Synod of Udayamperor, non-Christian musicians played instruments during the celebration of holy Eucharist inside the church on festival days.¹⁹⁵ From this canon, the following information is available about the feasts of Nazranis.

1. Holy Eucharist was celebrated as per the Christian tradition

¹⁸⁹ In colloquial use, it is called as *Ampatham Perunnal* (festival of the fiftieth day) since it is coming on the fiftieth day from the Easter.

¹⁹⁰ During the Portuguese regime, it was widely publicized that the Persian cross at Mylapore was sweating blood on eighteenth December. Nazranis considered eighteenth to twenty first of December as the days of martyrdom of Saint Thomas

¹⁹¹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., Pp 204 -5

¹⁹² Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 178

¹⁹³ This is in *Kollam* era. According to the new calendar, November 1

¹⁹⁴ Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, Op. Cit., P 220

¹⁹⁵ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 142

2. Musicians had a role in feasts and they were non-Christians
3. The musicians were to stand inside the church and to play their instruments during the time of holy Eucharist just like in the Hindu temples during *Poojas*.
4. Other non-Christians also participated in the Christian feasts.

Processions were also an inevitable part of the Nazrani festivals. Even though there are no pre-Portuguese documents available, it seems from later practice that the Nazrani processions were not much different from its Hindu counterparts *Ooruvalathu* and *Aarat* processions. The Nazrani processions had a name of its own as *Kurisumm Kodiyyum Edukkuka*.¹⁹⁶ At the end of the Synod of Udayamperor, there was a procession around the church with cross and flags¹⁹⁷ and with musical instruments.¹⁹⁸ The mode of receipt of the East Syrian bishops in AD 1490 as "The faithful were greatly pleased with them, went to meet them joyfully with Gospel, Cross, thurible, and candles, and ushered them in with great pomp, with psalms and canticles"¹⁹⁹ may be taken as the style of Nazrani processions

Apart from the religious side, the feasts in general and especially the processions of the Nazranis were a public announcement of their royal privileges. Out of the legendary seventy two privileges, a procession seems to be the best opportunity to express thirty privileges named *Ambari* (howdah on elephant), *Arpu* (cheers, also called *Kurava*, *Alavattam* (peacock feather fan a royal insignia), *Edampirisamkhu* (conch with left screw), *Kuzhal* (lute or bugles), *Koti* (ensign), *Cannamelkatti* (a kind of canopy), *Takil* (kettle drum), *Tazha* (a kind of decorated fan or royal umbrella), *Nagarathoranam* (triumphal or ornamental arch, gateway; strings of leaves and flowers hung across the streets, *Natayum Natatthum* (processions with heraldry), *Nantavilakku* (a special kind of lamp / torch), *Nettipattam* (ornamental forehead coverings of elephants; royal tiara of princes), *Pakalvilakku* (day lamps), *Panjavarnakkuda* (multi-colour royal umbrella), *Panjavadhyam* (indigenous orchestra with five instruments),

¹⁹⁶ =The entrance of the cross and the flag. This name is still in use. It was also mentioned in the canons of the Synod of Udayamperor. (Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 159)

¹⁹⁷ The Nazrani flags, two triangles hanging from a rectangle with the insignia of cross, are not much different from the shape of Kerala temple flags.

¹⁹⁸ Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 245–6

¹⁹⁹ Original Syriac text is available in Assamanus, J. S., *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, Vol. III-2, Rome, 1728, P 590. For English translation, see Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 37

Pandalvithanam (canopy decorations), *Paravatani* (carpet), *Pavata* (royal cloth), *Manakkolam* (platform), *Maddalam* (tombourine), *Munkai* or *Nayakatvam* (leadership), *Murasu* (battle drum), *Valampirisamkhu* (conch with right screw), *Viripandal* (honour to erect *pandal* / pavilion), *Veena* (Indian lute, a royal instrument) *Viramaddhalam* or *Perimpara* (royal/war drums), *Virmsvadhyam* (war bugles), *Vencamaram* (beautified Yak-haired tassel) , *Samkhu* (conch).²⁰⁰ The Nazrani feasts had enough peripheral resemblance to the Kerala temple festivals to lend and borrow the paraphernalia each other. Ferroli evaluates this practice as follows:

Umbrellas, musical (or unmusical) instruments, torches, popguns and so forth are used both in Christian and Hindu processions. Elephants are led in procession, to add solemnity to the display. Bishops and priests have often to forbid borrowing and lending processional paraphernalia from and to Hindu temples.²⁰¹ An exact imitation of the Hindu *Prasad* is seen in the offerings made by the people to the church, and returned by the church to the people, of eatables, money, fowls, sweets etc. In older times, the priests used to sit in the sanctuary and eat²⁰² the fruits and plantains that are offered in fulfilments of vows.²⁰³

Gouvea confirms Ferroli's judgment regarding banquets at church as "All of them gather on certain days in the porches of the church and dine together, the dinner being either offered by the Church Fabrica, or some wealthy men who have made a promise to the church to give this dinner. At this, the rich and the poor eat of the same food. The dinner is called *Nercha*."²⁰⁴ From all the above, it is clear that the Nazranis celebrated their Christian feasts with multifold interests. It served the purpose of their doctrinal requirements. At the same time, it was an exhibition of their royal privileges as well as their status in the *Jathy* system. It also brings the Nazranis together and refreshed the bondage between them.

According to all available information, Lents and fasts played a prominent role in the Christian life of Nazranis. Gouvea gives the following information about the Lents and its Nazrani observation.

²⁰⁰ Joseph, *Kerala Christianikal, Op. Cit.*, Pp 155 – 6. Even though others who gives the list of privileges like K. N. Daniel, Z. M. Paret, Joseph Chazhikkattu, Chummar Choondel are slightly differ in some of them, the general natured did not tampered by that.

²⁰¹ Here Ferroli speaks about the Roman Catholic priests and bishops during the Portuguese period.

²⁰² This practice was existed even at the end of the nineteenth century. A bull from Kandanadu by Patriarch Peter III, from the Kandanadu church prohibited it in AD 1877. (*Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 1088 - 111)

²⁰³ Ferroli., *The Jesuits, ... Vol. II, Op., Cit.*, Pp 156 –7

²⁰⁴ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena ... Op. Cit.*, P 210

They ate meat on Saturdays and Wednesdays, and fish on Fridays.²⁰⁵ They fasted in lent, eating only once a day just before sun set. They began the *Qainquagesima* Sunday without any ceremony on Ash Wednesday.²⁰⁶ ... Many fasted Our Lady's fast from the 1st of August till the feast of assumption, and from the 1st of September till the feast of Nativity, and so can the fast of the Apostles, beginning the first day after Pentecost and continuing for fifty days. But this was a matter of devotion, not obligation, though many observed it.²⁰⁷

The fasting days, according to the East Syrian tradition, practiced in Persia was not much different from the Nazrani days.²⁰⁸ Gouvea has also given the description of how the Nazranis approached the Lents.

In this fast they abstained from fish, eggs and milk preparations, as well as from wine; and throughout lent they did not approach their wives... During lent every day they went thrice to the church, in the morning at waking up, at nightfall, and at midnight; though in the last many were missing... when as a rule they prayed prostrate with the face on the ground... On days of obligation failing at the fasting time, they were absolved from fasting as on Sundays. The common folk thought that, unless they washed the whole body early in the morning on fast days, the fast was useless. And some more ignorant thought the same was the case if they touched a low caste man, according to the superstitious custom of Malabar.²⁰⁹

A comparison of this Nazrani practice and its Persian counterpart clearly indicates that the Nazrani usage of lent was an adaptation from the practice of the East Syrian Church.²¹⁰ The description of Ferroli, based on Jesuit documents, confirms that the Nazrani tradition of lent is not much different from the East Syrian tradition.²¹¹

²⁰⁵ Here Gouvea made a mistake. The Nazranis observed all Wednesdays and Fridays as fasting days. Based on Portuguese documents Ferroli states that "they abstained from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays. During Lent they abstained from eggs, milk, liquor and sexual intercourse." (Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P. 178). The Portuguese introduced Saturday as day for fasting according to the Roman Catholic tradition. For details, see the twelfth canon of the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Malayalam version. (Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 215)

²⁰⁶ Here Gouvea describes the great Lent of fifty days prefixing Easter. According to oriental tradition, it starts on a Sunday evening. Where as the Roman Catholics begins three days later, on Wednesday, which is called *Ash Wednesday*. For details, see the eleventh canon of the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Malayalam version. (Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 214)

²⁰⁷ Zachana, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 202-3

²⁰⁸ For the list, see Maclean, *The Catholics...Op. Cit.*, Pp 340 -2

²⁰⁹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 202 - 3

²¹⁰ Maclean, *The Catholics...Op. Cit.*, P 342

²¹¹ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 178

Among the lents, the three days lent of Ninevites was observed most solemnly by Nazranis, according to the East Syrian tradition.²¹² In tune with the canons of Synod of Udayamperor, all Nazranis, including those living far away from churches, should attend church services as obligatory during the three days lent. For those who were dwelling in *Kudikal*, the lent of Ninevites was the only occasion for attendance in the church services.²¹³ Perhaps they stayed at churches for all three days. In this light, the description of Gouvea is meaningful:

The most solemn was during the three days, beginning eighteen days before Lent, which in their dialect they call *Mononoibo*,²¹⁴ said to be the fast of Jonah, days in which in most of churches dinners were given to the people as a whole, which were attended by all... As often as at night or day they went into the church while the Casanars were singing the divine office, they took in their hands the hands of the priests, and kissed them as a sign of peace and obedience, and this they called giving and receiving *Casturi*.²¹⁵

According to the letter of Fr. Antonio da Porto dated twentieth November AD 1557 to the king of Portugal, such a devotion of Nazranis towards lent was received most probably from their East Syrian prelates.²¹⁶ All descriptions confirmed that the observance of lent was a greater expression than the sacraments by Nazranis towards their Christian identity.

The Organization

Basic Structure

An *Angady*, the basic settlements of Nazranis seem to be the primary organization of the Nazrani community. The other form of Nazrani settlement, *Kudikal*, shows no trace of an organizational form²¹⁷ but seems as attached to any one of the *Angadys*.²¹⁸ The church, known as *Pally*, was the centre of the community in every *Angady*. However, the church was an element of the ecclesial organization of Nazranis. There were *Angadys* with more than one

²¹² "Everyone fasts in Advent, twenty-five days; Lent: fifty days; the Rogation of the Ninevites, three days at the end of winter, a fast instituted in commemoration of the preaching of Jonah at Nineveh, and most strictly observed." (Maclean, *The Catholicos...Op. Cit.*, P 341)

²¹³ Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 168

²¹⁴ = *Moornu Noyampu*, which means Three days lent

²¹⁵ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 203

²¹⁶ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 158 - 9

²¹⁷ The twenty third decree of the ninth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version states the lack of organizational form of *Kudikal* (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 213)

²¹⁸ The inhabitants of *Kudikal* should go to one of the churches at least for occasional receipt of the sacraments. Hence, the each of the *Kudikal* must attached to a church. The seventh canon of the fourth session of Synod of Udayamperor according to the Malayalam version confirms that the Nazranis living in *Kudikal* came once in every year to the church. (Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 167- 8.) However, it did not specify the church. Hence, it can be assume that each of the *Kudikal* attached to a church.

church.²¹⁹ The internal disputes in the same *Angady* led to the establishment of most of them and hence dedicated to the same saint.²²⁰ The historians generally agreed that the dimensions of the western concept of 'parish' were not strictly applicable for Nazranis and their ecclesial organization of *Pally* during the pre-Portuguese period.²²¹

The basic ecclesial organization of Nazranis was called *Yogam*. *Yogam* was the traditional administrative body of the temples in the *Nampoothiri* religion.²²² Andrews Thazhath has the following opinion about the origin of the Nazrani *Yogam*.

The *Yogam* probably had its origin in the 'Manram system' of the Indo-Dravidians at the beginning of the Christian era. After the Aryan emigration, the Brahmins developed the system of *brahmadeyam*. There was much similarity between the *brahmadeyam* of the Brahmins and the *Yogam* of the Christians.²²³

The *padiyola* related to the Kothamangalam churches of AD 1509 confirms that the *Yogam* derives the ecclesial organization of the Nazranis. According to that, Archdeacon Ittikuriath effected a compromise between two parties contending for the ownership of the two churches of Kothamangalam, allowing each of the parties to have a church with *Yogam*.²²⁴ There is no documentary evidence that gives a clear derivation for the *Yogam* during the pre-Portuguese or Portuguese period. However, the definition given in the article one of the *Chattavaryola*,²²⁵ passed at the *Malankara Pally Yogam*, held at Kottayam seminary on 1208 ME, seems to be applicable for the pre-Portuguese period also. It defined that "When the priests and laymen of each church join together, it became a *Yogam*."²²⁶ This definition expresses the collective responsibility and

²¹⁹ In the famous Nazrani settlements of Angamaly, North Parur, Kothamangalam, Kottayam, Kaduthuruthy etc. had two churches each before the Synod of Udayamperor. However, it never referred as different *Angadys*.

²²⁰ The twenty seventh canon of the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to Malayalam version confirms this. (Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 226.) The local legends about North Parur, Kaduthuruthy, Kottayam and Kothamangalam stating various reasons for the quarrel between the Nazranis of same *Angady* which leads to the establishment of a new church in the same *Angady*.

²²¹ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 152

²²² While writing about the construction of Puthencavu church, the author of *Niranam Grandhavari* states that *Nithyakari Yogam* and *Adiyanthira Yogam* were administrating the Chengannor temple. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 97)

²²³ Thazhath, *The Juridical...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 41

²²⁴ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 81

²²⁵ = Code of Canons

²²⁶ Konat MSS, No. 385, *Chattavriyola* (in Malayalam) Also see *Naalagamam MSS*, P 217

executive power of the *Yogam*.²²⁷ Gouvea confirms, "In these [of the Nazranis] churches, there presided the oldest priest present,²²⁸ whoever he might be. They had no curates nor vicars in the church."²²⁹ Leaving the Portuguese addition of vicar, all the four Palayoor copper plates of AD 1606, 1677, 1681 and 1745 confirm that the local priests and the laity together buy, sell or lease on behalf of the church.²³⁰

Authority and Responsibility

The management of revenue, assets and all other temporalities of the church were vested on the *Pally Yogam*.²³¹ Jacob Kollaparambil evaluates the role of *Pally Yogam*²³² as follows: "The Church of India had her own system of administering the temporalities of the Church. The administration of the properties of each church was vested with a council elected by the assembly (*Yogam*) ascribed to the particular church. The *Yogam* assumed the responsibility of sustaining the clerics ascribed to the church. Besides they had to contribute for the sustenance of the bishop."²³³ The *Pally Yogam* had the right to select their clergy along with the responsibility of maintaining them. The bishop had no right to ordain²³⁴ one without a consent letter called *Deshakuri* from the respective *Pally Yogam*.²³⁵ The *Yogam*, along with their *Kathanars* had the right to hear a case and pronounce a punishment up to excommunication to any Nazrani.²³⁶ Placid Podipara called this self-government of the Nazranis as a

²²⁷ An evidence of such collective responsibility of *Pally Yogam* still exists. The *Deshakuri*, consent letter from the brides parish to the grooms parish, the statutory document required for officiating the marriage, is addressed as "The vicar, local priests, the trustees and the rest of the people of NN church to the vicar, locals priests, trustees and the rest of the people of NN church..."

²²⁸ He was called *Moopan Kathanar* in Malayalam

²²⁹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 202

²³⁰ Antony, C. L., *Bhasha Padanangal*, Thrissur, Kerala Sahithya Academy, 1989, Pp 24-36

²³¹ The meaning of the Dravidian word *Pally* is village. Nowadays it is used to refer the church building and the parish church. Till the nineteenth century, this was used to refer the whole Christian Church as well as the church building. However, during the pre-Portuguese period, the Nazranis used *Pally* not for parish but for *Grama* (village) and for the whole Church.

²³² Later, the local assemblies were known as *Edavaka Pally Yogam*. This means the assembly of the church of the village. However, most of the documents indicates that the *Pally Yogams* were always used with the place name of the respective churches like *Kandanadu Pally Yogam*, *Niranathu Pally Yogam* etc. The use of the term *Edavaka Pally Yogam* may come into effect only when a generalization was became necessary during the Portuguese period.

²³³ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 200

²³⁴ "An analogous system existed in the Church of India. Only after the *Yogam* (assembly of the faithful ascribed to a church) issued a document called *Desakury*, consenting to the promotion of a particular person to Holy Orders and assuming the responsibility to sustain him, the bishop used to ordain him." (Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 215)

²³⁵ Thazhath, *The Juridical...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 38

²³⁶ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, P 191

'Christian Republic.'²³⁷ The *Pally Yogam* did not consist of all families or male members belonging to that community. Only those who had contributed in the construction of the church²³⁸ and the respectable members were included in the *Pally Yogam*.²³⁹

Higher Authorities

Regarding the affairs affecting the whole Nazranis, there was a representative body of local churches called *Malankara Pally Yogam*.²⁴⁰ According to the custom of Nazranis, each *Pally Yogam* was considered as a unit in the *Malankara Pally Yogam* and selected *Kathanars* and laymen to represent each.²⁴¹ Though there was no common property to govern, the administration of temporalities was not included as a portfolio of administration of wealth for the *Malankara Pally Yogam*. However, all affairs, spiritual, temporal or ecclesial affecting all the Nazranis were decided by this *Malankara Pally Yogam*. They alone had the right to accept their bishop and the Archdeacon²⁴². All social and theological change needs the consent of the *Malankara Pally Yogam*.²⁴³ In the words of Joseph Perumthottam, "these assemblies ensured the active role of the faithful in the ecclesiastical affairs and safeguarded the customs and privileges of the Christian community."²⁴⁴

According to Parammakel Thomman Kathanar, there existed a regional assembly between the *Pally Yogam* and *Malankara Pally Yogam*. In his eighteenth century travelogue, *Varthamanapusthakam*, he states, "according to the ancient custom of the Malabar Church, no punishment could be inflicted unless the crime was proved before the representatives of [at least] four churches."²⁴⁵ Even though Andrews Thazhath named it as *Desa Yogam*,²⁴⁶ there

²³⁷ Stated in his introduction of the English translation of *Varthamanappusthakam*. (Thomman Kathanar, Parammekkal, *Vrthamanappusthakam*, Thevara, Janatha Book Stall, 1971, Pp 3 -4)

²³⁸ And their successors

²³⁹ Thazhath, *Juridical...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 42 -3, Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, P 191.

²⁴⁰ According to the Portuguese documents, "these church assemblies looked after the whole Christian life of the community and the temporalities of the church." (Perumthottam, Joseph, *A Period of decline of Marthoma Christians (1712- 1752)*, Vdavathoor, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies Publications, Vadavathoor, 1994, P 7)

²⁴¹ The laymen representation was the double of *Kathanars* from each church till AD 2002.

²⁴² For further details, see the topics 'The Bishop' and 'The Archdeacon' in this chapter

²⁴³ The most powerful evidence of the superiority of *Malankara Pally Yogam* is the Synod of Udayamperor itself. The laymen participation in that Synod was against the canons of the Roman Catholic Church. (Thaliath, Jonas, *The Synod of Diamper*, Bangalore, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, 1999, Pp 41 -2)

²⁴⁴ Perumthottam, *Period of decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 8

²⁴⁵ Thomman Kathanar, *Vrthamanappusthakam*. *Op. Cit.*, P 41

²⁴⁶ Thazhath, *Juridical...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 42

is no other proof for its existence, scope or dimension.²⁴⁷ Perhaps the representatives of the neighbouring churches were invited as juries in the cases that went beyond the control of one *Pally Yogam* or while if one of the parties had no confidence in his respective *Yogam*.

Hierarchy

Early Period

According to the local tradition, Saint Thomas formed an Indian hierarchy.²⁴⁸ The same tradition says that this hierarchy ceased to exist before the fourth century because of the lack of any bishop.²⁴⁹ It is also said that the priestly formation was re-established by Mar Joseph of Uraha, who came along with Knai Thomman in AD 345.²⁵⁰ It is reasonable to think that the Indian priesthood was restructured in the East Syrian Church²⁵¹ style after a close link was established.

The possibility of the existence of an Indian hierarchy could not be ruled out. In the sixth century, Cosmos Indicopleustes reports that the Bishop of Kalliana was appointed from Persia.²⁵² However, Cosmos did not describe him as Persian by origin as in the case of the priests of Socotra he described.²⁵³ The letter of Patriarch Timothy the great around AD 800 to the Archdeacon of India is about the right norms to be followed in the ordination of the priests, bishops, metropolitans and the Patriarch.²⁵⁴ From that letter, it is very clear that the style of ordination of bishops in India was not proper according to the canons of the East Syrian Church until that time. Hence, it also proves that there was an Indian hierarchy, perhaps of Indian origin, existing until that time. It is certain that the lineage of Indian bishops vanished during the period of Patriarch Timothy. Since then onwards the bishops seen in the history of Nazranis are all Persians by origin beginning with Mar Sabor and Mar Afroth.²⁵⁵ After the proper establishment

²⁴⁷ Jacob Kollaparambil also acknowledged the existence of local assemblies as "For important matters the assemblies of the neighbouring churches also were consulted" (Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 192)

²⁴⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 75

²⁴⁹ Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 10

²⁵⁰ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 77

²⁵¹ For all ancient churches, there are three stages in the hierarchy of priesthood namely Bishop, Presbyter and Deacon. Catholicos, Patriarch, Pope, Metropolitan, Archbishop and Episcopa were created within the same category of bishop for various administrative reasons. Only bishops can give ordination.

²⁵² Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 29

²⁵³ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 30

²⁵⁴ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 80

²⁵⁵ For the list of Persian bishops in India, see the topic 'Religious Affiliation' in this chapter.

of the Persian connection of Nazranis, the hierarchy was structured to suit the canons of the Persian Church under the Catholicos of the East.

The Catholicos

The Nazranis were the subjects of the Catholicos of the East since they were affiliated with the East Syrian Church.²⁵⁶ They accepted him as their spiritual head. Narratives of Joseph the Indian state: "Their Pontiff is called Catholica and wears a tonsure in the likeness of a cross. He appoints his Patriarchs...one in India and another in China...Marco Polo had made mention of this Catholica²⁵⁷ in his treatise on Armenia,²⁵⁸ where he says that there are two kinds of Christians, Jacobites and Nestorians, whose pope is called *Jacobita*, who is the Catholica."²⁵⁹ The term Catholicos later led to an argument that the Nazranis were subjects to the Catholicos under the Patriarch of Antioch. The pseudo-Nicean canon called Arabic canon placed the Catholicos of the East under the spiritual supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch.²⁶⁰ *Niranam Grandhavari* echoes this argument.²⁶¹ However, even if the alleged Nicean canon was genuine, it was not binding on the East Syrian Church since they had no participation in the council of Nicea. A Synod held in Markabta proclaimed that the Persian Church as independent and under its Catholicos in AD 424.²⁶²

During the period of Catholicos Ber Basamin in the third century AD, the Persian Church tried to develop an identity different from that of the Christians of

²⁵⁶ In the fourth century, The Christian Church in the Roman Empire was divided into four Patriarchies for administrative purpose. This system with these four Patriarchs, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch, along with the titular Patriarch of Jerusalem is known as the Pentarchy. In the meantime, the Christianity in the Persian Empire was also centred to the bishop of Selucia-Ctesiphon, who was later known as the Patriarch of Babylon. However, it was impossible in Persian Empire to retain a title similar to that in the Roman Empire due to the rivalry between both the Empires. After the declaration of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire by emperor Constantine in AD 313, the Christians of the Persian Empire were treated as the enemies of the nation since the Roman and Persian Empires were in constant enmity. Therefore, to retain a separate identity from Christianity in Roman Empire, the Persian prelate took a different title as Catholicos, which means the universal father.

²⁵⁷ This reference is to Marco Polo Book I, Chapter 15, where he actually speaks of the kingdom of Mosul and not of Armenia. It is clear that the reference is to the Chaldean Patriarch. (Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., Pp 275-6)

²⁵⁸ According to Mundadan, "This is a misnomer for "Aramea" and "Arameans" which seem to be confused by the Portuguese. This region, as once in the Persian Empire and was successively ruled by the Babylonians, Assyrians and Chaldeans and has been known as Babylonia, Assyria and Chaldaea. The commercial language of this place continued to be Chaldean or Aramaic even after the Persians became rulers of the Empire. And people hailing from these parts were known in Malabar as "Arameans" and their country as "Aramea." The Portuguese confused these terms with Armenia and Armenians. (Quoted by Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., Pp 274-5)

²⁵⁹ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., Pp 167-8

²⁶⁰ Geevarghese, Rev. P. T., *Where the Syrian Christians Nestorians?*, re-printed in Moolayil, Kuriakose Coepiscopa in *Four Historic Documents*, Cheeramchira, Mor Adai Study Centre, 2002, Pp 118-9

²⁶¹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 77, 196

²⁶² Attwater, Donald, *The Christian Churches of the East Vol. II*, Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1947, P 185

the Roman Empire to escape from the persecution.²⁶³ It led to the acceptance of Nestorianism as their Christology²⁶⁴ and hence the Catholicate of Persia became Nestorian. Even then, there were very few who remained without accepting the Nestorian Christology, but un-organized. The Patriarch of Antioch appointed a bishop named Mar Marutha for the spiritual affairs of the non-Nestorians of Persia in AD 628. The different non-Nestorian groups in Persia agreed to unite at a synod held at Dyer Mathai. Mar Marutha was appointed as the head of Persian non-Nestorians with the title *Mafrian*.²⁶⁵ This *Mafrian*, under the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch, had a very limited jurisdiction. Some of them claimed the title *Catholicos*²⁶⁶ in a very later period. There is no proof for their authority over Nazranis.²⁶⁷

The Catholicos of the East had never been to India. Except a few like Joseph the Indian, who visited him at his residence in Babylon, no Nazrani had ever seen him.²⁶⁸ He did not execute any authority over Nazranis directly except the consecration and appointment of their bishops. However, he was the symbol of the Christian unity of Nazranis to the Christendom. After AD 1551, two rival lines of Catholicos emerged in the Persian Church. One surrendered to the Pope of Rome. In the late sixteenth century, both the Catholicoses sent bishops to India.²⁶⁹ Even though those bishops were fighting each other, the reverence to the Catholicos remained intact irrespective of their creed, since Nazranis did not

²⁶³ Chediath, G. G. Appassery, *Bar Ebraya - Sabha Chgarithram Randam Bhagam*, (Tr. of the Chronicle of Barhebraeus Part II) Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1980, P 29

²⁶⁴ Nestorius was the Patriarch of Constantinople. He developed a Christology in which Saint Mary was called as *Christotokos* instead of *Theotokos* in the Alexandrian Christology. The Universal council held at Ephesus in AD 431 rejected his Christology and excommunicated him from the Church. It is quite natural that the Persian church, which desperately needed a separate identity from the Church in the Roman Empire, accepted the theology that was expelled from the Roman Empire. Barhebraeus hinting that this acceptance was mainly due to political reasons. (Chediath, *Bar Ebraya...*, Op. Cit., P 29). Due to the work of Bar Sauna, Metropolitan of Nisei, the Persian church officially accepted the Nestorian Christology during AD 484-486. (Chediath, *Bar Ebraya...*, Op. Cit., P 38) The present day theologians found no grave mistake in the teachings of Nestorius.

²⁶⁵ Khedivate, G., *Pourasthya Catholicos*, Vadavathoor, Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1985, Pp 78-80

²⁶⁶ At present, there are five prelates using the title *Catholicos*. The Supreme Catholicos of all Armenians at Etchmiadzin, The Armenian Catholicos of Cilicia, Catholicos of All Georgia, The Catholicos of the East of the Nestorian Church and the Catholicos of the East of Malankara Orthodox Church. The *Mafrianate* under the Patriarch of Antioch does not exist since the nineteenth century. For more details, see: Thottappuzha, Varghis John, "Christhava Lokatthe Catholikkamar" (Art.), *Baselius Marthoma Mathews II Souvenir*, Kottayam, 1999, Pp 131 - 5

²⁶⁷ Barhebraeus (1226-86), who was a *Mafrian*, never mentioned India in connection with *Mafrian* in his elaborated history of Catholicate and Mafrianate.

²⁶⁸ "In the year one thousand eight hundred and one of Alexander [AD 1490], three believing Christian men came from the remote countries of India to the Catholicos Mar Simeon." One among them was Joseph the Indian. (Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., Pp 36 -7)

²⁶⁹ Podipara, *The Canonical...*, Op. Cit., Pp 41-3

know him personally. Gouvea confirms their attitude towards the Catholicos: "They were deeply attached to the schismatic Patriarch of Babylon, head of the Nestorian sect."²⁷⁰

The Indian Hierarchy

The Nazranis had a hierarchy of clergy to cater to their local religious requirements. Like any other ancient Christian Church, it also had a three-tier clerical formation of bishop, priest and deacon. As a Church associated with the East Syrian Church, its clerical formation should be in the same manner of the latter. Francis Day narrates the pre-Portuguese clerical formation of Nazranis as follows: "At the head of the Syrian church was a Metropolitan, the inferior clergy were termed Catanars, who were divided into two grades, the senior corresponding to our presbyter, whilst the inferior were deacons."²⁷¹ But a far away community from the Christian heartland, the office, function and authority of these ranks were not fully as prescribed in the canons of the East Syrian Church. The social environment made differences in their respective counterparts in the East Syrian Church.

The Bishops

As seen earlier, the bishops appointed from Persia governed the Nazranis. They were of Persian origin at least in the second millennium AD. Cosmos confirms that the bishop of India was appointed from Persia in the sixth century. At least from the period of Mar Sabor and Afroth, a regular presence of them in Kerala is available from different sources. The Syriac book of AD 1301 confirms his title as the "Metropolitan bishop of the See of St. Thomas and of the whole Church of the Christians of India." It also shows his residence as Kodungallor.²⁷² According to Placid J. Podipara, the Metropolitan of India was "Metropolitan and Gate of All India." He held the tenth place among the other metropolitans of the Persian Church and came before (after?) the one of China.²⁷³ Mingana, after referring to several Syriac documents, comments that "in the fourteenth Christian century, the Metropolitan of India was the fifteenth in rank among all the Metropolitans of the Nestorian Church...[the] late Syriac documents...give

²⁷⁰ Quoted by Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 202

²⁷¹ Day, *Land of Perumals*, Op. Cit., P 218

²⁷² Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, Op. Cit., P 188

²⁷³ Podipara, *The Canonical...*, Op. Cit., P 52

Angamale and Shingala (Chrongalore) as the seats of the Nestorian Archbishop, but he is sometimes mentioned in connection with other towns." ²⁷⁴

Appointment of bishops without specifying a town as his seat, if they are with administrative authority, is against the traditions of all ancient Churches. However, the use of 'Gate of all India' as their title indicates that they had higher status than a mere bishop since this title indicates the highest level of authority and respect. In the Semitic world, the gate denotes the maximum respect.²⁷⁵ Here the narration of Joseph the Indian becomes relevant. According to him, the Metropolitan of India had the title 'Patriarch'.²⁷⁶ Antony Vallavanthara, who studied the Narratives of Joseph the Indian, comments as follows:

The word Patriarch used in this context needs to be studied in detail. Does it mean Metropolitan or Patriarch? Did Joseph really mean Patriarch? We cannot affirm either now. For, on the one hand, we know that the most important title used for the head of the Malabar Church is the title of "*The Metropolitan and the Gate of All India*"...However, in the narratives the term used is Patriarch. And we know also that just before the Coonan Cross oath of 1563, in a letter sent by Ahatalla, he designated him as the "Patriarch of China and of All India." Does this mean that the title of Patriarch was one that was applied to the heads of China and India? If this was not a term known to the Christians of Malabar, why did Ahatalla use it? Further, Podipara thinks that the Metropolitan of India had a kind of quasi-patriarchal power.²⁷⁷

There is no conclusive evidence to confirm the use of the title Patriarch. However, several prelates from the Middle East addressed as 'Patriarchs', even if they were just Episcopas or Metropolitans in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.²⁷⁸ Such later usage indicates that the Persian prelates of Nazranis once used their title as Patriarch. However, G. Schurhammer conclusively says in his book 'The Malabar Church and Rome during the early Portuguese period' in 1934 that "The head of the Indian church was sometimes referred to "as Patriarch, of course in a wide sense"²⁷⁹ Regarding the use of the title 'The Gate

²⁷⁴ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., P 65

²⁷⁵ Jesus Christ referred himself as 'I am the Gate'

²⁷⁶ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., Pp 167-171

²⁷⁷ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., Pp 275

²⁷⁸ Several examples are available in this context. Mar Ahatalla, who was martyred by the Roman Catholics in AD 1653, was always referred as Patriarch (Kollaparambil, Rev. Jacob, *The St. Thomas' Christian Revolution of 1653*, Kottayam, The Catholic Bishop's House, 1981, Pp 108-12). Mar Anthrayos, the Syrian bishop arrived Kerala in AD 1678 was called as Patriarch (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 85). The letter of Mar Thoma V to the Patriarch of Antioch dated 25 Kanni, AD 1720, requesting to send a 'learned Patriarch'. (Assamanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis ...*, Vol. IV, Op. Cit, Pp 590-1)

²⁷⁹ Quoted in Podipara, *The Canonical...*, Op. Cit., P 53

of India', later references are also available.²⁸⁰ In both cases, the beginning of such usage is yet unknown.

The laws of all ancient churches vested the authority for ordination and consecration of altars exclusively with the bishops. It ensured the unity of the Church since without properly ordained priests and consecrated altars, no Church can exist and hence, the separatists cannot survive. Eventually, the bishops assumed several more temporal and ecclesial powers also. Regarding Nazranis, the primary rights of the bishops, the ordination and consecration of altars, are found exercised by the East Syrian bishops. A Syriac document in the beginning of the sixteenth century states that "They [East Syrian bishops] consecrated altars and ordained many priests, because the Indians were for a long time without bishops."²⁸¹ This description did not agree with the one given by Barbosa, who visited Kerala around AD 1500, except in the general outline. According to him: "These Christians, thus continuing without instructions and with no priest to baptise them...determined to send forth into some from among them the world where the Sacrament of Baptism was known...came to stay in the land of *Armenia* where they found many Christians and a Patriarch who ruled them...sent with them a Bishop and five or six clerks to baptise them and say mass and instruct them...These Armenians ... baptised for money... and thus for lack of money many went unbaptised."²⁸²

Considering the fact that Barbosa had only second-hand information about the instance, the Syriac document is taken as more authentic. However, according to Barbosa's description, the baptism was reserved for bishops and they performed it for money. Even if the Church laws made no such reservation and all priests have the authority to baptize, several other sources confirmed that such a reservation existed among Nazranis at least in the sixteenth century. Ludovico di Varthema says in AD 1505 about the Nazranis of Kayamkulam or Kollam as follows: "They say that every three years a priest comes there to baptise them. And that he comes there from Babylon."²⁸³ Penteado confirms the above in AD 1516:

²⁸⁰ Parambil Chandi, the native bishop for Romo -Syrians after the *Coonen Cross* revolution used this title. (Jose, N. K., *Kudavachoor Pally*, Vaikom, Hobby Publishers, 1985, Pp 149-50) In the above-mentioned letter of Mar Thoma V dated *Kanni* 25, AD 1720, he used the same title.

²⁸¹ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 36 – 38.

²⁸² Gangadharan, *Duarte Barbosa...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 96-7

²⁸³ Quote by Panjikkaran, *Syrian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, P. 283

Many are baptized at 50 years of age...All this is due to the fault of the Fathers [the East Syrian bishops] who go about among them...they do not baptize in the church unless this age is over; and however old the people may be they do not baptize them unless in great numbers...for one has to bring three *fanams* however poor he may be, and the rich even more. These aims are divided into three parts; one part goes to the priest, another to the ministers and the third to the church." ²⁸⁴

Even if Penteado's description has little exaggeration, because of his fanatic Roman Catholic attitude, it is found as true from a letter of Mar Jacob in AD 1523 to the king of Portugal that claiming the administration of baptism was his right.²⁸⁵ These all lead to the conclusion that baptism was reserved for the East Syrian bishops at least in the later stage.

Even if the East Syrian bishops were known with glorious titles of 'the Gate of India' and Patriarch, the list of Persian bishops to Nazranis consists of episcopas and metropolitans. It indicates that the authority of East Syrian bishops was limited only to the ordination of priests and consecration of altars, even if they used the title as Patriarch.²⁸⁶ There were several reasons for such a limitation like barrier of language, the lack of continuity due to several periods of absence of bishops, administrative system developed from the local tradition that forbids any such authority and the influence of the office of the archdeacon.

Whatever may be their real authority was, Nazranis respected them as their spiritual fathers and hence they may have great influence over them. Such an influence was used in the sixteenth century by Mar Jacob to persuade Nazranis to sell their pepper to the Portuguese instead of Arabs.²⁸⁷ The bishops trained the *Kathanars*.²⁸⁸ They remained the theological and spiritual advisers. In such a way, they had a great influence over Nazranis. It is also found in the sixteenth century that the continued presence of the Persian bishops was a real inspiration of Nazranis in the renovation of old churches and in the construction of the new ones²⁸⁹. Ferroli, depending upon the Jesuit sources, describes the

²⁸⁴ Quoted by Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, Op. Cit., Vol. I, P 291

²⁸⁵ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 112

²⁸⁶ Both Episcopa and metropolitan have the same priestly order. However, in administrative matters, an Episcopa is a subordinate to metropolitan and has limitations in authority. However, both can officiate ordination of priests and consecration of alters.

²⁸⁷ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 111-2

²⁸⁸ Several Syriac manuscripts of that period stated as copied by the student of certain bishop.

²⁸⁹ The presence of the East Syrian bishops is found in connection with the construction or reconstruction of several churches during that period.

functions of the East Syrian bishops in the sixteenth century as "The Bishop had both spiritual and temporal power. He alone ordained priests and consecrated churches, but never without payment."²⁹⁰ Gouvea gives the following description about the East Syrian bishops, their duties and income.

Their [Nazranis] prelates were Chaldean by race, sent by the Patriarch of Babylon, of Nestorian sect, whom they obeyed; and their bishops in conferring Holy Orders, consecrating altar stones, blessing churches, absolving from excommunication, and in all other ecclesiastical affairs, just as the priests did with Baptism and Communion, lived in open simony, a price being agreed upon for all these things, though in some there was a fixed and definite price.²⁹¹

In general, the East Syrian bishops of Nazranis remained as their spiritual fathers. They provided necessary sacraments and collected money in various forms. Their visits retained the Nazranis in the Christian faith. However, those bishops were far away from executing any administrative authority as in the rest of the Christendom.

Archdeacon

There was an office named Archdeacon²⁹² in all ancient churches. However, their nature, function and powers are different in each tradition. Generally, he is the chief assistant of the bishop in the performance of the liturgy and sacraments in all traditions. Besides, they have certain role in the government of the diocese. However, it varies in each tradition. In all churches, they are the mediators between the bishop and the congregation. At present, the role of Archdeacon is almost extinct in all churches.²⁹³ In some churches like the Roman Catholic Church, it was officially suppressed even before the tenth century.²⁹⁴ The nature of Archdeacon is also different in various traditions. He is a deacon by priestly order in the West Syrian tradition and his duties are limited

²⁹⁰ Ferrol, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 177

²⁹¹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 202

²⁹² The term *Archdeacon* was derived from the Greek words *Arka Deakkon* means 'the chief assistant'. The Syriac equivalent of the same is *Reesh M'Samssono*. Archdeacon was mistaken as deacon, the lowest among priestly orders due to the similarity in the title. Even though the meanings of the both are the same, it became the same office in very few cases only.

²⁹³ Even if their duties are mentioned in several sacraments, nowadays the Archdeacon is assigned only for the consecration of the holy oil (*Mooron*) in Malankara Orthodox Church. In other sacraments, they were substituted by other orders of the priesthood.

²⁹⁴ For the full account on the Archdeacon See (a). Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, and (b). Thomas, M. Kurian, "Arkkadiyokken Paschathya Pourasthya Parambaryangalil" (Art.), *Malankara Sabha Magazine*, 1993 July & September issues

mostly to sacramental.²⁹⁵ In East Syrian tradition, Archdeacon is a priest by order and his office is of a more administrative nature²⁹⁶. The authority of the Archdeacon in the East Syrian tradition is summarized as follows.

1. Every episcopa, metropolitan and the Catholicos must have an Archdeacon.
2. He is the head of all the church orders
3. Every complaint to the bishop must go through him only
4. Everything related to the church must be executed by the bishop through him
5. Every candidate to the priestly orders must be examined by him
6. His name must be remembered in divine services
7. He must examine all clergy regarding their knowledge.

According to the known history, the real administration of the Nazranis was always in the hands of the Archdeacon, even in the presence of the bishop. They belonged to the Pakalomattom family as hereditary succession.²⁹⁷ According to the Nazrani legends, the origin of the archdeaconate of Nazranis dates back to the period of Knai Thomman in the fourth century AD. *Niranam Grandhavari* describes the origin after the grant of copper plate privileges to Knai Thomman as "it was decided that the ordination given by Saint Thomas should not be taken out from that family. Brought one person from *Palamttam* [Pakalomattom] family and had given the title of Archdeacon to him, and gave authority to him to protect and punish the *Margavasikal* of Malayalam."²⁹⁸ Rev. K. Kuruvilla states that Knai Thomman, Mar Joseph Episcopa of Edassa and all others took this decision.²⁹⁹ He also states that the Archdeacon governs the Nazranis as *Veda Thalavan* since then.³⁰⁰ Rev George Curian adds that he looked after the temporalities of the church.³⁰¹ In his answers to the Madras government on twentieth *Medom* AD

²⁹⁵ The details of the nature and function of Archdeacon in the West Syrian tradition is available from the *Nomocanon* of Bar Hebraeus, popularly known as *Hoodaya Canon*, in chapter 7:6. (a.) Abraham Kathanar, Konat, *Hoodaya Canon (Tr.)*, Pampakuda, Mar Julios Press, 1952, Pp. 105-8 and (b.) *Pontifical Taksa of Ordination, Malayalam MSS* of H. H. Baselius Marthoma Mathews I.)

²⁹⁶ The laws regarding the nature and office of the Archdeacon in the East Syrian tradition is available from the canons of Mar Marutha (+ AD 410). See a. Chediath, G, *Mar Maruthayude Canonakal*, Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1989 and b. Raphael Vattakuzhi, Corepiscopa, *Taksa Prathanakal Part IV*, Trichur, Rev. Fr. M. J. David (Pub.), 1989, Pp 226 -31)

²⁹⁷ For more details see Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*,

²⁹⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 77

²⁹⁹ Kuruvilla, *Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 18

³⁰⁰ = Head of the religion

³⁰¹ Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 13

1812, Mar Thoma VIII, then Prelate of the Nazranis and a member of Pakalomattom family, confirms the above for question numbers three and seventeen. He adds that "For 1308 years from 345 aforesaid to 1653 when Mar Ignatius came to Malayalam, people of the Pakalomattom family used to be appointed as Archdeacons, and they were managing, the religious affairs." ³⁰²

The first clear evidence of the existence of the Archdeacon is a letter of the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy (780-823) around AD 800 addressed to the "Archdeacon (*Arkn*), the Head of the Faithful in India."³⁰³ However, very little is known about the pre-Portuguese history of Archdeaconate of India. *Niranam Grandhavari* gives a list of four archdeacons of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it reads as:

On *Mithunam* 6, 745 ME, Archdeacon Malanar passed away.
On *Meenom* 30, 768, ME Archdeacon Yohannan passed away,
On *Karkkidakom* 15, 779 ME Archdeacon Geevarghese passed away,
On *Meenom* 5, 815, Archdeacon Ittykuriyath passed away³⁰⁴

Rev. George Curian gives a slightly different list. According to him, East Syrian bishop Mar Yohannan appointed Archdeacon Geevarghese in AD 1542. Archdeacons Yakob, Alexander and Geevarghese succeeded respectively.³⁰⁵ The first Indian document showing the existence of the Archdeacon is a *Padiyola*³⁰⁶ of AD 1509.³⁰⁷ In this, Archdeacon Ittykuriyath³⁰⁸ made a compromise between two parties contending for the ownership of the two churches of Kothamangalam. This document styles the Archdeacon as *Jathikku Karthavian*, which means the head of the caste.³⁰⁹ Apart from the existence of the office, this *Padiyola* confirms that the Archdeacon is the head of the *Jathy* and he had the powers to settle the disputes.

³⁰² *The Seminary Case Book, Vol. III, Case No. III of 1061, Pp 158, 161*

³⁰³ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 80

³⁰⁴ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 127, *Niranam Grandhavari* also confess that the white ants destroyed the *Ola's* (palm leaves) bearing the history of Archdeacons at Niranam in the late eighteenth century.

³⁰⁵ Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 21

³⁰⁶ *Padiyola* is a minutes of proceedings, normally a document written on palm leaves.

³⁰⁷ *Kerala Society Papers...*, *Op. Cit. Vol. II, P 278*

³⁰⁸ The exact usage of title in this *Padiyola* is *Ittykuriyath Archdeacon Achen, Jathikku Karthavian*. *Achen* is a Malayalam word commonly used to mark the respect. (*Mundadan, Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 146)

³⁰⁹ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 81. According to him, here the 'head of the caste' means as "the head of the St. Thomas' Christians. This title is practically the same as that found in the above-mentioned letter of Patriarch Mar Timothy, - the head of the Faithful in India - for, at the time of Mar Timothy the only Christian community in India was that of St. Thomas' Christians." (*Kollaparambil, Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 82)

In the sixteenth century Portuguese documents, the Archdeacon appears for the first time in a letter of Fr. Amador Correia to his friends in Europe on January 20, 1564.³¹⁰ During the pre-Udayamperor period, there were several references about the person and office of the Archdeacon on several occasions. Fr. Dionysio, the rector of the Jesuit College at Cochin, states about the office of Archdeacon in a writing of January 4, 1578 that "Formerly, after the death of the bishop, there remained nobody in his place...Mar Joseph ordered that there might be the Archdeacon of Angamaly as the vicar and provisor, and ordered that this one be the vicar for the Christians."³¹¹ However, this description differs from the ongoing tradition that says about the Archdeacons from the Pakalomattom family who governs the Church even in the absence of any bishop.³¹² Whereas Fr. Dionysio speaks about the Archdeacon who's authority is limited only during the presence of his bishop. Dionysio's description is explainable according to canon of the East Syrian Church that demands that every bishop must have an Archdeacon and have only one.³¹³ The synod of Mar Ishahac of AD 410 states the office and function of the Archdeacon according to the East Syrian tradition.³¹⁴ Again, the seventeenth canon of the synod of Mar Isoyab of AD 587 gives further explanation of this office.³¹⁵ The Archdeaconate of India must be evaluated on this canonical base since the Nazranis were affiliated to the East Syrian Church.

Under strict canonical terms, an Archdeacon should be known as "Archdeacon of 'NN' bishop." His office is mentioned as the 'head of ministry', which limited them to the ritualistic office alone.³¹⁶ However, the Archdeacon of Nazranis used titles with broader sense. They used the Syriac title *Arkadeacon kol Hinduvayo* which means Archdeacon of all India. This title perhaps derived from the same of the East Syrian bishops who used their title as 'Metropolitan (Patriarch) of all India.'³¹⁷ Another Syriac title they used was *Tharvode Kol*

³¹⁰ Quoted by Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 84-5

³¹¹ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 84

³¹² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarai*, *Op. Cit.*, and Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*,

³¹³ Jacob Kollaparambil assumes that the presence of two Archdeacons then was due to the presence of two East Syrian bishops at that time. Both of them had own Archdeacon according to the canon.

(Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 84 -5)

³¹⁴ Chediath, *Synodicon Orientale...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 28

³¹⁵ Chediath, *Synodicon Orientale...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 260 -1

³¹⁶ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 222-3

³¹⁷ See Above the topic 'The Title of the Bishops' in this Chapter

Hinduvaya, which means 'the gate of India'.³¹⁸ This also was the title of the Metropolitan (Patriarch) of India.³¹⁹ The use of the term 'gate' indicates the tribunal or court in Semitic concept.³²⁰ These two titles and its implications are not justifiable according to the East Syrian canons. The historians point out that during the long absence of bishops, the Archdeacon should administer the vacant See. Even in his presence, the favourable factors of the native Archdeacon allow the latter to exercise more powers than the canon prescribes. This may have led the Archdeacon to use the same titles of the Metropolitan (Patriarch) of India. However, while the Archdeaconate continues and the presence of a bishop was uncertain, there was no other choice to express the title of the Archdeacon but to use the title of the bishops instead of his name. In addition, the long periods of absence of the bishops made it necessary to the Archdeacons to have a title of their own.

Apart from the Syriac titles, the Archdeacon had indigenous titles too. Various sources give different titles used by the Archdeacons like *Jathikku Karthavian*, *Jathikku Thalavan*, and *Manakulathilakan*.³²¹ It is difficult to explain these usages which have bearing upon the *Jathy* system of Kerala with reference to the East Syrian canons. The *Jathikku Karthavian* and *Jathikku Thalavan* are easily comparable with the office of *Thamprakkal* of Kerala *Nampoothiris*.

In the *Nampoothiri*-oriented Kerala community, *Thamprakkal* was the extreme of the elite. Though only *Azhvanchery Thamprakkal* of Sukapuram is well known in the history, every *Nampoothiri Gramam* had its own *Thamprakkal*.³²² *Thamprakkal* was the final authority in judgment regarding any spiritual or temporal issues of the *Nampoothiris* and their allied castes.³²³ It was necessary to have an authority above the civil administration for *Nampoothiris* to retain their supremacy over all others. It was also necessary to have one due to the existence of the numerous local chieftains of Kerala since the organization structure of the *Nampoothiri Gramams* are not fit to such geographical limits. The same parameters developed the office of the *Thamprakkal* in Kerala society were

³¹⁸ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 225

³¹⁹ See Above the topic 'The Title of the Bishops' in this Chapter

³²⁰ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 226

³²¹ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 223

³²² The *Thamprakkal* for Panniyoor Gramam - Kalapakamcherry, Peruvanam Gramam - Keerangattu, Iranikkulam Gramam - Akavoor and Perinchelloor Gramam - Kurumathoor. Even though their office is same, they were known with different titles like *Thangal*, *Naykker* etc.

³²³ Kanippayoor, *Aryanmarude...*, *Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, 110-5

applicable for the Nazranis to have such an office of their own.³²⁴ The function of the *Thamprakal* was the interpretation of law,³²⁵ the judgment and punishment³²⁶ and the appointments to certain offices.³²⁷ The office of the Archdeacon had all the above functions among Nazranis during the pre-Portuguese period. Even the four traditional rights of *Tamprakal*,³²⁸ *Bhadrasanam*, *Arvammanyam*, *Brhamasamragyam* and *Brahmavarchas*,³²⁹ were applicable for the Archdeacon in respect of Nazranis.³³⁰

Since the Nazranis had their own set of laws and different religious system of the *Nampoothiris*, it became necessary to have an administration of their own. The Archdeacon was at the top of such a system. Ferroli, based on the Jesuit documents, describes the condition of the Archdeacons in the sixteenth century as follows:

The Archdeacon was his [the bishops] right arm; in fact, he was all-powerful, both in ecclesiastical and civil matters. He was from the country, and practically always from the same family, though the office was not hereditary, but dependent on the votes of Bishops, clergy and people.³³¹

As in the case of the bishops, may be symbolic, an approval of the *Malankara Pally Yogam* was needed to become a *Jathikku Thalavan*. Even if the selection and training were did earlier by his predecessor, as in the case of any hereditary succession, such a recognition of the community may be necessary to get the royal confirmation to that post.³³² Besides the canonical and caste background, the Archdeacon assumes the real administrative power over the Nazranis. Joseph de Santa Maria, the Bishop of Hierapolis sent out by the Pope of Rome in AD 1660 to the Nazranis summarized the office of the Archdeacon as

³²⁴ Actually, every caste and sub-caste should have one 'head of the caste'. However, Kerala society was formulated in such a way that all upper caste people are bound to obey the *Nampoothiri* laws and all of them were affiliated to any of the *Nampoothiri Gramam* in one way or other. So, separate laws and authority was not necessary to *Kshatriyas* and *Sudras*. The Nazranis were a part of the *Chathurvarnya* system but they were not affiliated to any *Nampoothiri Grama* and governed by different law. Hence, they needed their own 'head of the caste'.

³²⁵ Kanippayoor, *Aryanmarude...*, Vol. II, Op. Cit., P 111

³²⁶ The State Institute of Encyclopaedic Publications, *Sarva Vinjanakosham Vol. III*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997, Pp 569-70

³²⁷ Baskaranunni, *Pathombatham...*, Op. Cit., Pp 528-30

³²⁸ *Sarva Vinjanakosham Vol. III*, Op. Cit., Pp 569-70

³²⁹ Their meanings are, the throne, full rights (authority), spiritual authority and the divine glory and lustre attained by knowledge or realization of eternity, respectively.

³³⁰ The title 'Archdeacon of all India' and 'Gate of India' itself indicates the throne.

³³¹ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, Op. Cit., P 177

³³² The presence of the *Yogam* and certain dignitaries was essential in case of the appointment of several temple titulars, even if the kings appointed them.

follows: "the Archdeacon is like the Chief and Prince of the St. Thomas' Christians who have no other secular or sacred dignity belonging to their own nation." ³³³ Galletti comments in 'Dutch in Malabar' that "The chief men of the ignorant Malabar Church always seem to have been willing to add to their own claims in the eyes of their people by obtaining the recognition of a distant Patriarch or Pope, but at the same time anxious to keep real power in their own hands."³³⁴ In reality, the spiritual, temporal and ecclesial authority was really vested with the Archdeacon of all India, irrespective of the 'recognition of a distant Patriarch' or the presence of any bishop.

Even though the Archdeacons used such elaborate titles and exercised most of the episcopal authority, they were never ordained as bishops. Rev. George Curian accused that this was a deliberate act of the East Syrians to prevent the Nazranis from attaining autonomy:

But this migration [of Knai Thomman] enhanced the religious and secular life of both the parties [the immigrants and the locals]. Then onwards foreigners robbed the dignity of the locals who were autonomous until then. Even though one among the *Palamattom*, one of the families from which Saint Thomas appointed priests, was appointed as Archdeacon and administered the church properties, he was not appointed a bishop. If it was so, the control of local Christians will remain with them [the locals] and the [Church] affairs would go smoothly. Then the absence of bishops or quarrel for that post would never happen and the Christians would prosper too.³³⁵

This argument finds as true from the example of the Ethiopian Orthodox church. The world's largest Oriental Orthodox Church was kept as a dominion of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Perhaps from the time of its evangelisation in mid-fourth century or certainly from the twelfth century, there was no bishop of Ethiopian origin in that Church until AD 1926. There was only one bishop for the entire Ethiopia who was a Copt appointed by the Coptic Church. This primate was called *abuna*, that is, "our father" (the ordinary style of addressing a priest in Arabic). The *negus*³³⁶ from time to time tried to get rid of this Coptic control.³³⁷ Even if the political power was with them, the Ethiopians never got a bishop of

³³³ Quoted by Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 174

³³⁴ Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 174

³³⁵ Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 13

³³⁶ *Nigus* is the title of the king of Ethiopia, Who was a member of the Ethiopian Church.

³³⁷ Attwater, *Churches of the East Vol. II...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 213

their own till AD 1926.³³⁸ However, during all these times, the administration of the Ethiopian Church was vested with an Ethiopian monk–priest appointed to the post of *Echegue*. The role of the Coptic bishop was limited to ordaining, benedictions and anointing of the kings.³³⁹ Hence, the office and function of *Echegue* was just equal to that of the 'Archdeacon of all India'.

In the sixteenth century, the Archdeacon of all India was so powerful even in the continued presence of the bishops. The Portuguese attempts to suppress the Archdeaconate prove that it was the symbol of the nationality and unity of the community.

The Priests

Though they had no bishops of their own, all of their ordinary priests were Nazranis. They were known as *Kathanar*³⁴⁰ that was derived from the Syriac word for priests *K'assesa*.³⁴¹ According to Francis Day "Clergy were permitted to hold secular offices, also to marry, whilst their wives took precedence in the church, and were known by wearing round their necks a golden cross."³⁴² Joseph the Indian gives the specific information about their existence and nature: "Thus, they have priests, Levites and sub deacons. The priests, however, do not have tonsure, but they have a little hair on the top of their heads...The priests live very chastely. If one is found lacking in chastity, he is deprived of the right to celebrate the Mass"³⁴³

The Portuguese concept about the Nazrani *Kathanars* was very bad. In their view, the priestly orders of Nazranis are corrupt and incompatible. The comments in the letter of Fr. Joao Garces to the King of Portugal of 2 January AD 1529 are the best example of their attitude. In that letter the *Kathanars* were described, as "Simony was rampant, ignorance, both among the clergy and the laity appalling. Many priests were married; many lived in concubinage. Several

³³⁸ In AD 1926, four Ethiopians were consecrated as auxiliary bishops to the Coptic Abuna and later the Church declared full independence.

³³⁹ For more details see: Ethiopian Orthodox Thawhido Church (Pub.), *The Church of Ethiopia Past and Present*, Addis Ababa, 1997, Pp 15 -21

³⁴⁰ For more details see Thomas, M. Kurian, "Achenum Kathanarum Pathiriyum" (Art.) in *Galad Tri-monthly*, 2001 July - September .

³⁴¹ There was also a usage as *Kassanaar* in Kerala. *K'assa*, the Syriac short form for the word *K'assisa* was added with the Dravidian symbol for respect *Aar* or *Naar* to form this word. It is the case with *Kathanar* (*Kathan* + *Aar*). However, Gundert argues that *Kathanar* is derived from the Word *Kartha* which means once who administrating or the lord. (Gundert, *Dictionary...Op. Cit.*, Pp 200, 214)

³⁴² Day, *The Land of Perumals*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 217-8

³⁴³ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 172, 179

carried on commerce. A good number served as soldiers with Pagan Rajahs." ³⁴⁴

Gouvea gives the following details about the *Kathanars*:³⁴⁵

They [The Nazranis] were attached to holy orders... They began to be ordained very young,³⁴⁶ and immediately used the ecclesiastical dress, which as a rule consisted of a large white pair of drawers and a shirt loosely worn over it.³⁴⁷ But some who were more dignified or when they went out of their country wore robes or mantles, white or black very befitting, and their crowns shaven in the guise of regular canons and Friars.³⁴⁸ The priests are ordained at the age of 17, 18, or 20 years. Most of them marry after ordination³⁴⁹, and many with widows. They married once, twice and thrice, the illegality of bigamy being unknown among them... When they celebrate in one and the same church; they were often father, sons and grandsons, all priests, and all ministering there.³⁵⁰ These women whom they call *Catatiars* or *Casanaras*, were therefore more honoured than the rest, and were given places of honour in church and elsewhere, and wore as their insignia a cross of gold or any other metal about the neck, over all other dress, so as to reveal the dignity of priests' wives. Those who are not yet priests are called "*chamazcs*"³⁵¹

Probably the low age of ordination was developed from two factors. Firstly, there were long periods of absence of bishop in the history of Nazranis. Perhaps it became a practice to get the ordination when the bishop was available.³⁵² The style of priestly education was the second reason. Historians state that the Nazranis began their education at the age of eight.³⁵³ In the case of priesthood, they studied under *Malpans*, the learned doctors of the Church.³⁵⁴ It is also stated

³⁴⁴ Ferroli, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 103

³⁴⁵ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 201-2

³⁴⁶ Vat Syr. 22 of AD 1301, was copied by a Deacon Joseph who had only fourteen years then. (Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 187 -8)

³⁴⁷ This dress is still in use by the Orthodox priests which is called by the Syriac name *Kammis*

³⁴⁸ The Roman system is to shave the centre of the head and keeping a tonsure as the symbol of priesthood. The Syriac tradition is of its just reciprocal. Even today, this is done ceremonially while giving ordination. Nazranis combined the Syriac tradition and the local practice, and used *Kudummi*, a tuft of hair, as the symbol of their priesthood. Nazranis said to the Portuguese on their arrival that the *Kudummi* (tuft of hair) itself symbolizing the ordination for their priests. (Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 18)

³⁴⁹ East Syrian tradition permits the priests to marry once after their ordination.

³⁵⁰ There is no wonder in it since *Kuladharna* and *Kulathozhil*, that is carrying down of prescribed jobs through generations, was the driving force for the entire society then.

³⁵¹ This word is derived from the Syriac word *M'samshona* means deacon. Even though this means full deacon only, in Kerala, Even today, it used for Sub-deacons (*Hauptadeacon*) and even for *Korooya* also.

³⁵² Thazhath, *Juridical...*, *Op. Cit.*, P39

³⁵³ Ayyar, *Anthropology...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 56

³⁵⁴ Joseph the Indian narrates that "they have very excellent and learned doctors. The study of letters thrives well there... The said Joseph also added that there were many holy doctors, who interpreted very wisely the Old and New Testaments." (Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD, Op. Cit.*, P 274) Gundert states the same as the testimony of Nazranis during their meeting with the Portuguese in AD 1500 as "We have a lot of *Vedas* [Bibles], [Theological] books and commentaries. Our scholars are teaching the children from them." (Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 18)

that the candidates for the priesthood used to stay with their *Malpan*³⁵⁵ under his direction and guidance until ordination.³⁵⁶ Hence, it became a practice to get the children ordained as deacons and send them for training under the *Malpans*.

Joseph the Indian states the *Kudummi* as the mark of ordination.³⁵⁷ Gundert confirms the same.³⁵⁸ Some early Portuguese documents disclose that it was in the shape of a cross.³⁵⁹ They also grow beard.³⁶⁰ The peculiar white robes and shorts mentioned by Gouvea were the dress of the *Kathanars*. It is also confirmed by other Portuguese writers like Monserrate, who gives a description in AD 1579: "Before the arrival of the Portuguese, they did not wear the tonsure, they were dressed in white just as the clerics of Constantinople"³⁶¹ This white robe may be of Persian origin when Nazranis were under the bishop of Fars.³⁶² They often wear the laymen's clothes³⁶³. Ferrolli, based on the Jesuit documents, accused the condition of the *Kathanars* in the sixteenth century as "The clerics were very [in] numbers, and in dress and manners called hardly be distinguished from the laity...They were all equally ignorant."³⁶⁴ Considering the evidences stated above, these two accusations could be taken only as the ignorance of the Roman Catholics about the practice of Nazranis.

It is stated that the *Kathanars* were generally married in the pre-Portuguese period. Goes interprets the statement of Joseph the Indian regarding the chastity of priests as the conjugal chastity, that is, after the death of the first wife, they do not marry another.³⁶⁵ The canons of the East Syrian Church permit the marriage of priests.³⁶⁶ There is no conclusive proof for the remarriage of

³⁵⁵ =Teacher, Doctor (in Syriac). Till recently, the priestly training of Nazranis held just like the Indian *Gurukula* system.

³⁵⁶ Vazheeparambil, Prasanna, *The Making and Unmaking of Tradition*, Rome, Mar Thoma Yogam, 1998, P 103

³⁵⁷ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 172, 179

³⁵⁸ Gundert states that Nazranis describes to the Portuguese in AD 1500 that "The *Kudummi* [tuft of hair] itself symbolizing the ordination for our priests." (Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 180

³⁵⁹ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I. 186

³⁶⁰ Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 189

³⁶¹ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 147

³⁶² From the writings of Barhebraeus: "It is said that down to the time of Mar Timothy the great (AD 779 – 823), the secular priests of the provinces of Fars were wearing white garments." (Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 34-5). Joseph the Indian states that 'they use the dress of the Moors, i. e. cotton clothes.' (Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, *Op. Cit.*, P 274)

³⁶³ The eight canon of fourth session of the Synod of Udayamperor confirms this. (Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 189)

³⁶⁴ Ferrolli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 177 - 8

³⁶⁵ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 148

³⁶⁶ The third canon of the Synod of Mar Aqaqus Catholicos in AD 486 discussed the celibacy of the priests and permits their marriage. In fact, that canon is encouraging the marriage of priests as a means to keep them out from sins. (Chediath, *Synodicon Orientale...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 77 -2)

Kathanars except Gouvea's description.³⁶⁷ Canons of the East Syrian Church permit the remarriage of the clergy after the death of the first wife.³⁶⁸ However, some form of polygamy and practice of keeping concubine existed among Nazranis.³⁶⁹ It is possible that, as a part of the same society, their *Kathanars* also did the same.

Gouvea states the priestly duties of the *Kathanars* as follows:

From the first tonsure up to ordination, priests do not fail to say the divine office in Chaldean in a loud voice, singing it in their fashion twice a day, once at three in the morning, and again at five in the evening, and in neither did they make a mistake, but apart from this, they did not think they were obliged to pray; they had no breviary or any book³⁷⁰, and whether coming in late or going out early, they took no account of any defect, nor felt it a duty to make it good.³⁷¹

While writing about the East Syrian bishops in Malabar to the king of Portugal, Matheus Diaz, a Latin Malabarian priest, on twenty second January AD 1550, states "Among other things they ordained the natives, but without permission to say Mass"³⁷² As seen earlier, the baptism was perhaps reserved for the East Syrian bishops. If the *Kathanars*, at least some of them, were not allowed to officiate holy Eucharist, then their priestly duties were limited only to a few like, marriage, burial, commemorative services for the departed etc. With the Roman concept of pastoral care, Gouvea accused "No priest tried to find how the Christians behaved themselves, nor have a care of their souls. So, everyone acted as he pleased."³⁷³ Mundadan summarized the priestly functions from various contemporary documents as follows: "[They do] not seem to have been more than saying mass on certain days, saying the divine office in choir, assisting at marriages, funerals and at some family functions such as *chathams* [annual feasts of deceased relatives] and the first rice-feeding of the little child etc."³⁷⁴

Another function of the priests was preaching. This was limited to a few, perhaps better educated and specially trained to preach. It is stated that there

³⁶⁷ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., Pp 201-2

³⁶⁸ The third canon of the Synod of Mar Aqaqus Catholicos in AD 486 permits the same. (Chediath, *Synodicon Orientale...*, Op. Cit., Pp 81-2)

³⁶⁹ Thirteenth canon of fifth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Malayalam version confirms it. (Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, Op. Cit., P 203)

³⁷⁰ This statement is from the authors' ignorance in East Syrian tradition. They had breviary etc. and several seemed as copied in Kerala before his writing for more details see Van Der Ploeg, *Syriac Manuscripts...*, Op. Cit.,

³⁷¹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 202

³⁷² Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, Op. Cit., P 104

³⁷³ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 202

³⁷⁴ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, Op. Cit., Vol. I, P 188

were preachers among them who preached throughout the year. Dionysio states that Nazranis love those sermons. He adds "sermons are delivered to them by those cathenars who know something. Their method of preaching is to narrate stories one after another without any regard for sequence or relevance to the occasion. They enjoy preaching for two or three hours at a stretch."³⁷⁵ Since their *Kathanars* fulfilled the religious requirements of Nazranis, it could not be said that there was no pastoral care. According to Gouvea, the *Kathanars* fulfilled the some other needs of the people beyond the administration of sacraments.

These Christians do likewise use a book of charms and sorcery, called *Parisman*, i. e. a little Persian table, which was included among church books.³⁷⁶ There was no Casanar who had no copy, and many made a living thereby, finding days of good or ill omen for marriage and other things in the fashion of pagans, and many charms or spell for various purposes, including some indecent ones.³⁷⁷

The priests often practised superstitions and malefic to expel the devil.³⁷⁸ Indeed there were some unfair practices too³⁷⁹ and they may not be educated in the European standards. However, It is clear that their *Kathanars* performed the priestly duties demanded by the Nazranis during the pre-Portuguese period.

Selection, Training and Ordination

Each *Pally Yogam* selects priests for the respective church known as *Deshathu Pattakkar*, which means the local priests.³⁸⁰ Hereditary succession also existed.³⁸¹ A document called *Desha Kuri* confirmed their selection.³⁸² Confirmation of the Archdeacon was also essential.³⁸³ They were ordained first as a deacon, then as the priest by the bishop. In several cases, the candidates went to the Middle East to get the ordination during the long absence of

³⁷⁵ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, Pp 189-90

³⁷⁶ Actually, here Gouvea speaks about two books, the *Parsiman* and the 'Book of lots'. The Synod of Udayamperor banned both. About the *Parsiman*, see Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 103. The Book of Lots was generally known as *Paalputhakam* that also banned by the Synod of Udayamperor (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 102). A portion of the 'Book of Lots', translated into Malayalam, is found as a part of *Niranam Grandhavari*. That is for start a travel. Another MSS is kept at *Konaf* library in Syriac which was published from their in AD 1899 (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 61-2,167-8)

³⁷⁷ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 204

³⁷⁸ Stated in a letter written by Fr. Joao Maria Campori to the Fr. General of Jesuits in April AD 1604. (Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, *Op. Cit.*, P 297)

³⁷⁹ According to the third decree of the fifth session of the Synod of Udayamperor, the priests, who infected with leprosy, were also celebrating sacraments. (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 158)

³⁸⁰ Thazhath, *Juridical...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 39

³⁸¹ The copyist of a Syriac book in AD 1584 wrote in the colophon that he was the son of another priest. (Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 140-141) See also Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 201-2

³⁸² Vazheeparambil, *The Making...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 185

³⁸³ Vazheeparambil, *The Making...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 165

bishops.³⁸⁴ Joseph the Indian was one such. A Syriac document of the late fifteenth century confirms this.³⁸⁵

The Portuguese missionaries accused the Nazrani priests of their ignorance.³⁸⁶ However, the unknown author of the above mentioned Syriac document testifies that the candidates from India were well instructed. The copyist of Vat. Syr. 22 of AD 1301 is found as well versed in the Syriac language at the age of fourteen.³⁸⁷ They had their own system of priestly education under *Malpans*. Joseph the Indian confirms, "they have very excellent and learned doctors. The study of letters thrives well there... There were many holy doctors, who interpreted very wisely the Old and the New Testaments."³⁸⁸ Gundert also testifies the same.³⁸⁹ The East Syrian bishops also became instructors of the clergy.³⁹⁰ The young clerics received further instructions from the elder priests of their own church.³⁹¹ Fr. Melchoir Carneiro describes the methodology as follows:

He [the *Malpan*] taught the Scripture in the Syriac language. The disciples who were beginners in the study were given exercises in writing and learning the alphabet. The mode of learning took the form of writing down the lessons the master gave them and drill in repeating them. The main purpose of their study was to read and interpret the Sacred Scriptures, although some were taught [the teaching of] the fathers and the theologians. Some students transcribed the books of the fathers and theologians and treasured the manuscripts.³⁹²

The Portuguese documents reveal the close resemblance of the *Malpanates* and the Indian *Gurukula* system not only in methodology of teaching, but in the relation of the student and teacher.³⁹³ Perhaps Nazranis culminated the methodology of Indian *Gurukula* with the East Syrian syllables for their priestly training.

³⁸⁴ Gouvea states that the book *Parsiman* was "composed by two Casanars who went to Persia for studies, for the Christians finding of old a deficiency of priests to teach them, sent to Babylon two able young men to learn and be ordained" (Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 204)

³⁸⁵ Assamanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis ...*, Vol. IV, Op. Cit., Pp 590-1 and. Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., Pp 36 -7

³⁸⁶ Ferrol, *Jesuits ...* Vol. I, Op. Cit., Pp 177 - 8

³⁸⁷ Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, Op. Cit., P 188

³⁸⁸ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, Op. Cit., P 178

³⁸⁹ Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, Op. Cit., P 18

³⁹⁰ Copyists of several Syriac MSS state themselves as the students of the East Syrian bishops. (Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, Op. Cit., Pp 140-1,188)

³⁹¹ Thazhath, *Juridical...*, Op. Cit., P 40

³⁹² Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, Op. Cit., Vol. I, P 189

³⁹³ Thazhath, *Juridical...*, Op. Cit., P 40

Income

It is clear that the church did not pay any salary to the *Kathanars* during the pre-Portuguese period. Evidences confirm that the priests were paid for the sacraments.³⁹⁴ Mundadan describes the income of pre-Portuguese clergy:

The means of subsistence of the parish clergy were provided from the properties of the church and also from the benefactions made by the people to the church. They had other incomes such as those from marriages, baptisms, funerals etc. The principal source of their income was, as stated in the records, from *chathams* or funeral feasts, which were held all through the year and from which the priests who participated in them earned a great deal.³⁹⁵

The general tone of the sixteenth century western writers was that the *Kathanars* never perform sacrament without a fee. Gouvea states: "many Christians were not baptised at all... partly not to pay the price for the simony, which the Casanars received for it." ³⁹⁶ He further accused that the priests openly live on simony³⁹⁷. According to him, "In the sacrament of Baptism and Communion, they were openly Simoniac, never giving them except at a fixed price, which was slipped into their hand. As for matrimony, some called upon any Casanar who happened to be present."³⁹⁸ Fr. Joao Maria Campori states that this was the practice even after the intervention of Portuguese. He wrote to Fr. Francis De Oliveyra on twentieth August AD 1618 about situation at a church, which he visited: "There we found the clergy divided on account of the parochial rights, and the "casual" income from the Church, so that they cared very little for the spiritual welfare of the people. They neither baptized, nor confessed, nor said Mass, except when they were paid for it."³⁹⁹ The sixteenth century Roman Catholic documents describe the behaviour of *Kathanars*: "They exercised no priestly functions, except for money" ⁴⁰⁰ However, Michel Geddes criticized this accusation in AD 1694 as follows:

This noise of Simony was raised for no other reason, but to throw dirt on the memory of their former bishops, whose fees at their ordination were not in all probability so great as they are at Goa, and had as

³⁹⁴ Barbosa stated that Persian bishops gave baptism for money. (Gangadharan, *Duarte Barbosa...Op. Cit.*, P 96-7)

³⁹⁵ Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 153

³⁹⁶ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 199

³⁹⁷ From apostolic times onwards, buying or selling of sacraments for any price is treated as a grave sin. The term *Simony* was derived from Simon, the Samaritan (Acts. 8, 9-25)

³⁹⁸ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 201

³⁹⁹ Quoted by Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 421

⁴⁰⁰ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 177

little in them of a formal bargain. But the truth is, Simony as well as heresy, is a stone the church of Rome throws blind-fold at all that displease hereto at the same time she's the church in the world that's most guilty of it: So when she was crying shame of the emperors as Simoniacks.⁴⁰¹

Even in the Indian context also, receiving fees for priestly functions is justifiable. According to the Brahmanic practice, no ritual becomes completed unless the fee of offering called *Dakshina* is paid to the priest. Hence there is no wonder the Nazranis who share the same cultural heritage also practised the same. Fr. Joao Maria Campori confirms that they had no fixed income and according to him, "a means of binding the priest to his duty was to secure for his maintenance a fixed income."⁴⁰² Apart from the fee for the sacraments and finding days of good or ill, the main source of income was the share of the tithe of the dowry.⁴⁰³ This was shared between the priests and the church.⁴⁰⁴ Fr. Dionysio reports that such incomes were equally distributed among all the priests of the particular church, whose number may go beyond eight.⁴⁰⁵

Secular Life

Apart from their priestly duties, the *Kathanars* lived just like ordinary people. Mundadan assumes that such an ordinary life and perhaps the ordinary dress might keep the early Portuguese invaders from not noticing them.⁴⁰⁶ They went for fishing, hunting and travel like ordinary people and stayed at hotels. Some of them were addicted to alcohol.⁴⁰⁷ Gouvea states about the temporal life of *Kathanars*: "The priests exercised secular functions, even with pagan Rajahs; as collectors, paymasters, and tax gatherers, which they handled as laymen, and some could not be distinguished from the latter by dress."⁴⁰⁸ Apart from such government duties, The *Kathanars* were also engaged in trading.⁴⁰⁹ They were even engaged in military service and went to war.⁴¹⁰ The fifteenth decree of the

⁴⁰¹ Geddes, *Church of Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 110

⁴⁰² Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 414

⁴⁰³ The usual amount was ten percent of the dowry, which was shared into two parts. One for the church and the other for the priests. This practice existed till the first half of the twentieth century.

⁴⁰⁴ The sixteenth canon of fifth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Malayalam version confirms it. (Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 193)

⁴⁰⁵ Quoted by Mundadan, *Traditions...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 152

⁴⁰⁶ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, P 186

⁴⁰⁷ Canon eight and nine of the fifth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Malayalam version banned such activities. (Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 188-9)

⁴⁰⁸ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 202

⁴⁰⁹ Zacharia, *Udaymperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 189

⁴¹⁰ Archbishop Manezes had seen *Kathanars* carrying swords and shields in his visit after the Synod of Udayamperor. (Hough, *History of Christianity...Op. Cit.*, P 170)

fifth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version confirms that they were paid for such services.⁴¹¹All such testimonials lead to a conclusion that the priests of Nazranis were leading an ordinary life just like any other Nazranis except in their priestly functions.

Conclusions

The calamities of the first millennium wiped out the form of Christianity present in the early centuries of the Christian era in the Malabar coast. The Persian migrations of the first millennium replaced it with the East Syrian Christianity instead. The presence of the Persian bishops from the first millennium till the colonial period clearly vouches for the East Syrian Christianity of the Nazranis. The Trade relations with the East Syrian Christians as well as the membership in the *Therissa* network ensure the East Syrian affiliation of the Nazranis.

However, the Christianity of the Nazranis was not a copy of that of the East Syrians. Even though the East Syrian missionaries tried to establish it in the pure form, it took a different shape among the Nazranis. The lack of constant supply of the Persian bishops was indeed a reason for that. However, it was more the social environment of the Nazranis that made the reshaping of the East Syrian Christianity in a different way.

The Brahmanic life style of the Nazranis as well as their position in the *Jathy* system was the real factors that affected the remodelling. They had to fit their religion to the Brahmanic lifestyle for the survival. Even though the entire East Syrian sacraments were introduced to the Nazranis, they were practised only what they find fit for their lifestyle. Even in that case, the Nazranis remain with the Christian faith, in whatever crude form it is, without falling to the Brahmanic religion. By the time of the colonial invasion, the Nazranis were deep-rooted with Christian doctrines and the essence of the East Syrian Christianity.

The East Syrian structure of hierarchy was imported along with their ecclesiology. However, it was modified fit the power structure of Nazranis that was constituted with the *Yogams* and the *Jathikku Thalavan*, who was Archdeacon in the East Syrian terms. As a result, the Greco-Roman Episcopacy was not implemented over Nazranis but they remained as an Episcopal Church.

⁴¹¹ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 164

In all church-related affairs, they adopted the East Syrian law only to the extent that did not tamper their caste structure.

All the above discussions lead to the conclusion that the Christianity of Nazranis was neither fully indigenous nor a copy of East Syrian or any other tradition. It seems as a complex mixture of both, conveniently stirred to fit the caste bound lifestyle of the Nazranis. Fr. Placid J Podipara, after comparing the difference between the East Syrian law and the practices of the pre-colonial Nazranis, evaluates this complex nature of the *Marthomayude Maargam* as:

...How far the prescriptions of the Seleucian laws were in force in Malabar is a question difficult to answer. The special *sui juris* set up of their Church against its socio-political background was more important and more practical for the Malabarians than the Seleucian laws...the Seleucian laws might not have/had any strong grip on the Malabarians...⁴¹²

Considering all these, it may be concluded that the Nazranis have their East Syrian Christianity in their own way. The caste and social status of the Nazranis shaped the nature of their Christianity. The Nazranis defined this Christianity with all its laws and traditions as *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*.

⁴¹² Podipara, *The Canonical...*, Op. Cit., Pp 67 -8

Chapter – V THE WAY OF THOMAS Vs. PETER

The Portuguese and the Nazranis

The Portuguese Colonial Intensions

The Portuguese efforts to establish a direct trade route from India was basically with the intention of the shifting end point of world system from Venice to Lisbon that begins from the Nazranis, Gujarathis, Muslims and *Chettis*.¹ J. Reither, in his *World History*, points out the two motives of the Portuguese voyage as follows.

One of the motives, the more comprehensible to modern minds, was to open up commerce with the east by a route, which would not involve the payment of heavy tolls to the Muslim Turk. The other motive, frequently the more important to men of the fifteenth century, was to hem in the Turk and to break his hold upon the Holy Land.²

Among the two, the first had crucial importance to attain the superiority in Europe after the discovery of American continent and the east coast of Africa.³ Mundadan gives more weight to the second reason and elaborated the same as the control of land connected with this maritime trade.⁴ According to Pius Malekandathil, based on the works of Pe. Antonio Vieira (AD 1608-1697), the Portuguese retained a dream to become the centre of a world empire for which spreading of Christianity was essential. The thesis of Pe. Antonio Vieira (AD 1608-1697) is summarized as follows.

The prophecies of the Bible are to be fulfilled through the kingdom of Portugal and the Portuguese were entrusted with the task of establishing the kingdom of God on earth. He even goes to the extent of equating the second coming of Christ with the establishment of Portuguese rule on earth [the fifth universal monarchy], which ensures civilization process and conversion of people to Christianity.⁵

¹ Malekandathil, *Jornada ... Op. Cit.*, Pp XXVIII _ XXIX

² Quoted by Mundadan, *History of Christianity... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 238

³ "When da Gama arrived in Calicut the trade in spices between Europe and the Far East was ancient and well organized. At Malacca...junks from Canton and spice craft from the East Indies met the ships of the Moslem ... The spices were then shipped to ... the Malabar Coast... From there the spices took either of two ancient routes to the Mediterranean: to Ormuz, at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, through the gulf, up the Euphrates River to Aleppo -and Beirut; or to Aden, through the Red Sea, and then overland to Suez and Alexandria. At Alexandria and Beirut ... passed into the hands of Christian merchants, mostly Venetian, for at the end of the fifteenth century Venice still successfully enforced the monopoly of the Mediterranean spice." (Rice, Jr., Eugene F., *The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460-1559*, New York, W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1970, P 31

⁴ Mundadan, *History of Christianity... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 238-40

⁵ Malekandathil, *Jornada... Op. Cit.*, P LV

Under this concept, the spreading of Christianity was indispensable and the civil and ecclesial authorities were inseparable. Hence, the trade motives turn further to the colonisation and Christianisation of the dominions. The Portuguese believed that the increase of Christian population as Roman Catholics with Latin tradition under the Portuguese *Padroado* would strengthen the hands of the King of Portugal with loyalty and obedience. They perhaps consider a monoculture society with Portuguese tradition throughout the world would ensure the required loyalty. Therefore, their imperial requirement of increasing Portuguese subjects was affected the Nazranis by the advancement of the Portuguese in Kerala.

The Portuguese Connection

In AD 1498, Vasco de Gama reached Kerala coast. His discovery of a direct sea-route to Europe led to the colonization of India and the Far East. The Portuguese invasion of the sixteenth century affected the Nazranis drastically. After the fruitless efforts to have a friendly treaty with Calicut, the Portuguese turned their attention to Kochi. There they met the Nazranis who in turn were found much useful to the Portuguese cause as the controllers of pepper supply. The Nazranis were also happy to have a powerful ally who could overcome the powerful *Zamorin-Arab-native* Muslim axis from which they suffered a lot of damage in their trade especially at Kodungallor.

The demonstration of the power, mastery over sea and undiminished demand for pepper and such commodities along with common religious background of the Portuguese led the Nazranis to think about the possibility of a new axis of the Nazranis and Portuguese based at Kochi to overcome the Calicut based *Zamorin-Arab-native* Muslim axis. Such a new system would re-establish the Nazrani supremacy over the trade and commerce, which certainly would lead to a tremendous economic prosperity to them. Beyond that, they had no intention to fall in the folds of the political system of the Portuguese colonialism.

On the contrary, the Portuguese colonialism had more intentions than simple trade. They considered the Nazranis as a part of their elaborate world order. This difference in intentions of the Nazranis and the Portuguese led to a stormy relation within a short time from their first meeting and ended after 150 years. The first contacts of the Nazranis were so pleasing to the Portuguese. Manuel Faria y Sousa, in his *India Portuguesa* describes the meeting between Vasco de Gama and the Nazranis in AD 1502 during his second voyage to India:

Here [at Cochin] Don-Vasco received ambassadors who said they came from some Christian inhabitants of that neighbouring country, the metropolis thereof was Cranganore, and they were to the number of 30,000...that they were infested by the Pagans, that they knew he was an officer of the most Catholic King of Europe to whom they submitted themselves, delivering into his hands the Rod of Justice. This Rod was red...they were dispatched with hopes of a powerful assistance.⁶

While Alfonso de Albuquerque made the treaty with the queen of Kollam, he restored the self-administration of the Nazranis in the civil and criminal matters, who helped him to fill his ships with merchandises.⁷ But, he handed over the executive authority to the Portuguese factor Antonio de Sa.⁸ From Manuel Faria y Sousa, it is clear that the Portuguese believed that the Nazranis would be obedient to them without efforts especially when they swore during the meeting with Vasco de Gama that "the King of Portugal have authority over them and they will judge all culprit only in his name."⁹ After evaluating the different arguments about the depth of this subordination, Mundadan came to the following conclusion.

The event is to be explained by the spontaneous relief, joy and even pride the Christians of Malabar...felt at the good news that a captain of a mighty emperor of their own religion, with armadas sweeping the oceans, had reached their port. Surely, they needed the help of such a captain to safeguard the privileged existence they led in the country. This security they could not manage to retain by themselves for all time...It is no wonder then that they desired the power of the Portuguese to increase in India. This would be a certain guarantee for their own security. We have to remember that in this epoch not only did India as a whole lack political unity, but also even the tiny Malabar found itself in the same plight, being ruled by petty kings...Probably the local king who had sent the Christians with letters to the Portuguese had in mind this aim of securing the help of the Portuguese for his own political ambitions. Hence, it would be unjust, considering the situation as it was, to accuse the Christians of ingratitude or betrayal. They approached the Portuguese not only with the permission of their king but even with his positive support, we might even add, at his bidding.¹⁰

It is doubtful whether the Nazranis had any intention in Portuguese connection beyond the advancement of trade. After the collapse of the *Tharissa*

⁶ Quoted by Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 100

⁷ Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 34 -5

⁸ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 100

⁹ Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 25

¹⁰ Mundadan, *History of Christianity... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 268 -9

network, they lost their direct entry into the world system that was then controlled by the *Zamorin*-Arab-native Muslim axis operating from Calicut. Perhaps they found an opportunity for a direct re-entry into the world system through the Portuguese armada. They believed that the Portuguese, who too were Christians, would create a new consortium that replaces the *Tharissa* network. Their trade condition was not so pathetic even though it was an oligopoly at Kodungallor. They were aware that the Muslims from Calicut, to whom they forced to sell pepper,¹¹ made more profit than them even though the procurement of pepper was still their monopoly in the south of Kodungallor.¹² Hence, the Nazrani relation to Portuguese was not a surrender but only a trade arrangement. This is confirmed by the complaint by Portuguese governor Lopo Soares that "while Muslim and Hindu kings send messengers to and likewise had written to him, they, although they [the Nazranis] were Christians, did not approach him nor ask him for anything."¹³

The Portuguese never received direct political supremacy over the Nazranis.¹⁴ But, in course of time, they got influence over the local kings especially through the pepper subsidy they provided every year. The Portuguese navy was not a threat for the interior kingdoms without any seashore.¹⁵ But, the control over the Nazranis was essential for the Portuguese to save their trade. Hence, the Roman Catholic Church under the Portuguese *Padroado* was used as a tool to implement Portuguese control over the Nazranis. On the other hand, the Nazranis treated the advancement of Roman Catholic Church into their life as the colonial suppression. The violent reaction towards the sacrament of confirmation, newly introduced by the Roman Catholics, is a proof for the Nazrani attitude. The description of Gouvea regarding the incident at North Paraur is a good example.

...[Speak] of the greatness of the Sacraments of the Church, in which he [Menazis] spent an hour and a half, and concluding with the doctrine of the Sacrament of Confirmation, he stood up asking them to come to him for getting confirmed. Until then the people had heard him quietly, but on this point they all got up with the arms in hand, saying in a loud voice with great impetus that they would not allow the Confirmation, because their Bishops never did so to the

¹¹ For more details see the topic 'Rise of Calicut' in Chapter III

¹² Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, *Op. Cit.*, P XXIX

¹³ Quoted by Mundadan, *History of Christianity... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 293

¹⁴ Andraan Moens, the Dutch governor of Kochi confirms that the Portuguese never had any authority over the Nazranis (Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 180)

¹⁵ Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp XXX – XXXI

Christians, nor was that Sacrament instituted by Christ, but his invention, with which he wanted to make them captives, and vassals of the Portuguese by putting the seal of Portuguese in their forehead, which word they used for the sign of the Cross which with the holy oil he was making on their foreheads¹⁶, and soon as a sign of captivity was giving them a slap, and that if, the cowards and the *paruos* of Vaipicota allowed themselves to be made captive and to be slapped, they would not tolerate it, nor would he lay his hands on their beards, nor on the faces of their women and of their daughters, that he should go to the Portuguese and leave the Christians of Saint Thomas, and that otherwise it would cost him a lot, for they were in their lands, where nobody could do any harm to them.¹⁷

The above stated description not only expressed the Nazrani view on the Portuguese colonialism but their confidence of own independence and their abhorrence towards the neo converts. Even though the twenty fourth canon of the ninth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version put the Nazranis under the protection of the king of Portugal, the Nazrani attitude towards the Portuguese neither changed nor they ever acknowledged the political supremacy till the fall of Portuguese power in the Kerala coast.¹⁸

The Trade Relations

During their first contact, the Nazranis warmly welcomed the Portuguese with an intention of their trade prosperity. On his first meeting with the Nazranis, the latter informed him "if you build a fort here [Kodungallor], you will be able to seize the entire India."¹⁹ This should be taken as an expression of confidence of Nazranis who were prohibited from the maritime trade by the *Zamorin*, on the Portuguese armada. Similar act of courtesy was extended to Alfonso de Albuquerque at Kollam by taking initiative to fill his ships with pepper and other commodities.²⁰ In AD 1504, the Nazrani Merchant Mathias of Kollam supported Pedro Alvaraz Cabral and later he and Tharakan Thoma of Kayamkulam actively involved in filling the Portuguese ships with spices at Kochi.²¹ It all indicated the beginning of a harmonious and prosperous period.

But, this honeymoon did not last long. The Nazranis withdrew from supplying pepper and other commodities to the Portuguese. The element of

¹⁶ Nazranis knew the sign of cross. Hence, the Roman Catholic sacrament alone brought the opposition.

¹⁷ Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 130 –1

¹⁸ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 213

¹⁹ Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 25

²⁰ Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 25

²¹ Mundadan, A. Mathias, *The Arrival of Portuguese in India and the Thomas Christians Under Mar Jacob*, Bangalore, Dharmaram College, 1967, Pp 55,62,77. Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp XLVI - XLVII

cheating and the lack of fair price led them to take such a decision. For the Nazranis, the disposal of their produce was not difficult since the Calicut Muslims were ready to buy the pepper and the ghat-routes were operative to smuggle it out to Coromandel coast. Perhaps the lack of market for the Portuguese products in the reciprocal trade also made the Nazranis to consider the Portuguese alliance as fruitless. Since they used their pepper politics in the religious wars during the years following the Synod of Udayamperor, the Portuguese receipt of pepper at Kochi fell almost to zero.²² This led the Roman Catholic authorities to compromise or even surrender up to an extent to the Nazrani cause in their *Maargam*. The ill treatment of the Portuguese made the Nazranis withdraw from trading with the former. Even though Mar Jacob, the East Syrian prelate of the Nazranis accused it as a result of the Muslim propaganda, he described the events in his letter to the king of Portugal of AD 1523:

The Christians whom I am ruling, got all the pepper from the hands of the farmers who collected it and that they dared not bring it to thy factory for fear... that they were giving underweight in the scales and were paying for it very badly and were beating and treating them like slaves, and that thy Portuguese, when they saw their pepper, would rob them and make them prisoners and send them to Portugal... as we are all Christians and of the same law, so they begged me much, that I might put a remedy to this by getting the Christians to come to thy... and I might order them in future never more to sell any pepper to the Moors... for I took my Christians to thy fortress of Cochin to speak with, the Portuguese and they were so well received by the Vedor de Fezenda Pero Nunez and the Factor, Manuel Botelho, and the nobleman, Diogo Pereira and others also... And this I did many times until I had brought them to love thee, and then they agreed and swore to me, never more to sell the pepper to the Moors and to bring it clean and dry to thy factory, as they indeed are doing, as thou canst see by the shrinkage, which thou shalt see in that of this and the last two years.²³

Even after twenty years from this letter, the situation of pepper trade was remaining so bad that King John III of Portugal was forced to interfere. In his letter to the governor of Kochi he wrote: "We have come to know that in the lands of Cochin the Christians of St. Thomas are being cheated in weights and measures by our men who deal with pepper there; and that the surplus is taken from them although they were, according to the old practice, used to give it with

²² Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp LXI - LXIV

²³ Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 110 -1

just weight and measure."²⁴ According to the report of Mathias Dias of AD 1550, the condition remains the same even with a substantially low price than Calicut.²⁵ This adverse trade condition and the resistance against the religious suppression led the Nazranis to channel their pepper through the Ghat-routs to the trading centres in the Coromandel ports. This was so intense that the Portuguese failed to fill a single ship from Kochi during the successive years of the Synod of Udayamperor even at great persuasion and incentives.²⁶

After the fall of Nagapattanam in AD 1645, the Dutch started the trading activities from the East coast. Perhaps it not only provides a favourable condition to the Nazranis to sell out their pepper but it paved a way to harmonious relation with the Dutch after their conquest of Kochi in AD 1663 also. Indeed the Nazranis got an upper hand in the pepper trade with the Dutch since the Dutch were adamant Protestants who keep abhorrence with Roman Catholics. Even after the Dutch conquest, the dissident Romo-Syrians were favouring the Portuguese. They were under the Portuguese *Padroado*, the political enemies of the Dutch in Europe.²⁷

The Portuguese period was indeed prosperous for the Nazranis. The establishment of several new churches and *Angadys* in the sixteenth century²⁸ indicates the economic prosperity of the Nazranis. However, the Portuguese trade alone was not credited for this prosperity. Perhaps the following factors together brought this prosperity:

1. The competition of three markets, the Portuguese at Kochi, the Muslims at Calicut and the buyers at Coromandel, for the pepper of single seller, the Nazranis, provide more demand and revenue for the Nazranis.

²⁴ Mundadan, *History of Christianity... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 317. Prior to this, Miguel Vaz, the vicar general, reported to king John III that the Portuguese do injustice to the Nazranis in pepper trade. (Mundadan, *The Arrival...*, Op. Cit., P 119)

²⁵ Mundadan, *History of Christianity... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 321-2)

²⁶ Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, Op. Cit., Pp LXII - LXIII

²⁷ The Dutch attitude towards the Roman Catholics and their prelates is clear from the following comment of Jacob Canter Visscher "... that country contains one archbishop and two Bishops. As we may suppose they are the craftiest spies of the Portuguese monarch, prying into the affairs of the company, and imbuing the natives with deep aversion to the Dutch." (Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II*, Madras 1924 (AES Reprint), Madras, Asian Education Services, 1982, P 47)

²⁸ The History of several churches including both *Cheriyā* and *Valiya*, of Kottiyam, Puthuppally, Muttuchira etc., stating that they were established in the sixteenth century. it is evident from its architecture that several -probably most- of the churches were constructed or reconstructed during that period.

2. The increased demand led to the expansion of pepper producing areas and trading activities.
3. The influence of Portuguese over native kings creates a favourable political atmosphere for the Nazranis.
4. The uninterrupted presence of East Syrian bishops and their zealous work.²⁹

The Impact on Social Customs

The Portuguese invasion and the Roman Catholic missionaries created cultural problems from the early contacts. The adherence of the Portuguese to the cow meat was always a problem.³⁰ The missionaries considered the Nazrani tradition as incompatible with theirs from the religious standpoint. A letter of Jerome Xavier S. J., the rector of Cochin seminary, to the Jesuit general in AD 1590 clearly indicates the Roman Catholic concept regarding the Nazrani customs.

The priests and seminarians of the Thomas Christians were reciting the divine office in choir even when they live far away from the church...The people had greater esteem toward their clerics than toward the missionaries. As far as the missionaries were concerned... the Syriac language was a problem for singing the divine office in the church with others; so also for celebration of the mass, wedding and burial. The St. Thomas Christians were observing very rigorous fast - without using milk, eggs, milk products, fish, wine and betel leaf, which they chew very often. The manner of their fasting also was difficult: to eat at eleven o'clock in the evening was very painful. So the missionaries were considering whether they should conform themselves to the St. Thomas Christians. It was also due to the scandal to the Christians to see that the missionaries were eating meat and fish and drinking wine when the faithful used to fast. The difference in fasting was a problem in the seminary at Cochin as well. The students were to be trained in the customs of the locality. However, according to the missionaries, it was good to introduce the seminarians to the Roman customs, since with their Roman doctrines the missionaries could turn the students away from their Syrian customs.³¹

²⁹ It is stated in the letter of four bishops to the Catholicos of AD 1504 that, "They [Nazranis] have eager to build new churches, are prosperous in every respect, and living in peace and security." (Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., Pp 38 - 9)

³⁰ An incident during the second voyage of Gama shows the early Portuguese cow killing. (Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, Op. Cit., P 24) The companions of archbishop Menezes kill a cow during his visit to Angamaly that led the Nazranis of Angamaly to tell lie to the King of Mangattu. (Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, Op. Cit., Pp 352-4) According to the annual report of AD 1683 of St. John Britto S. J. about the Christians of Tanjor, "One of the reasons why Christians were persecuted was that it was said they showed scanty respect to cows and used to sell them for slaughter." (Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 82)

³¹ Abbreviated form from Vazheparambil, *The Making...*, Op. Cit., P 110

The Roman Catholic missionaries considered every social custom of the Nazranis as heathen impurities received from the Hindu surroundings. Perhaps this concept along with the Portuguese efforts to create a monoculture society led to the alternation of social customs of The Nazranis by the Synod of Udayamperor. The first, third, fourth, fifth and seventeenth decrees in the ninth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version shows the nature of the social changes introduced by the Roman Catholics.³² From a keen observation of these regulations, it is evident that the net result of them was the total alienation of The Nazranis from the *Jathy* system of Kerala. According to the sixteenth decree of the Synod of Udayamperor regarding baptism, the Nazranis were expected to distinguish from the surroundings even in their names.³³ Perhaps the Portuguese considered that it might be good for their political intention to detach the Nazranis from the rest of the population to make them subject to the Portuguese empire. The twenty third decree of the ninth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version, that asks the Nazranis to live as separate villages, justify this argument.³⁴

Double Standards

While the Portuguese were converting the Nazranis as a part of their culture, they retained double standards for Portuguese and the Nazranis.³⁵ It was impossible for the Nazranis to take a treatment as inferiors while they had their own stand as an honoured and dignified community. As the net result of these, the Nazranis obscured all those propagated by the Portuguese including the Roman Catholic religion.

Calendar

It was essential for the Roman Catholics to have the change of time measure of the Nazranis into the western way. The Nazrani way of counting day from evening to evening was changed as midnight to midnight. The sixteenth

³² Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 202 -5, 210

³³ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 119

³⁴ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 213

³⁵ The Synod of Udayamperor prohibited the Nazranis from using different weights and measures in buying and selling (Zacharia, *Udayamperor... Op. Cit.*, Pp 232-3) while the Portuguese cheated them in weight at Kochi in pepper trade. (Mundadan, *History of Christianity... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 317) The Synod prohibits Nazranis from having concubine (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 207) whereas the Portuguese at Kochi kept several concubines. (Mundadan, *History of Christianity... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 359-67) The Synod prohibits diabolical charms (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 206) The Roman Catholic priests did the same at their visits to the Nazrani churches (Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 410 -25)

decree of the eighth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version orders the Nazranis to follow the western day calculation and to fit the feasts and lent according to that.³⁶

The Nazranis took it as a serious issue even if this change had little effect in their daily life. During the post-*Coonen Cross* period, the old custom of evening to evening was restored. Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah wrote a full essay that justifies the Syriac tradition.³⁷ Even though the daily life was not affected, by the Roman changes their ecclesial life, especially that of the priests, was disturbed since the cycle of canonical prayers under the East Syrian tradition was designed for evening to evening. Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah, after citing the Biblical evidences to justify the Syriac tradition states: "it is necessary to consider and analyse the prayers you recite daily. We think that it is necessary to ask those governing you about the beginning and end of the prayers you recite in the evenings and in the mornings"³⁸ This statement confirms that the old tradition was re-established by the West Syrians since the Nazranis were following the Roman Catholic tradition during the period of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah.

There is no trace of an official introduction of the Christian era to the Nazranis. It is indeed a Roman Catholic introduction since it was not in use till the colonial period. However, the Nazranis practised the use of the Christian era from that period. But only 'the year of our Lord' was found as used. Months and dates remained in the Malayalam era. Perhaps the Christian background of the new era made the Nazranis accept this colonial introduction voluntarily. However, the Christian era alone was not sufficient enough to give a clear time consciousness to them. They used the Christian era and Malayalam (Kollam) era together to cater to their time consciousness. The following statement from the *Niranam Grandhavari* is a good example.

Puthuvaippu was formed in the year of Messiah 1341 that is Kollam 516...The Portuguese arrived at Kochi in 683 of Kollam era and ruled for 165 years. The printing of books begins in the foreign countries in the year 1415 of Messiah that is 590 of Kollam. In the year 1437 of Messiah that is 659 of Kollam, the bullets and gunpowder was invented in foreign countries. Kodungallor Mahadevar town was destroyed in the

³⁶ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 189

³⁷ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 158 -9

³⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 159

year 1514 of Messiah that is 659 of Kollam. Mar Abraham Metran arrived in the year 1545 of Messiah that is 720 of Kollam.³⁹

These dates confirm that the Nazranis were well versed in Christian era but unable to express the time consciousness without the help of Malayalam era. There was no change in its use even after the Portuguese period since their successors, the Dutch, also used the same. However, according to Paulinus, Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed replaced Gregorian with Julian calendar, which was followed by the West Syrians.⁴⁰ But this affected the date calculation only.

Language

The Portuguese invasion did not make any difference in the language of the Nazranis in daily life. It remained as in the past except the Portuguese and Latin additions to their vocabulary.⁴¹ This addition was higher than the rest of the Keralites since several of them were with religious nature. Hence, nobody except the Nazranis had any use for them.⁴² In several cases, the Portuguese and Latin words were spread among the Nazranis as their dialectal form such as *Kumpassaram* (Confession)⁴³, *Pulpam* (Pulpit)⁴⁴ etc. However, the Nazranis accepted only words that had no counterpart existing in their religious vocabulary. Considering the names given to the other two sacraments introduced by the Portuguese, confirmation and extreme unction, it is obvious that the Nazranis adopted a western terminology only when there was no Syriac or Malayalam equivalent available to express the same meaning.⁴⁵

³⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 82 - 3

⁴⁰ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 108. Paulinus states that the profession of faith of the Nazranis initiated by Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed includes the beginning of the great Lent ten days after that of the Roman Catholics. This difference is according to the Julian calendar.

⁴¹ A close examination of the Malayalam version of the canons of Synod of Udayamperor discloses that the Nazranis had sufficient vocabulary for their temporal and ecclesial life except those introduced by the Portuguese. For example the sixteenth canon of the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Malayalam version prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages by Nazranis mentioning the same with the Syriac word *H'amra*. (*Zacharia, Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 242)

⁴² The Latin words like *Papa* (Pope), *Arulica* (Relicario), *Almathi* (Palmatica), Surplice and the Portuguese words like *Petratha* (intruda), *Konta* (Contas), *Osthy* (Hostia) etc. were had no use except for the Nazranis and the neo converts among the people of Kerala.

⁴³ The word *Kumpasaram* was derived from the Portuguese origin of *Confessar*. It was the only sacrament out of seven bearing a western name. (Joseph, Dr. P. M., *Malayalathile Parakeeya Padangal*, Thiruvananthapuram, The Kerala Bhasha Institute, 1995, P 447)

⁴⁴ Pulpit was introduced to the Nazranis by the Roman Catholics and bear a name derived fro the Latin origin *Pulputum* (Joseph, *Parakeeya Padangal...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 416)

⁴⁵ The Nazranis expressed the sacraments of confirmation and extreme unction as *Mumbiluthe Opprusma* (first blessing) and *Odukkathe Opprusma* (last blessing) respectively. The first part of both words is in Malayalam language and the second part, *Opprusma*, derived from the Syriac word *Roosma* (=blessing). Apart from these two and the Portuguese derived *Kumpassaram*, two out of the seven sacraments, baptism and holy Eucharist, having Syriac names as *M'amodeesa* and *Qurbana* and the remaining two, marriage and ordination, have Malayalam names as *Penkattu* and *Pattam* respectively.

The Nazranis used some of the words like Padre as *Pathiri* to mark their separate identity from the Roman Catholics. Even though this word and *Kathanar* have the same meaning as the priest, the latter was reserved exclusively for the native priests. *Niranam Grandhavari* went further and used the word *Pathiri* to mark the native priests who were following the western ideology also.⁴⁶ Even the universal phrase of 'Christian' was seldom used by the Nazranis to distinguish themselves from the neo converts. They stuck to their ancient title 'Nazrani'.⁴⁷

In the case of the liturgical language, The Roman Catholics failed to introduce Latin⁴⁸ due to the adherence of the Nazranis towards the Syriac language. Even though the Roman Catholics were well aware that the continuation of the use of Syriac would remain as the great obstacle to the conversion of The Nazranis, they dropped the introduction of Latin language even before the Synod of Udayamperor⁴⁹ Instead, they introduced the translations into Syriac as well as into Malayalam from Latin that they felt more effective to introduce. The eighteenth decree of the eighth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version dealt with the languages. This decree suggests that the vicar "shall instruct them in the doctrine, that is to say, the sign of the cross, the Paternoster, Ave Mary, the creed, and the commandments of God, and the church, the articles of faith, and other Christian doctrines in the Malabar tongue...and not in the Syriac, which the people do not understand... and in all churches there shall be a book of the doctrine in the Malabar tongue, for the instruction of children."⁵⁰ Even though the *Coonen Cross*

⁴⁶ Palluruthy Yakob Kathanar, a Nazrani priest helped the Roman Catholics to prepare the Malayalam version of the acts of Synod of Udayamperor is referred as *Palluruthy Yakko Pathiri* (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 83). Even in the eighteenth century, *Pathiri* and *Kathanar* were used to mention two different identities. The conversion of Kattadi Kuruvilla Kathanar to the Dutch Protestantism was described in *Niranam Grandhavari* as "while it was going, after Mudakkattadi Kathanar was raised as Remban, [he] become insane and wished to join in the *Lentha Maargam* [the Dutch religion]. [He] joined in the *Lentha Maargam* and decided to become a *Lentha Pathiri*." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 92)

⁴⁷ The Roman Catholics too accepted this usage. The Malayalam version of the acts of Synod of Udayamperor addressed the Nazranis as *Marthoma Nazranis*. (Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 107 ff). The catechism of Fr. Clement Pianius published from Rome in 1772 AD have title as *Nazranikal Okkakkum Ariyandunna Samkshpa Vedartham (Compendiosa Legis Explanatio Omnibus Chrestianis Scitu Necessaria)* (Pianius, *Samkshpa Vedartham*, *Op. Cit.*, P 24)

⁴⁸ Even earlier as in AD 1557, the missionaries like Fr. Antonio De Porto tried to teach the Chaldian bishops "the Roman ceremonies, and said it in Latin." (Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, *Op. Cit.*, P 153)

⁴⁹ The third council of Goa in AD 1585 states as "The seventh decree orders the translation into Chaldaic of the Missal and Roman Breviary... Similarly that do pontifical e sacerdotal Romano se tresladasse o necessario para. conferir, ou dar orders, e administrar sacramentos"... Also that the Catechism, a Summary of Moral Theology for Confessors, and Prayer Books be translated into Malayalam." (Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, *Op. Cit.*, P 172) According to Jacob Kollaparambil "The people did not seem to mind such changes as long as they were presented in the Chaldean language." (Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, P 18)

⁵⁰ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 190 -1

revolution of AD 1653 ends the Latinization program, the already introduced Latin rite through Syriac language was sustained. The association with the West Syrians from AD 1665 onwards did no change in the language pattern. The ecclesial language remains as East Syrian throughout the seventeenth century.

Art and Architecture

The period of the arrival of the Portuguese was a period of construction and reconstruction of the churches of The Nazranis.⁵¹ The sixteenth century witnessed the establishment of several new churches. Perhaps the economic prosperity of the sixteenth century leads the Nazranis to construct new churches. The cordial relation with the Portuguese in the beginning opens the doors for the Roman Catholic missionaries to work with the Nazranis. This also leads to their influence in the construction of churches. The stone inscription of Muttuchira church is the best example of the coordination of the Nazranis, the East Syrian bishops and the Roman Catholic missionaries.

The holy cross was erected in this field in the year 1528 of the nativity of Moran Issa Messiah, With the order of the lord by Mar Denha, Mar Abo and Padre Geevarghese. There after [Padre Geevarghese] went to Portugal with nephew Padre Mathew. On 15 *Kanni* of 1520 of the nativity of Messiah, this cross was erected with wooden covering. Bishop Mar Simon and Padre Yakob.⁵²

The influence of the Roman Catholic introduction of art and architecture, that is the Portuguese, is summarized as follows by Jayaram Paoduval:

We see here that lots of these figures have been tremendously influenced by the European art tradition. Prior to our quest into the matter of sculpture, it will be pertinent to have a look at the architecture of these churches and their architectural decoration. As far as the external form is concerned, the Kerala churches actually do not provide any evidence of European influence, the look from the sides an oblong hall with a facade in the front. The facades however have curving Dutch gables with sometimes niches in the triangle format. The nave doors of the Churches are usually arched reminding of the Romanesque times in most of cases the churches do not have aisles but it is not uncommon. The interior again avoids any decoration on the ceiling of the nave. But the Altar has coffered ceilings in most of the cases. Obviously, the architecture could not play a greater influence because of the materials and artisans available in Kerala. So, the churches are mainly oblong halls with a facade in the front and rateable on the other end of the hall. A kind of

⁵¹ In the letter of four Chaldian bishops to the Catolicos of AD 1504, it is sated that "They have begun to build churches, are prosperous in every respect." (Mingana, *Early Spread...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 38-9)

⁵² *Kerala Society Papers...*, *Op. Cit. Vol. II*, P 254

superposition occurs here where one architectural pattern is transformed in function, meaning and character adding a few symbols.⁵³

The twenty ninth decree of the eighth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version gives the sum of the Roman Catholic introduction in the art and architecture of the Nazrani churches as "the first work that shall be done after that of the baptismal font out of the alms of the parish, shall be to set up some images...and in all churches that are large enough, and yet have no pulpits, pulpits shall be erected for the preaching of the word of God."⁵⁴ Nothing except the introduction of images made any impact on the Nazranis. However, the introduction of images deeply influenced the Nazranis who abstained from any form of images in their churches through their East Syrian background. Perhaps the thorough idol worshipping surroundings might lead them to accept the images so fast. By the beginning of the West Syrian connection, it spread all over the churches and the Nazranis were deeply attached to it.⁵⁵

Justice and Punishments

The Synod of Udayamperor abolished the Nazrani tradition of justice and punishments by shifting the authority from the *Yogam* to the hierarchy of priests and bishops.⁵⁶ Furthermore, it put The Nazranis under the jurisdiction of the inquisition of Goa and empowered the Jesuits at Vaippikotta seminary to act as the local agents of the former. The twenty second decree of the third session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version stated: "This present Synod...submit itself to the...court of the holy office of the inquisition... this present Synod doth beseech the lords inquisitors to authorize some learned men within this bishopric, or the Jesuits of the college of Vaipicotta...to absolve all such as shall stand in need thereof, and that with such limitations as they shall think fit; considering how difficult it is for the people inhabiting the Serra, to have recourse to the tribunal at Goa."⁵⁷

⁵³ Poduaval, Jayaram, *Christian art in Kerala and its European connection*, Unpublished Seminar Paper presented at the FoKCH seminar -2 at Kottayam on *the Christian art and architecture*

⁵⁴ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 196

⁵⁵ Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah wrote an essay against the idols. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 152-5)

⁵⁶ The canons of the Synod of Udayamperor that empowered the vicars and the bishop to give punishments, never mentioned about the consultation with the *Pally Yogams* or *Malankara Pally Yogam*.

⁵⁷ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 108 - 9

Considering the brutality of the European prelates towards the Nazranis even after the collapse of the Portuguese political power in India,⁵⁸ it was much more cruel during the seventeenth century. Perhaps the brutality⁵⁹ and the loss of self-government of justice led to the *Coonen Cross* revolution of AD 1653.

Women's Share

The twentieth decree of the ninth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version declared that the female offspring had equal rights on their father's properties.⁶⁰ Even though the scale of its real implementation is unknown, the eighteenth century documents confirm that the right of female inheritance was accepted as a rule with some objection in that century.⁶¹ It leads to the conclusion that women's right was accepted during the Portuguese period.

Settlements

The arrival of the Portuguese did little change in the peripheral nature of the Nazrani settlements. It remained between Kunnampulam and Chathanoor with an exception of Thiruvamkodu as in the past. But two major changes occurred due to the Portuguese influence. Firstly, the growth of Kochi as the trading capital attracted a lot of the Nazranis to it. But due to several reasons, no large permanent settlements of the Nazranis were formed in Portuguese Kochi.

Secondly, the economic prosperity brought along with the Portuguese led to the formation of several new inland Nazrani settlements and the development of the existing ones. These are found as established at procurement centres of pepper and other export commodities with sufficient transporting facilities.⁶² This expansion was observed even at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The letter of the four East Syrian bishops to Mar Elijah, the Catholicos of the East in

⁵⁸ Paramakkal Thomman Kathanar wrote the following about the situation in the eighteenth century 'During our period, Chacko Kathanar of Edappally was killed as locked in a room without finding the truth and reality of the subject. [He was] denied the sacrament of confession during his death. He was buried like a dog at a pond-side as wrapped in a mat...Even after you the [European prelates] assured in writing in 1773 that no punishment will impose without the judgment of four or six churches...Panachikkal Varghese Kathanar was captured and chained at neck and send to Varappuzha without charged any offence and without the judgment of the *Pallikkar*. *Vadukar* beat him as laying backside up on a cot. You [the European missionaries] are coming to the feasts of our famous churches every year and take the money came as offering and spending it at your will...' (Thomman Kathanar, *Vrthamanappusthakam*. *Op. Cit.*, P 313)

⁵⁹ For more details about Inquisition see Lea, H. C., *The Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, New York, Harper Torch Books, 1969

⁶⁰ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 211-2

⁶¹ For more details see the title 'Women's Share' in chapter VI.

⁶² The history of several churches established during that period, though not referring about the Portuguese, witnessing this development. For example: Kottayam Valiyapally, Kottayam Cheriyaapally, Muttuchira, Puthuppally.

1504 AD: "They [the Nazranis] began to build new churches, are prosperous in every respect, and living in peace and security."⁶³

The Portuguese wished to concentrate the Nazranis at *Angadys* and, if possible, to abolish the *Kudikal*. The twenty third decree of the ninth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version, states that this concentration was "for the spiritual profit they will receive thereby."⁶⁴ This may be directed for the more effective control of the Portuguese over the Nazranis in both political and ecclesial matters. Even though new *Angadys* were formed for the reasons mentioned above, the Portuguese failed in abolishing the *Kudikal* and hence no apparent change occurred in the structure of the Nazrani habitat.

The Impact on the *Jathy* Structure

The Portuguese advancement affected the *Jathy* structure of the Nazranis adversely. It was partly because of their attempts to change the culture of the Nazranis and partly because of the evangelisation. It was the Portuguese colonial policy to create enough Portuguese subjects by inter-marriages of Portuguese and the natives, which was encouraged and even gifted as the token of appreciation.⁶⁵ Perhaps the Portuguese approached the Nazranis for inter-marriages with their female, which the latter rejected on the grounds of their *Jathy* consciousness.⁶⁶ This may be one of the untold reasons for the retreat of the Kollam Nazranis to interior to live with the 'Hindus', reported by the historian of Alfonso de Albuquerque.⁶⁷ Even though the Nazranis succeeded in avoiding inter-marriages, they still faced the problem with the neo converts, almost all of them from backward castes and in most cases, women for Portuguese prostitution during the early period.⁶⁸ The existence of these outcaste, untouchable Christians was really a threat to the caste dignity of Nazranis. The description of Vincenzo about the Nazranis and of the neo converts give an impression how contradictory their nature and the social status are. Regarding the Nazranis, he stated that "Among the Malayalees; they... are the best, for the faith seems to perfect their natural qualities... The Christians come next after the

⁶³ Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., Pp 38-9

⁶⁴ Zacharia, *The Acts...* Op. Cit., P 213. The corresponding canon in the Malayalam version (the ninth) clearly speaks about *Angadys* and *Kudikal*. (Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, Op. Cit., P 237)

⁶⁵ Mundadan, *History of Christianity...* Vol. I, Op. Cit., P 437 -8

⁶⁶ Varghese, *Malankara...* Vol. I, Op. Cit, Pp 204-5

⁶⁷ Ferroli, *Jesuits...* Vol. II, Op. Cit., P 100

⁶⁸ For a detailed account based on contemporary sources of the newly converts and the prostitution, see Mundadan, *History of Christianity...* Vol. I, Op. Cit., Pp 359-67

Brahmins...They do not touch members of inferior castes...They keep some Nayar slaves...The churches enjoy the privilege of immunity⁶⁹...Like Nayars and Noblemen, they may ride on elephants. Their women are very modest." Whereas he narrates about the neo converts:

That they are of three kinds. The first, called *Regnicoli*, are soldiers from Portugal. The second are *Misticii*, born from Portuguese soldiers and Indian women. The third are Slaves converted to the faith. The first - with the exception of the nobility - are the dregs of Portugal, restless, often guilty of some crime, or exiled. The second are badly brought up, most effeminate and sensual. The third are rude, fierce, unable to do any skilled work in a climate all a-fire, the inclination to evil grows strong in everyone. Some deem it necessary. The hatred, aversion and enmity with which they fight one another for the least reason, surpass all belief. Their lasciviousness is very great. Men and women live in constant laziness, passing the great part of the day almost naked, without regard or respect to difference of sex. They are always chewing betel, which is a very hot leaf mixed with cardamom and areca. They smoke a good deal. All this sets there inside - which is already heated by the climate - on fire. From these general causes, one can sufficiently understand the condition of these people...I do not enter into particulars lest I should offend the reader's modesty.⁷⁰

This report confirms that even the state of the Portuguese was incomparable with the nobility enjoyed by the Nazranis in the society. Even if it was limited at the seashore alone in the beginning, it became a problem everywhere since the Roman Catholic missionaries started wandering for maximum conversion into Christianity. Due to the strong protest of the local rulers, especially of the King of Kochi,⁷¹ all converts were from the untouchable castes, who were declined to be accepted by the Nazranis as their brethren.⁷² While the conversion encouraged by the Portuguese for political and by the Roman Catholic missionaries for religious reasons, the Nazranis resisted the entry of the neo converts into their churches. Perhaps the Nazranis highlighted their *Jathy* name as 'Nazrani' to distinguish from the neo converted 'Christians'. The twenty ninth canon of the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor, according to the Malayalam version, gives a clear picture of the colonial policy

⁶⁹ Some temples had the privilege of immunity that is, if a culprit secured within the specific boundary of such places called *Sankatham*, nobody should arrest or expel him from there.

⁷⁰ Ferrol, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, Pp 133-4

⁷¹ Mundadan, *History of Christianity... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 361

⁷² Joao Maria Campori reported in AD 1618 that the Nazranis denied entrance to the Roman Catholic missionaries in their churches since the latter are "deal with Mucucvers and other low caste people." (Ferrol, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 423)

that demanded the maximum conversion of lower castes. It observes that the Nazranis refused to accept them "because if those converted from the lower castes would unite with *Nazrani Mappilas*, no further dealings are possible [for the Nazranis] with the upper castes."⁷³

The request to the Nazranis to permit the neo converts to enter the porch of their churches⁷⁴ was a clear indication of the failure of the Roman Catholics in the eradication of the *Jathy* consciousness of the Nazranis. They further tried to eliminate or suppress the practices related to the observation of untouchability. The second canon of the ninth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version requested the Nazranis to cheat their Hindu neighbours by 'just pretending as observing untouchability while not practicing it'.⁷⁵ It is doubtful whether the intention behind the action against the practice of untouchability was an act of social reform. Rather it seems as an act to get acceptance to the neo converts who were obedient to both Portuguese civil authority and the Roman Catholic Church. Perhaps the Roman Catholics wished to decaste the Nazranis to reduce them totally under the dependency of the colonial forces.⁷⁶ It was well aware to the Roman Catholics that the social dignity within the *Jathy* frame and the protection of *Kuladhrma* had given a certain degree of security to Nazranis that made them neglect the Portuguese and Roman Catholic advancements. However, the Nazranis succeeded even at the Synod of Udayamperor to retain their *Jathy* dignity unpolluted by avoiding the intercourse with the neo converts.

The later arrived West Syrians took a philosophical view about the observation of untouchability. They do consider untouchability as a sin but not instructed to discontinue. Perhaps it was because the conversion was not a part of their agenda and their awareness about the Nazrani consciousness about the caste dignity. The twentieth *Memra* of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah stating the bath to absolve from the impurity received from untouchables is meaningless if the mind is not pure.⁷⁷ He insists on the purity of mind and soul. Such an ideological stand was acceptable to Nazranis since it would not affect their daily life.

⁷³ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 227-8

⁷⁴ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 227-8

⁷⁵ Zacharia, *The Acts...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 202-3

⁷⁶ Even after the expulsion of the Portuguese, The Roman Catholic missionaries consider Nazranis as inferior, than 'white-skinned' (Thomman Kathanar, *Vrthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, P 319)

⁷⁷ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 183

Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum

When the interaction with Portuguese started after AD 1498, it became essential for the Nazranis to specify their separate Christian identity. It became more essential to define it when the Portuguese started their attempt to convert the Nazranis into Roman Catholic faith and its customs. Then they arrived with a crystal-clear formula in three words to distinguish their Christian identity in front of the Roman Catholics as *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*. In the acts of the controversial Synod of Udayamperor of AD 1599, *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* appears as it is in two places. First as the first canon of the second session according to the Malayalam version: "We believe that there is only one *Maargam* [faith] that was taught to the apostles by Jesus the Messiah and the *Maargavum Vazhipadum* of Simon Peter and of Saint Thomas are one and the same. We reject the teaching that both of these are different."⁷⁸ Again, in the sixth canon of the second session it is stated that "This Synod understands that the heretics divided the one holy faith of one true God as *Maargavum Vazhipadum* of Simon Peter and of Saint Thomas. But the true Nazranis have only one *Maargam*, faith and baptism which was taught by Jesus Christ to the disciples."⁷⁹

Both the decrees, almost identical and used almost in the same context, gave a very clear explanation that at what meaning and level the Nazranis used this terminology. To ascertain the above, first it has to evaluate at what context it was used. When the closer interaction between the Nazranis and the Portuguese, who were Roman Catholics began, the latter approached with the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supremacy and universal jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome.⁸⁰ When their swinging Persian prelates were unable to make defence against this claim, based on the alleged supremacy of Saint Simon Peter over other apostles, the Nazranis put forward their own apostolic origin from Saint Thomas as the counter claim by reinforcing their old terminology. By deriving the phrase *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*, the Nazranis clearly distinguish themselves from the Roman Catholics with an independent identity. The *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* must be considered as a theology

⁷⁸ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 120

⁷⁹ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P. 133

⁸⁰ Saint Peter is respected as first among equals between twelve apostles by all ancient Churches. However, except the Roman Catholic, no Church, including the East Syrian, accept the supremacy of the Pope of Rome over other prelates. However, the Pope of Rome respected as the first among equals in the *Pentarchy* system of the old Roman empire without acknowledging any jurisdiction over other Patriarchs

rather than a mere phrase. By introducing this, they declared that the Nazranis who are following *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* and the Roman Catholics who are following *Keppayude (Saint Peter) Maargavum Vazhipadum* are different and hence the laws, jurisdiction, faith, and whatsoever ecclesiastical, are different. That means the faith, customs and laws of the Roman Catholics are not applicable to the Nazranis.

Keppayude Maargam

For the Roman Catholics, the phrase *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* was most disturbing. Their claim over the Nazranis with the doctrine of the universal jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome was shattered over this. By the above mentioned decrees of the Synod of Udayamperor, the Roman Catholics tried to establish both of them, *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* and *Keppayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*, are the same, and hence the law of the Roman Catholic Church is applicable to the Nazranis too. The Roman Catholics found this tradition of the Nazranis dangerous, hence they directed the vicars and parish priests by the seventh decree of the third session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version to explain repeatedly to the people that both are the same.⁸¹ Even though those decrees were made acceptable by brutal force, the Roman Catholics were not able to remove the Saint Thomas tradition or the *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* from Nazranis. That remained with them and became the ideological ground for the *Coonen Cross* revolution of AD 1653.

When the phrase *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* in Malayalam language went to the western world through Portuguese or Latin language, it became the 'law of Thomas'. The law of Thomas is the translation of Malayalam phrase *Marthomayude Niyamam*. But why *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* was translated as the 'law of Thomas' since an apt translation was possible as 'the faith and lineage of Saint Thomas'. Many treated this as a simple translation of the concept. But some others give more dimensions for this change who treated it as a deliberate act. Dr. Scaira Zechariah observed that the change of *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* as the 'law of Thomas' in the westerns' hand was not a mere linguistic accident.⁸² Religion was then a law for

⁸¹ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, Op. Cit., P 133

⁸² Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, Op. Cit., P 11

the Europeans. Their level of understanding was not broad enough to accept and understand religion as a way of life. During that period, the post reformation Roman Catholic Church was very keenly enforcing the law-abided life style in Europe. They could not think religion as a way of life like the Indians' treating that has broader perspectives than law

Considering *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* in theological point of view, it gives more light to the way of thinking and the influence of Saint Thomas tradition of Nazranis. By discriminating *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* and *Keppayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*, they not only denied the supremacy of the Pope of Rome but that of Saint Peter, the apostle, from whom the Pope of Rome claims his authority. Even though they strongly denied the supremacy, every other ancient Churches in the world passively accepted the upper hand of Saint Peter in different levels.⁸³ The significance of rejection of the authority of Saint Peter at any level by the Nazranis must be considered at this context. Hence, the consciousness of the Roman Catholics on *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* was understandable. But the roots of this concept were more historic. A note of Penteado in the early sixteenth century reads: "As regards their [Nazranis] national customs, their will is corrupted, their priests just as there were twelve apostles, even so, they founded twelve customs, each different from others."⁸⁴ From this report of Penteado, a Roman Catholic priest who worked with Nazranis from AD 1516, it is found that the Nazranis had a clear idea about the independent identity of Christian churches like theirs. This broad idea existed during the early stage of the Portuguese connection, definitely existed earlier than that, was crystallized as *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* when the Roman Catholic pressure increased.

The Nazranis not only stated about the difference between *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* and *Keppayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* but also they visualized it. The Nazranis of Palayoor compiled a drama with three characters, Saint Thomas, Saint Peter and Saint Kuriakose during the period of the Synod of Udayamperor, which was staged at several other churches. Gouvea described the content of it as follows:

⁸³ For example, the Coptic Church claims their Episcopal lineage from Saint Mark who was a disciple of Saint Peter. Antiochian Church claims it from Saint Peter.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Mundadan, *History of Christianity...*, Op. Cit., Vol. I, P 495

Saint Thomas starting to complain against St. Peter, that his law having been preached by him to the people of India, and its Christians owing him obedience, especially those from Malabar, descendants of his disciples, and that of St. Peter preached in Rome and in Italy, he, against all reason, had brought his own powerful Archbishop, so that with the strength and fear of the Portuguese his law could be introduced among the people who did not owe him obedience, and should throw out the law itself which he had preached, and of many reasons why one was the law of St. Peter and the other his, and that the Bishops of Rome, successors of St. Peter, had nothing to do with the Bishops of his Christendom, for both were Apostles of Christ, and both had been given equal power, for one in one part and for the other in another part... St. Peter was listening to the arguments of Saint Thomas ... saying that his law was for the whole world, and that Christ had determined it that way, and that even if that of Saint Thomas were good, his was better, with which they would start to fight... St. Cyriac was giving the sentence in favour of Saint Thomas, and his law, saying that the Christendom of Saint Thomas had no obligation whatsoever to St. Peter, nor to his chair in Rome, but to Babylonia, which was of Saint Thomas, and that the Archbishop of the Portuguese, who was saying the contrary, was a heretic and otherwise it would not be allowed to go about in Malabar, nor to observe anything which he ordered, nor what he had been made to swear by force and with the fear of the Christians at Diamper.⁸⁵

This dialogue clearly indicates that the Nazranis treated all modifications suggested by the Roman Catholics in their lifecycle was against the 'law of Thomas' or *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*, which they considered as their identity. This drama also indicates that the Nazranis knew the real meaning of *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* to explain it perfectly rather than a phrase. This also proved that the argument of the Roman Catholics that the Nazranis were ignorant and ill-trained in Christian doctrines was not true. It also proved that the claim of Joseph the Indian in AD 1500 about the books and learned teachers by which the Nazranis got their training in Christian doctrines was true.⁸⁶

The comparison of Saint Thomas and Saint Peter leads to one more conclusion that the Saint Thomas referred to in the *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* was really Saint Thomas the apostle, not Knai Thoma. This rules out the argument of some writers as the origin of the Saint Thomas tradition of the

⁸⁵ Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 444-6. Gouvea further states that this drama became so popular that several churches invited Palayoor team and staged it. Archbishop Menezes was disturbed by its popularity and he finally banned it. (Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 446)

⁸⁶ Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD*, *Op. Cit.*, P 114

Nazranis was not from Saint Thomas the apostle, but from Knai Thoma, the Persian migrant. The following report of the European missionaries of December AD 1652, just before the *Coonen Cross* revolution proves that the Saint Thomas Vs. Saint Peter controversy had dimensions far beyond theological.

This affection of theirs for Babylon stems from the fact that, having had so many archbishops from there and not from Rome, they imagine that with an archbishop from Rome they become less important preferring St. Peter to St. Thomas who, they say, is at least equal to St. Peter, while with their prelates coming from Babylon they preserve the greatness of St. Thomas; or to say better, having bishops from Babylon they can live as they want and the Archdeacon [whom they consider as their head] can be the principal ruler, which is not possible having an archbishop from Rome, since he cannot give up his government over to the Archdeacon, although he seizes it, as is evident from what is said above.⁸⁷

The religious and secular life of Nazranis were inseparable and falls under *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*, they treated all interference of the Roman Catholic Church as well as the Portuguese as *Keppayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*. As the result, *Keppa*, Saint Peter, became the symbol of the entire colonial introduction.

The Coonen Cross Oath

Considering the Nazrani concept on the Synod of Udayamperor as the replacement of *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* with *Keppayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*, the *Coonen Cross* oath of AD 1653 was the restoration of *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*.⁸⁸ The Nazranis determined to reverse all the Roman Catholic implementations from their 'way and lineage'. The West Syrian bishops arrived in the seventeenth century after the *Coonen Cross* oath ideologically supported this restoration process though they replaced the East Syrian tradition with the West Syrian and the Catholicos of Babylon with the Patriarch of Antioch. In his bull dated February 5, AD 1665, Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed wrote as follows:

They held an unlawful council. [Synod of Udayamperor] and Changed the true faith taught by the Apostle of our nation...the false Christians of India forsook the laws of the Syrians and accepted new laws one thousand and six hundred years after the

⁸⁷ Quoted by Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, P 224

⁸⁸ For the details about the background, events and consequences of the *Coonen-Cross* oath, see: (i) Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.* and Paret, *Nazranikal...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, Pp 378-420

arrival of St. Thomas. For 1,600 years, the Romanists had no authority in this diocese. Many bishops, priests, deacons, and other Christians of both sexes...have during the last 1,600 years, died in this diocese. Do you think that all of them are doomed to hell? Never...It was from the Romanist missionaries of Sampalur, that the Christians of India learned to believe in the Roman Church. They forsook the true faith and the famous rituals of the Syrian Church, and fell into the heresies of the Romanists from love of money.⁸⁹

Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah gives a clearer picture about the post-*Coonen Cross* concept of *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*. He claimed himself as "a part of the body of Saint Thomas [Christians]" and calls the Nazranis as *Marthomman Nazranis*.⁹⁰ He, as a West Syrian, was not ethnically one among the Nazranis. Hence, he became a part of the body of Saint Thomas, that is Saint Thomas Christians, only through the common Syriac tradition. The recognition of the pre-Udayamperor Nazrani way of life as 'Orthodox' by Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed, who, as a West Syrian was one among the people of Peter,⁹¹ also should be taken on this basis. Hence, it clearly indicates that the oath of *Coonen Cross* was an attempt to the restoration of the *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*. Perhaps the both West Syrian prelates were not aware about the social elements of the *Marthomayude Maargavum* beyond the Syriac tradition. This argument is further justified by the resistance of the Nazranis towards the introduction of West Syrian tradition by both mentioned above.

The Impact on Ecclesial Structure

The Portuguese invasion and the Roman Catholic interference affected the ecclesial organization of Nazranis from top to bottom. Apart from the Portuguese power, the division of the East Syrian Church also affected the Nazranis in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Nazranis made it clear to Cabral that the Catholicos of the East was their head of the Church.⁹² However thin the direct relations were, for centuries they remained as the binding force of Nazranis with the rest of the Christian world.

However, in AD 1552, an East Syrian bishop, who failed in the run for the office of the Catholicos, went to Rome and surrendered to the Roman Catholic

⁸⁹ Philip, E. M., *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, Cheeramchira, Mor Adai Study Center, 2002, Pp 145-8

⁹⁰ The thirty second poem in the *Mar Ivaniosinte Memrakal* (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 188)

⁹¹ West Syrian Church claimed the apostolic origin from Saint Peter.

⁹² Gundert, *Kerala Pazhama...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 18

Church. An East Syrian Church under the Pope of Rome was declared thenceforth. Even though he was murdered on his return, a lineage of Catholicos under the Roman Catholic Church established and gained followers.⁹³ As a part of the power struggle between the two, both Catholicos' sent bishops to Kerala. The Nazranis were under confusion by the presence of the bishops sent by both who quarrelled each other for the power.⁹⁴ Otherwise, the change of the Catholicos did not affect the Nazranis since there were no direct relations. However, the acceptance of Catholicos as the head of the Church, even if one of them claimed as under the Pope of Rome, was intolerable to the European missionaries. Mar Joseph, who arrived in India in AD 1556 was the brother of Mar Simon Su-la-Qua, the founder of the Roman Catholic Chaldian Church⁹⁵ whereas Mar Abraham, the last among the row, was sent by the Nestorian Catholicos.⁹⁶

It was difficult for the Roman Catholics to introduce their plans about Nazranis so far as the Catholicos remained as the head of the Church. The Catholicos, residing in Persia, who was not under the Portuguese *Padrado*, was not fit for their political structure. The presence of the East Syrian bishops, who were sent by the Catholicos, remained as an obstacle for their Latinization and Romanization activities. The adherence to the Catholicos remained a hurdle to make the Nazranis accept the supremacy of the Pope of Rome.⁹⁷ At the peak of the attempts to replace Catholicos of Baghdad by the Pope of Rome, the Synod of Udayamperor added the two canons according to the Malayalam version such as "[I] believe that the Roman church is the head, mother and teacher of all the churches and [I] truly promise the obedience to the Pope of Rome...This obedience is not like that paid to the Patriarch of Baghdad"⁹⁸...And "the people over here called the Patriarch of Baghdad Catholica in the Holy Qurbana and in the prayers at both times. The meaning of the word Catholica is the head of all Christians. The title, 'Head of all Christians' should not to be used for anybody except for the Pope."⁹⁹

⁹³ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 151 –2

⁹⁴ Podipara, *The Canonical...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 56 –59

⁹⁵ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 152

⁹⁶ Podipara, *The Canonical...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 58

⁹⁷ According to Dr. Buchanan "...These churches' said the Portuguese, 'belonging to the Pope'- 'Who is the Pope' said the natives. We never heard of him'. The European priests were yet more alarmed, when they found that these Hindoo Christians maintained the order and discipline of a regular church under Episcopal Jurisdiction." (Buchanan, Rev. Claudius, *Christian Researches in Asia*, London, 1814, P 107)

⁹⁸ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 115

⁹⁹ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 113

The first among above not only replaced the Catholicos by the Pope of Rome, but demanded more obedience than was extended to the Catholicos. It might be indicated that the Roman Catholics demanded a total suppression of Nazranis under their Church rather than a mere titular supremacy that was enjoyed by the Catholicos of the East and his emissaries. There is no conclusive evidence for the effect of the forcefully implemented supremacy of the Pope of Rome over Nazranis during the next half a century. Considering the experience of Archbishop Menezes at Parur during his visit, it is reasonable to think that Nazranis treated the introduction of the Pope of Rome as same as the replacement of the *Maargam* of Thomas by that of Peter, which the Nazranis resisted strongly.¹⁰⁰

According to Fr. Vincenzo Maria, Archdeacon Thomas wrote to three oriental Patriarchs, Chaldian, Alexandrian and Antioch for sending a bishop in AD 1648, well before the *Coonen Cross* revolution.¹⁰¹ This indicates that the replacement of Catholicos with the Pope of Rome had little effect on Nazranis since they believed in the oriental prelates alone. It also points out that the Nazranis lost the confidence in the Catholicos of the East as their traditional titular head. Perhaps the Nazranis might feel that the existence of two rival lines, among one was under the Roman Catholic Church, might cause further trouble to them. Even they may think that those competing hierarchs were not capable to overcome the Roman Catholic threat against sending bishops to India. It is certain that the Nazranis compromised by mid-seventeenth century to any oriental prelate instead of the Nestorian Catholicos as their titular head. This paved the way the replacement of Catholicos of the East by the Patriarch of Antioch in AD 1686.

The Nazranis would have remained under the Catholicos of the East, if he was capable to send one of his bishops to the Nazranis before AD 1665 or later before AD 1686 uncaptured.¹⁰² But with the arrival of Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed, the West Syrian prelate of Jerusalem, in AD 1665 began the Nazrani relation with the West Syrian Church. The *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Chengannor under the initiative of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah formally approved the

¹⁰⁰ Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 123 -6

¹⁰¹ Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...**Op. Cit.*, Pp 98 -9

¹⁰² One East Syrian bishop named Mar Simon reached Kerala in the seventeenth century but fall into the hands of Roman Catholics (Thomman Kathanar, *Vrthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, Pp 379 - 80)

Patriarch of Antioch as the head of the Church¹⁰³ and hence the Catholicos of the East was formally replaced. The incidents of the eighteenth century indicate that even at this stage, the Nazranis retained their adherence to the title 'Catholicos'.¹⁰⁴

The Bishops and the Archdeacon

During the Portuguese period, the Nazranis experienced dramatic changes in the case of bishops. They were under the East Syrian bishops till AD 1598, followed by the Roman Catholic European bishops (AD 1599 -1653). An Indian hierarchy was established in 1653 AD after the *Coonen Cross* oath. The West Syrian bishops were also there from AD 1665 to AD 1696.

The significance of this change was not in its ethnicity except the establishment of the Indian bishopric, but in its nature. The Roman Catholics vested the ultimate authority in Bishops instead of the Nazrani practice that granted limited authority to them. During the administration of the East Syrians, the real authority was vested with the Archdeacon, who was a native. It was more important for Nazranis to have the *Jathikku Thalavan* than have a bishop.¹⁰⁵

The Roman Catholics were well aware of the importance of the Archdeacon. They tried to eliminate the Archdeaconate because its existence dilutes the process of concentration of the absolute authority to their bishops. None of its lengthy canons of the Synod of Udayamperor mentioned the term Archdeacon.¹⁰⁶ The Roman Catholics may think that the Archdeaconate would be suppressed by neglecting it. Even though Archdeacon Geevarghese remained at his office after the Synod of Udayamperor, Bishop Roz, the first Latin prelate of Nazranis, wished to suppress his office where as the Archdeacon tried to re-establish his powers. Jacob Kollaparambil comments: "no wonder that the archdeacon wanted to vindicate his jurisdiction against the attempts of the archbishops to take it over. He was actually in possession of it and the archbishops were trying to evict him."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 85, 202

¹⁰⁴ See the topic 'The Catholicos' in chapter VI

¹⁰⁵ In the second half of the eighteenth century, the Romo-Syrians complained that the lack of a *Jathikku Thalavan* was the reason for the troubles of them. They felt that an Archdeacon of their own *Jathy* was enough even for controlling the western bishops. (Thomman Kathanar, *Vrthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, Pp 31,380)

¹⁰⁶ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 107 -253

¹⁰⁷ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 184

During the Roman Catholic administration till AD 1653, the relations between the Archdeacon and the bishop were mostly stormy. In the beginning, bishop Roz acknowledged the position of the archdeacon. He was considering the Archdeacon as vicar general. The diocesan statutes of Roz of AD 1606, deal with the judicial power of the Archdeacon.¹⁰⁸ After a protracted controversy, Archbishop Brito had admitted the claims of the archdeacon. The Archdeacon used the rivalry between different religious orders within the Roman Catholic Church to safeguard his authority.¹⁰⁹ Later, Archbishop Garcia came with his frivolous argument to justify his policy of evading the archdeacon completely from the diocesan administration.¹¹⁰ However, with the consecration of Archdeacon Thomas as Mar Thoma Episcopa in AD 1653 ended the Archdeaconate of Nazranis and all its authorities were vested with the new bishop.¹¹¹

The discontinuation of the office of the Archdeacon indicates that the adherence of Nazranis was not to the ecclesial post of Archdeacon, but to the *Jathikku Talavan* from their own *Jathy*.¹¹² This promotion enables the Nazranis to compile both the authorities of the bishop and the Archdeacon into one and avoid further disputes as happened between the Roman bishops and the Archdeacons.

The Impact in Authority Structure

The emergence of the Latin bishops was the introduction of Greco-Roman power structure in which all authority was concentrated in the bishop. The Roman Catholics were well aware from the fifteenth century onwards that without a change in the power structure, it was impossible to make any changes in the Nazrani life. Whatever little their authority was, the presence of the East Syrian bishops was a great motive behind the rebellion against the Roman Catholic and Portuguese advancements.¹¹³ The Synod of Udayamperor and the rule of Latin

¹⁰⁸ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, Op. Cit., P 74

¹⁰⁹ Thaliath, *Synod of Diamper...*, Op. Cit., P 153

¹¹⁰ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, Op. Cit., Pp 185-6

¹¹¹ *Niranam Grandhavari* confirms that the last Archdeacon was promoted as the first Mar Thoma Metran and there was no Archdeacon afterwards (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 127)

¹¹² While Archdeacon Thomas was promoted as bishop, it was possible to appoint an Archdeacon. But a council of four priests was appointed to assist him for a period of three years instead. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 84) Perhaps the Nazranis wished to avoid further conflicts in between two power centres.

¹¹³ Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...* Op. Cit., Pp 23 -7. Two letters around AD 1550 confirms the attitude of the Roman Catholics about this. Fernando da Paz write as "Besides let letters be sent to the St. Thomas Christians...asking them to forget the customs they received from Armenia [Mesopotamia] and in all sincerity adhere to the Roman Church. It is almost three years that I am working among them with other Friars...exerting ourselves to draw the away from their ancient customs...Sire, in order that such great evil and offence towards God be avoided, it is imperative that these Bishops [= the Chaldean bishops] be

bishops from AD1600 to AD 1653 concentrated all authority in the bishop. The following changes were made in the authority structure of bishops as per the Synod of Udayamperor.

1. The appointment of the bishops was exclusively vested with the Pope of Rome.
2. The authority to punish the clergy and the laity was vested with the bishop.
3. Authority to grant divorce was vested with the bishop.
4. The bishop was declared as the agent through whom the church was subjected to the Pope of Rome.
5. Supervision of the income and expenditure of the local churches was vested with the bishop.
6. Execution of the last will and testimony was vested with the bishop.
7. Appointment of vicars, issue of license to priests for administering sacraments etc. was also vested with the bishop.¹¹⁴

These new regulations totally damaged the authority structure of the Nazranis. The following comment made by Ferroli is good enough to know the nature of the shift of authority:

Under the Chaldean Bishops, the Archdeacons...were the real rulers among the Christians. They settled quarrels, they fought Rajahs, they approved those who had to be ordained, they granted -dispensations and they made and unmade appointments, so that the *power of jurisdiction* was practically in their hands. The old Bishops, being foreigners, unacquainted with Malayalam and Malayalees, kept the *power of order*, were honoured, received their perquisites, and were satisfied: But an active man like Don Francis Roz, brought up in the traditions of the western Church, where bishops rule their Dioceses, meant to rule in Malabar as well. So Archdeacon George saw his powers curtailed, his influence diminished.¹¹⁵

Ferroli talks only about the curtailing of the authority of the Archdeacon, in fact all levels of Nazranis' ecclesial power structure lost its authority to the

prevented from coming to this country." Another letter of Antonio do Porto also in the same tune that read as "thus it is necessary that Y. M. should send a memorandum to the Pope to order the Chaldean Patriarch, who has given him his allegiance that in no case should he send Bishops to the Malabaris, but that if the Malabaris should ask for them he should tell them to obey the Bishop of Goa who is their Bishop by order of the Pope, whom he obeys." (Quoted by Perumthottam, *Period of Decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 13 -4)

¹¹⁴ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 144, 166, 230, 202, 205, 221, 226, 178, 207

¹¹⁵ Ferroli, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 301

bishops under the Roman Catholic rule. The impacts of these new regulations are the following

1. The *Yogam* lost its authority to govern the temporalities of the church and the selection of their priest.
2. The Archdeacon and the *Malankara Pally Yogam* lost its all authority to the bishop
3. The priests became the employees of the bishops and forced to live under the mercy of the bishops.

Immediately after the Synod of Udayamperor, the Nazranis started challenging these new regulations under the leadership of Archdeacon. After lengthy struggles, the Archdeacon made the second Latin prelate, De Brito accept most of his traditional authority.¹¹⁶ Obviously all other segments of the Nazranis who lost their authority too might have restored the powers at least partly. However, such a compromise was not permanent since Francis Garcia, the third Latin bishop declined to acknowledge any authority to the Archdeacon¹¹⁷ and claimed full autocracy. The Nazranis realized that their ancient right to autonomy was in jeopardy under the Roman Catholic prelates. That revelation led to the *Coonen Cross* oath of AD 1653. The net result of rule of Roman Catholic bishops was the redefinition of the bishops in Nazrani concept. They became the centre of authority rather than spiritual fathers. This might lead to the creation of an Indian hierarchy by abolishing the Archdeaconate.

The Indian Hierarchy

The Nazranis never attempted to raise anyone of them to the rank of the bishop from them till it became such a necessity.¹¹⁸ However, the situation was different in AD 1653. The Nazranis, after the declaration of independence from the Roman Catholic rule, desperately needed a bishop to retain their apostolic succession. It was also necessary for the maintenance of the unity of Nazranis especially during that turmoil. By the tragic end of Mar Ahathallah, the Nazranis

¹¹⁶ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 370 According to him "Archbishop Brito made the fatal mistake of virtually abdicating into his hands the rule of the Serra. Nominations of Parish Priests, Suspensions, Excommunications, Dispensations, and so forth had all been delegated to [Archdeacon] George " (Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 26)

¹¹⁷ The agreement made between the Archbishop and the Archdeacon in the presence of Dom Philippe Mascarenhes, the Portuguese Viceroy of India on December 12, 1645, virtually recognized no authority of the archdeacon. (Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, Pp 85-7)

¹¹⁸ At the end of the sixteenth century, Archdeacon Geevarghese was appointed by the Pope as a bishop to succeed Mar Abraham. However, Archdeacon Geevarghese refused it. (Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, Pp 26-8)

realized that it was impossible to get any oriental prelate as their bishop while the Portuguese control sustained over the sea. They also understood that, without a bishop on their side, it was impossible to be independent from the Roman Catholics. In that light, they appointed Archdeacon Thomas, then *Jathikku Karthavyan* of the Nazranis, as a bishop. He was consecrated as an *Episcopa* with the name Mar Thoma on May 22, AD 1653 at Alangad.¹¹⁹

The consecration of Mar Thoma I was performed by twelve priests instead of bishops. The Roman Catholics accused that as an act of Archdeacon Thomas.¹²⁰ But most of the historians agreed that it was an act according to the bull of Mar Ahatallah and by the will of the people. *Niranam Grandhavari* describes the authority granted by the bull of Mar Ahatallah, sent through the deacons who visited him at his captivity at Mylapore and its execution as follows:

...[He] send them with a *Staficon* authorizing them [Nazranis] to consecrate Archdeacon Thoma, who was ruling then, as an *Episcopa*. They [the deacons] came and send letters to all churches. They gathered...after the oath at Mattanchery, they all gathered at Alengad and consecrated Archdeacon Thomas as Mar Thoma Metran.¹²¹

The *Yogam*, which took the oath of *Coonen Cross* at Mattanchery, recognized Archdeacon Thomas as their ecclesiastical governor independent of the Roman Catholic bishop.¹²² Some historians suggest that this appointment took place at Chennamangalm.¹²³ It was possible that a series of lengthy sessions of the *Malankara Pally Yogam* held to discuss the future between the *Coonen Cross* oath and the consecration. The *Yogam* held at Idappally during the lent of Ninevits of AD 1653, decides to consecrate Archdeacon Thomas as their bishop as per the bull of Mar Ahatallah.¹²⁴ The third in this series held at Alangad on the feast of Ascension of AD 1653 consecrated Mar Thoma I.¹²⁵ *Niranam Grandhavari* describes that the event as "...completed the consecration by the people."¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 84

¹²⁰ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 35

¹²¹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 83-4

¹²² Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, Pp 140 – 1

¹²³ Paret, *Nazranikal Vol. I..., Op. Cit.*, P 502

¹²⁴ Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, P 142

¹²⁵ According to Leslie Brown, the meetings were held at Vypikotta and Chennamangalam and the consecration took place on the feast of Pentecost. (Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, Pp 100-1) However, in that year the feast of Pentecost was on June 1 and May 22 was the feast of Ascension.

¹²⁶ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 85

There are various arguments about the person of Mar Ahatallah as well as the authenticity and the content of his bull.¹²⁷ Cardinal Tisserant is uncertain about the authenticity of the bull.¹²⁸ According to Ferroli, Mar Ahatallah gave a conditional permission for this consecration which did not permit the new bishop to perform the pontifical-like consecration of holy oils, ordinations etc.¹²⁹ All agreed that the said bull permitted Nazranis to consecrate Archdeacon Thomas as their bishop by twelve priests. Jacob Kollaparambil, based on the contemporary documents, narrates the consecration as follows:

During the solemn celebration of the Feast of the Ascension, immediately the priests and people assembled there acclaimed Archdeacon Thomas as their bishop, and twelve priests proceeded with the rite of Episcopal ordination according to the old Chaldean Pontifical. The band belonging to the Cochin captaincy played, adding to the solemnities. Reportedly, the King of Alangad also was present at the ceremony, and some pagan rites, such as the throwing of strangled fowls with the performer and the spectators screaming, were part of the festivities.¹³⁰

According to Cardinal Tisserant, The bull of Mar Ahatallah was placed on the head of Mar Thoma during the consecration.¹³¹ Leslie Brown stated that the new bishop immediately began to execute his Episcopal authority by ordination of a Portuguese Roman Catholic named Dias as a priest without considering any restrictions, if existed.¹³² The following statement of Ferroli confirms that the new bishop started ordinations immediately after his consecration.

During previous troubles, the people usually came to terms [with the Roman Catholic bishop] at the time of the Ordinations. When they saw that, if they persisted in their opposition, their sons would not be ordained. Deacons or Priests, they climbed down. But this time the rebellion was no mere squabble; the discontent had spread everywhere; and the [Roman Catholic] Archbishop was deprived of over this last hope.¹³³

Validity of Consecration

The Nazranis depended on two aspects for the validity of consecration of Mar Thoma I, in the selection by the people and on the bull of Mar Ahatallah.

¹²⁷ There are four bulls of Mar Ahatallah to the Nazranis from Mylapore signed as "Mar Ignatius, Patriarch of India and China". For its original Syriac text and the English translation see Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, Pp 108 –12, 251-5

¹²⁸ Tisserant, *Indiayile...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 88

¹²⁹ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 35

¹³⁰ Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, Pp 147 –8

¹³¹ Tisserant, *Indiayile...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 88

¹³² Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 101

¹³³ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 35

According to the law of all ancient Churches, both western and eastern, consecration of a bishop by priest(s) is invalid. The law demands minimum three bishops for the consecration of another bishop. However, one bishop can do it in desperate situations. Mar Athallah, born and brought up till a bishop in the West Syrian Church, converted as a Roman Catholic later, was well aware about this canon. Considering the hardships Nazranis suffered to bring the East Syrian bishops for ordinations in the past, it is clear that they too were well aware about the unavoidable presence of bishops in the ordinations. In this context, the proposal of Mar Athallah to consecrate a bishop by a college of twelve priests should be evaluated.

According to Jacob Kollaparambil, Mar Athallah was supported by an ancient custom of the Coptic Church, to which he was exposed during his stay at Cairo. Jacob Kollaparambil writes about the authenticity and the content of the bulls in discussion:

The possibility that Mar Athallah himself wrote those two letters also cannot be ruled out. They contained a direction to the priests of Malabar to make their own bishops...during his stay in Cairo since 1643, he might have also heard that in the Alexandrian Church, a college of twelve priests reportedly used to select one of their ranks and ordain him as their Patriarch, until the beginning of the fourth century...It was possible that Mar Athallah thought that the alleged practice of the early Alexandrian Church could be applicable to the exceptional conditions of the Malabar Church.¹³⁴

By laying the bull of Mar Athallah over the head of Mar Thoma during the consecration,¹³⁵ Nazranis practised another ancient custom, which might have been known to them. Up to the time of Patriarch Mar Timothy (AD 780-823) of the East Syrian Church, " the bishops of China and India used to ordain their metropolitans laying the letter of the Patriarch over the elected, as if the very hand that wrote that letter were laid upon the ordained."¹³⁶ By the combination of both the ancient practices of Coptic and Indian churches, even though they were no more in practice, the Nazranis would have believed the consecration of Mar Thoma I as valid. The answer of a *Kathanar* to the Jesuits regarding this alleged

¹³⁴ Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, 113 ~4

¹³⁵ Tisserant, *Indiayile...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 88

¹³⁶ Kollaparambil, *Archdeacon...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 80

consecration, quoted by Ferroli as “You Portuguese have got rid of one king, and appointed another. We have done the same with our bishop,”¹³⁷ also pointing that the Nazranis believed the consecration of Mar Thoma I as valid.

Whatever be the status of the consecration of AD 1653, Mar Thoma I was properly consecrated as a bishop by Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed, the West Syrian Patriarch of Jerusalem, who arrived in India in AD 1665.¹³⁸ Even though Leslie Brown disagrees,¹³⁹ most of the non-Roman Catholic historians agreed that Mar Gregorius properly consecrated Mar Thoma I.¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, most of the Roman Catholic authors opposing or suspecting the validity of the consecration of Mar Thoma I¹⁴¹ except a few like Ferroli, who in turn agreed the regularization.¹⁴²

The Roman Catholic attitude towards the irregularity of the consecration is easily explainable since it was used as a tool for their propaganda to capture the Nazranis back to the folds of the Roman Catholic domination after the *Coonen Cross* oath. This propaganda plays a major role along with several other factors in the retreat of majority of Nazranis from the oath of *Coonen Cross*.¹⁴³ Hence, the Roman Catholics stick on with this propaganda, not only about Mar Thoma I, but about his successors up to Mar Thoma VI also,¹⁴⁴ with the hope on the Nazrani surrender to the Roman Catholic Church eventually.

Successors of Mar Thoma I

Mar Thoma I was succeeded by Mar Thoma II, who was followed by Mar Thoma III, IV, V and VI respectively. *Niranam Grandhavari* speaks nothing about the consecrator in any case except about the latter.¹⁴⁵ The Indian lineage of bishops remained with the Pakalomattom family with hereditary succession as in the case of Archdeacons. Even though there are no records about their selection, training and appointment, it is possible that it was the same as that of the Archdeacons in the past.¹⁴⁶ There is much confusion about the consecration of

¹³⁷ Ferroli, *Jesuits... Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 35

¹³⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 85

¹³⁹ Brown, *Indian Christians... Op. Cit.*, P 112

¹⁴⁰ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla... Op. Cit.*, P 121 and Philip, *Indian Church... Op. Cit.*, P 141

¹⁴¹ Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, Pp 548-9, Ittoop, *Malayalathulla... Op. Cit.*, Pp 120 -1 and Philip, *Indian Church... Op. Cit.*, P 150

¹⁴² Ferroli, *Jesuits... Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, Pp 149

¹⁴³ Bernard, *Marthoma Christianikal, Op. Cit.*, Pp 521 - 2

¹⁴⁴ For more details see the topic 'Validity of Consecration' in chapter VI

¹⁴⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 84 -6

¹⁴⁶ For further details see the topic 'The Archdeacons' in chapter IV

Mar Thoma II and III leaving the Roman Catholic argument of invalidity.¹⁴⁷ However, the most important regarding the consecration of Mar Thoma I is that the Nazranis retained the new lineage and hence able to safeguard their autonomy.

Dissident Lineage

The *Coonen Cross* oath was almost complete that all the Nazranis except a handful deserted Roman Catholic archbishop Garcia. Meckenzie describes the events as follows:

Of the whole number of Syrian Christians, computed to amount two hundred thousand persons, only four hundred remained under Archbishop Garcia. News of this revolt reached Rome and the newly elected Pope Alexander VII determined to entrust to the barefooted Carmelites the task of bringing the Thomas Christians back to the Roman fold...they met the Archdeacon Thomas. He was obstinate, but many of his followers were willing to submit to Rome, though not to Archbishop Garcia... before the close of the year the Carmelites fathers had persuaded forty churches to submit but the reconciled christens stood out for a bishop other than Archbishop Garcia ...On December 15th 1659, Fr. Joseph was consecrated in the papal chapel as bishop...and was appointed as the vicar apostolic of Sierra of Malabar... for a few months the work of persuading the Syrian Christians to quit the Archdeacon Thomas went on with considerable success and eighty-four churches¹⁴⁸ had returned to the Roman obedience while only thirty-two remaining under the Archdeacon.¹⁴⁹ When the capture of Cochin Town by the Dutch in January 1663 entirely changed the situation, not only the Portuguese clergy, but also the Italian Carmelites were ordered by the Dutch to quit this coast...[Bishop Joseph]...consecrated Parambil Chandy alias Alexander de Campo and appointed him vicar apostolic...¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ *Niranam Grandhavari* said nothing about the consecrator of Mar Thoma II and III. But in the case of Mar Thoma IV, it confirms as Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 85) According to Ittoop, Mar Thoma II was consecrated before the demise of Mar Thoma I and Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed. And Mar Thoma III and IV by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 121-3) According to E. M. Philip, Mar Thoma I and Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed together consecrated Mar Thoma II and Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah consecrated the III and IV. (Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 151 - 2) *Naalagamam* states that Mar Thoma I along with Mar Anthayose consecrated two Mar Thoma Metrans. (*Naalagamam* MSS, P 131) This is not true since Mar Thoma I was expired in 1670 AD and Mar Anthayose arrived only in 1678 AD (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 85)

¹⁴⁸ According to Ferrolli, forty churches were under bishop Chandy (Ferrolli, *Jesuits ...Vol. 1*, *Op. Cit.*, P 64)

¹⁴⁹ "When bishop Joseph of Calamites order arrived at Kochi by order of the Pope of Rome, Kadavil Chandy Kathanar and the people of Kaduthuruty Valiya Pally received him and bring him to Kaduthuruthy church and made him to stay there against the oath of Mattancherry.... But no other church accepted him. Since they [Nazranis] decided not to accept anybody other than from the family of Mar Thoma I, Panakuzha Chandy Kathanar was brought in from that family, bribed enough to get his consent. He was consecrated as bishop. By the work of both [Joseph and Chandy], gained the acceptance of few people. In this way the Church divided. After a while, those who joined with them merged to the Franks." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 84)

¹⁵⁰ Mackenzie, G. T., *Christianity in Travancore*, Trivandrum, 1901, as re-printed in *Indian Church History Classics*, Vol. I, *The Nazranis*, Ollur, 1998, P 120

The Roman Catholics never had any intention to consecrate an Indian as the bishop. Only the adverse situation after the Dutch conquest of Kochi forced Joseph Sebastiani to consecrate Parambil Chandy as bishop. But this became very helpful in bringing half of the Nazranis back to the Roman fold.¹⁵¹ The hope of those who joined Parambil Chandy to have a Roman Catholic lineage of bishops from the Pakalomattom family was wiped out by the appointment of Rafael de Figueredo Salgado, an Indo-Portuguese, as the successor of Bishop Chandy. Bishop Chandy was forced to consecrate him. This was against the will of Bishop Chandy who wished to give the bishopric to his nephew Mathai who was appointed as the Archdeacon by him.¹⁵² Perhaps he might think that this will begin a lineage of Roman Catholic bishops from his branch of Pakalomattom family. Leslie Brown comments that "it is very probable that had competent Indian bishops succeeded him the St Thomas Christians would have been united in the Roman obedience."¹⁵³

Even before the appointment of Parambil Chandy, it was made sure that there would be no Indian lineage. He was forced to take an oath before his consecration that he will not consecrate his cousin Mar Thoma I without the prior consent of Rome.¹⁵⁴ In fact, the consecration of Parambil Chandy took place after the failure of all efforts of Bishop Sebastiani and the Portuguese to eliminate Mar Thoma I. Ferrolli comments that "The Portuguese willingly have taken him [Mar Thoma I] together with Ittythomman and handed them both to the tender mercies of the Inquisition."¹⁵⁵ The continuous attempts with the help of civil authorities to get Mar Thoma I arrested failed because he escaped to the interior.¹⁵⁶ Perhaps the Nazranis would have accepted the Roman Catholic faith if they were allowed to have a prelate of their own from the Pakalomattom family as Leslie Brown evaluates.¹⁵⁷ But the Roman Catholic Church was adamant from the beginning

¹⁵¹ According to the Papal bull, the primary goal of Joseph Sebastiani was the return of the Nazranis back under archbishop Garcia. But he and his advisers afraid to read this part of the bull in the meeting of representatives of churches held on September 27, AD 1657 near Kochi. They withheld that part of the bull while it was read publicly. (Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 104)

¹⁵² Tisserant, *Indiayile...*, Op. Cit., Pp 95 –7

¹⁵³ Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 109

¹⁵⁴ Tisserant, *Indiayile...*, Op. Cit., Pp 96 –7

¹⁵⁵ Ferrolli, *Jesuits...Vol. II*, Op. Cit., P 59

¹⁵⁶ Tisserant, *Indiayile...*, Op. Cit., P 94

¹⁵⁷ There were some Roman Catholic missionaries who suggested Indian or West Asian hierarchs under the Roman Catholic obedience for the Nazranis. Penteadó suggested early in AD 1517 that the natives should be elected as bishops and appointed by the King of Portugal to replace the East Syrian (Nestorian) bishops (Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, 14) Fr. Dionysio suggests the appointment of Syrian bishops. He wrote to the Jesuit superior general that "how much important is that no bishop may come from Syria to

that the bishops of the Nazranis must be Europeans.¹⁵⁸ If such a precaution was taken with Bishop Chandy during the worst political condition, there would be no hope for Romo-Syrians to have a bishop of their own *Jathy* after the Amsterdam Decree of April 1, AD 1698¹⁵⁹ that allowed European missionaries, except Portuguese, to work in the Dutch East Indies.

The Indian hierarchy had some peculiarities. It remained in the Pakalomattom family that ensures no chance for an outsider to get appointed and hence nullified the possibilities for disputes. All authority was concentrated on the Greco-Roman style as introduced by the Roman Catholics in the bishop since the Archdeaconate was abolished. Hence, this hierarchy should be taken as an up-gradation of the traditional Archdeaconate to protect the autonomy of Nazranis. In the case of authority, the new lineage of bishopric followed the Greco-Roman administrative structure.¹⁶⁰

Significance of the Indian Hierarchy

Leslie Brown evaluates the consequence of the division of Nazranis through the consecration of Parambil Chandy as follows:

Personal rivalry with Mar Thoma had been a factor in his desertion to the Roman camp, and with his [Parambil Chandy] consecration it became more bitter. It seems that this spirit, throughout the years, has been the most potent factor in perpetuating and extending division in the Malabar Church. The second reason for the break-up of the Church was that foreigners were fishing in troubled waters. They had their own objectives, but they could be used by the Indian parties to strengthen their position, even while the foreigners throughout were consolidating their own.¹⁶¹

The existence of the Episcopal lineage begins from Mar Thoma I, which has saved Nazranis from a complete westernisation of the Indian Christianity.

this country... One means indicated is to make obstacles for the coming of these bishops. To this His Holiness the Pope may send one of the Syrian Chaldeans who is in Rome...These Christians have affection to these Syrian bishops...So it is necessary to use this trick to introduce the bishop who has Roman doctrines..." (Vazheeparambil, *The Making...*, Op. Cit., P 113) However, their demands were unheard to the majority who supported the European bishops.

¹⁵⁸ It may be argued that the Portuguese *Padrado* that prohibited the appointment of an Indian bishop. However, no Indian or even a Syrian was appointed as the bishop of the Nazranis in the newly established bishopric of Varappuzha after the oath of *Coonen Cross*. It was directly under the Pope through the sacred congregation of propaganda fide hence free from *Padrado*. They had many Syrian priests who trained at Rome and adamant Roman Catholics to appoint as bishops, if they wish.

¹⁵⁹ Ferrolli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 132

¹⁶⁰ One of the action of Joseph Sebestani, the newly appointed vicar apostolic to suppress the revolution, was the dismissal of three vicars appointed by Mar Thoma I (Bernard, *Marthoma Christianikal, Op. Cit.*, P 550) This indicates that from very beginning the Mar Thoma bishops follow the Greco- Roman administrative system.

¹⁶¹ Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, Pp 109 –10

The European prelates of Romo-Syrians also forced to compromise by allowing the Romo-Syrians to practise their own customs and manners just because of the existence of the Nazranis under Mar Thoma Metrans. The Nazranis were never ready to surrender to the new bishopric to the foreigners. All the reconciliation attempts failed chiefly on the Roman denial of the continuity of Mar Thoma lineage. Perhaps Rome was afraid that one day the Nazranis would declare independence by expelling all of them under the label of foreigner, if they have an Episcopal succession of their own as Paulinus suspected in the case of Mar Thoma IV.¹⁶² In a way, the Indian hierarchy was the symbol of nationality and self-respect of Nazranis during the post- Portuguese period.

The West Syrian Prelates

Even before the *Coonen Cross* revolution, the Nazranis started communicating with the eastern prelates for a bishop. However, it was impossible for any eastern prelate to reach India since the Roman Catholics made sure through the Portuguese out posts that none of them will cross the Arabian sea. After the fall of Kochi to the Dutch, Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed, the West Syrian bishop of Jerusalem arrived at Kochi in AD 1665. He was followed by Mafrian Baselius Yeldo along with Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah in AD 1685.¹⁶³ Mar Gregorius is the first West Syrian bishop to the Nazranis. Their arrival not only materialized the liberation, but also was a great turning point of Nazranis. Mar Gregorius introduced the relation with the Patriarch of Antioch whereas Mar Ivanios introduced the Alexandrian theology to Nazranis.

There was no difference for Nazranis from the Romo-Syrians during the post-*Coonen Cross* period except that the latter was obedient to Rome whereas the Nazranis were subjected to none but to Mar Thoma I. They accepted the Catholicos of Babylon as the titular head of their Church. Paulinus stated about the post-*Coonen Cross* theology and tradition of Nazranis as follows:

The schismatic followers of Thomas de Campo were professing the Orthodox faith established in the Synod at Udayamperor until the year 1665, when Gregorius the Patriarch of the Jacobites introduced heresy in Malabar, and they were not disagreeing in anything from

¹⁶² Paulinus comments about a unification attempt of Mar Thoma IV as "His intention and efforts were to build a diocese either through the Pope of Rome or through the Ignatius Patriarch of Antioch. He planed to expel them under the label as foreigners when a dispute arise by the Roman Catholics or the Jacobites." (Paulinus, *India Orientalis...Op. Cit.*, P 115)

¹⁶³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 85

the Catholics except that... they were not willing to abide by Roman decrees in respect of Thomas.¹⁶⁴

The Nazranis were delighted to have a Syrian prelate after sixty seven years from the demise of Mar Abraham in AD 1598. However, Mar Gregorius was from West Syrian tradition and the follower of the Alexandrian theology. For the Nazranis, the presence of an eastern prelate with a Syriac tradition was enough for the success of their revolution. They accepted him as the rightful successor of Mar Abraham even though the latter was a Nestorian and from the East Syrian tradition. The Nazrani concept of the arrival of the West Syrians is available from the following note found in a Syriac book copied by one deacon Abraham in AD 1734.

Mar Abraham Metropolitan arrived in 740 of Kollam Era. The heretic Portuguese changes the tradition of the Syrians after his death. Lent, the holy Eucharist and feasts. Later, in 861 Kollam Era, during the period of Mar Ivanios Episcopa Metropolitan, the traditions of Orthodox Syrians were re-established as in the past. That is the holy Eucharist, lent and feasts.¹⁶⁵

Leslie Brown narrates the consequences related to the arrival of Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed: "No one apparently knew enough theology to be worried by the possibility of doctrinal revolution and the bishop was willing to conform to local custom as far as he could. He was received at first as a bishop of their old tradition and created the first doubts in the minds of the faithful when he celebrated mass in a way they had not seen before. Mar Thoma persuaded him to use the local rite, which he did, refusing only to use unleavened bread and Roman vestments."¹⁶⁶ It seems that the Nazranis noticed the theological and traditional differences of Mar Gregorius. But still his West Syriac tradition was matching with the East Syriac tradition in several aspects. His title as the Patriarch¹⁶⁷ that looks like the one used by the East Syrian bishops of India might help him in gaining popularity. Perhaps Mar Ahatallah's West Syrian background also acted as an added advantage.¹⁶⁸ Apart from the regularization of the

¹⁶⁴ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, Op. Cit., P 107

¹⁶⁵ Placid, *Nammude Reethu*, Op. Cit., P 257

¹⁶⁶ Brown, *Indian Christians...*Op. Cit., P 111

¹⁶⁷ The West Syrian bishop of Jerusalem was the fifth Patriarch under the *Pentarchy* system.

¹⁶⁸ Mar Ahatallah was a West Syrian bishop. After his defeat in the run for the Patriarchate, he went to Rome and surrendered to the Roman Catholic Church. He possibly was appointed as the Patriarch of Antioch under the Roman Catholic Church like Patriarch Sa-la-Qua of the East Syrian Church. He went to Alexandria in Egypt and from there, upon the knowledge of the request of the Nazranis for the Eastern prelates, he

consecration of Mar Thoma I, the following are said to be the modifications of Mar Gregorius.

1. Hatred of Rome and the Nestorians.
2. Antioch is the religious centre of the world
 1. In Christ only one nature: the divine nature.¹⁶⁹
 2. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and not from the Son.
 3. No Purgatory
 4. Leavened bread to be used for the Eucharist
 5. The cope and not the chasuble to be used at Mass.
 6. The Gregorian calendar to be rejected. Lent to begin ten days after the Roman Catholics.¹⁷⁰

These reformations proposed by Mar Gregorius made no effect. The Nazranis refused to make any change in their habits.¹⁷¹ According to Cardinal Tisserant "Mar Gregorius did not introduce his Jacobite doctrines soon."¹⁷² However, his teachings about the liturgical traditions were acceptable because of its common Syriac background. The most significant point in the arrival of Mar Gregorius is that it allowed the Nazranis who were struggling to defend against the Roman persecution and persuasion. Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah¹⁷³ went further with the West Syrian tradition. He called a *Malankara Pally Yogam* at Chengannor that approved five principal doctrines according to the West Syrian tradition.¹⁷⁴ *Niranam Grandhavari* describes his reforms as follows.

...Mar Ivanios Episcopa...took from the customs practised in Malayalam, five with the obligation of soul, that is the Church, Person of Christ, Holy Ghost, Holy Eucharist and Lent. [He changed] Head of the church, doctrine about the Person of Christ, Doctrine about Holy Ghost, Practice of celebrating Holy Eucharist and of the observance

started to India. Perhaps his reference as Ignatius Patriarch, made by several authors, was justifying his appointment as the rebel Patriarch of Antioch. For more details see: Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, Pp 168-216

¹⁶⁹ This is actually Euthician hearsay rejected also by the West Syrians. But the westerners mistook those under the Alexandrian creed, as Euthicians since they cannot distinguish between both.

¹⁷⁰ Ferrol, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 63 Paulinus also gives a similar list (Paulinus, *India Orientalis... Op. Cit.*, Pp 107-8)

¹⁷¹ According to Mar Aprem, Even the attempt to use leavened bread for holy Eucharist invited strong opposition from the people. (Aprem, *Mar, Paurasthya Sabha Charithra Pravashika*, Thiruvalla, The Theological Literature Committee, 1976, P 95)

¹⁷² Tisserant, *Indiyale... Op. Cit.*, Pp 162-3

¹⁷³ He was a companion of Mafrian Mar Baselius Yeldo, Mar Baselius Yeldo died on the thirteenth day of his arrival (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 85)

¹⁷⁴ It is also argued that this *Pally Yogam* was only a local one of the southern churches. (Curian Cor-Episcopa, Kaniyamparambil, *Suriyani Sabha*, Thiruvalla, Kt. Alexander (Pub.), 1982, P 155) Konat MSS No. 154 is a bull of him issued from Chengannor regarding the points stated as his reforms. (For the translation of this Syriac bull see, Johns Abraham Konat, *Mar Ivanios Hidaythullayude Kalppana...Op. Cit.*, Pp 4-7)

of the Lent. The rest of the things were agreed to practice as per the existing tradition. He regulated them in such away and Mar Ivanios himself practised them.¹⁷⁵

The reforms mentioned above are explained as follows.

1. Roman Catholic Church is not the Universal Church. Patriarch of Antioch is the head of the Church.¹⁷⁶
2. The Person of Christ is defined according to the Alexandrian theology¹⁷⁷
3. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and not from the son.¹⁷⁸
4. The Leavened bread should be used for Holy Eucharist.
5. Lent should be observed according to the Syriac tradition.¹⁷⁹

According to Paulinus, the following are the teachings of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah.

Both the bishops mentioned above refused the Council of Chalcedon. They taught that Christ has only one [Devine] nature not two [Divine and Human]. They did not believe in Purgatory. During the forty days' lent, till Easter, they did not celebrate holy Eucharist except on Sundays that have no lent. They prohibited others from doing that. They did not believe in the Boniface vision of God after the death. They taught to pray standing instead of kneeling. They allowed the marriage of priests. Several deacons of Malabar, those who had not this permission in the past, were married. The birds and animals killed by suffocation were not permitted to eat...Mar Ivanios removed statues and crucifixes from the churches but paintings were permitted...¹⁸⁰

As a learned person and a scholar, he was able to write essays and argue with the Roman Catholics.¹⁸¹ He, perhaps due to the bitter experience of Mar

¹⁷⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, Op. Cit., P 85

¹⁷⁶ For the view of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah, see the first article, 'Regarding the argument of Roman Church as the Universal Church' in *Niranam Grandhvari* (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, Op. Cit., Pp 145 -50)

¹⁷⁷ There are three schools of theology about the Person of Christ, Nestorian, Alexandrian and Western. For the view of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah, see the article, 'Churukkathil Viswasa Karyangal' in *Niranam Grandhvari* (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, Op. Cit., Pp 127 -44)

¹⁷⁸ All ancient Churches except the Roman Catholic believes that the Holy Ghost is proceeding form the Father. Roman Catholic Church added with it as 'from the Father and the Son.'

¹⁷⁹ The bull of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah from Chengannor clearly specifying the lents according to the West Syrian tradition as "We have five holy lents apart from Wednesdays and Fridays... We observe the forty days lent, the lent of apostles, the lent of the assumption of saint Mary, the mother of God, the lent of Christmas and the lent of the Ninevits. The great Lent of forty days is completed by forty eight days...The lent is observed in the following way. The faithful should not eat meat, egg, oil, milk, cheese and any kind of living things. Nothing prohibited should be eat before sunset on Wednesday and Friday." (Konat MSS, No. 154 (In Syriac)

¹⁸⁰ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, Op. Cit., P 114

¹⁸¹ For further details about his writings see a. Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, Op. Cit., Pp 54 -9, 128-59, 250-59 and (b). Johns Abraham Konat, *Mar Ivanios. Hidaythullayude Kaippana...*Op. Cit., Pp 4 -7 (c) Thomas, *Mar Ivanios Hidatahullah...* Op. Cit., Pp 4 -15

Gregorius or of his own,¹⁸² did not attempt to reform the social customs or introduce the West Syrian sacraments to Nazranis. On the other hand, He recognized the existing practices of Nazranis as their lawful tradition as *Edathile Maryada*. His zealous work was successful in preventing the Roman Catholic advancement further.¹⁸³ It seems that he too highlighted his Syriac tradition by claiming the succession of Mar Abraham.¹⁸⁴ During the period between Mar Ahatallah and Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah, it seems that the Nazranis projected the Patriarch of Antioch as the head of the Church instead of the Catholicos of Babylon. Mar Ivanios was a strong propagator of the same.¹⁸⁵ It was necessary for the Nazranis to have a Patriarch who is compatible with the Pope of Rome. The Patriarch of Antioch was found suitable for their need.¹⁸⁶ They telescoped his authority to the pre-colonial period to provide a historic background for their claim. It was necessary for their survival to build up a past for the West Syrian affiliation not to set apart the Nazranis as a new sect that lost their claims over the churches.¹⁸⁷ This is reflected in the later documents by mentioning that the affiliation of Nazranis was with the Patriarch of Antioch instead of historically proved Catholicos of the East.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸² According to Paulinus, he was forced to argue with his own party too regarding doctrinal issue (Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 113)

¹⁸³ According to a document of AD 1870, "With great efforts, Mar Ivanios salvaged the Syrian churches now remaining. Those churches that were not able to be rescued by Mar Ivanios are still remain as Roman Churches." (Philipose Corepiscopa, Edavazhikkal, *Malankara Suriyani Sabhayude Swaroopam*, Kochi, 1870, P 30)

¹⁸⁴ In his bull from Chengannor, Mar Ivanios stated as follows. "I am writing the rules and regulations followed in Syriac Church from the period of apostles and the holy fathers. From then onwards the traditions of the Syrians of India till the period their bishop Mar Abraham [were Orthodox]. From the demise of Mar Abraham... for eighty years the Syrians forced to accept the laws of Franks. The Franks, who found that their rules are simpler than that of the Syrians, suppressed them as they please. This mistake was happened from the ignorance, not from correct judgment. Now, in the year 1997 of Greek era, they [Nazranis] are returning to the right tradition." (*Konat MSS, No. 154, Op. Cit.*)

¹⁸⁵ In his essays and poems, the projection of the Patriarch of Antioch as the head of the Church is found at necessary and unnecessary places. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 177-92)

¹⁸⁶ The following are the advantages of the See of Antioch that suit the needs of the Nazranis. (i) The Patriarch of Antioch is claimed as the successor of St. Peter as like The Pope of Rome. (ii) According to Bible, the Church of Antioch is older than that of Rome. (iii) The Patriarch of Antioch follows the Syriac tradition and has the same Mesopotamian origin of the Catholicos of the East.

¹⁸⁷ After the arrival of the West Syrians, the Roman Catholics accused that they have no right over the Nazranis since they are newcomers. For example, the bishop of Varappuzha wrote to the Dutch authorities at Kochi in connection with the ownership of the Karigachira church that "That church was built about 150 years before that time, when there were only Catholics and Nestorians, the Syrians having come after 1663." (Poonen, Dr. T. I., *Dutch Hegemony in Malabar*, Trivandrum, University of Kerala, 1978, Pp 213-4)

¹⁸⁸ Several eighteenth to twentieth century authors believed that the Nazranis were affiliated to the Patriarch of Antioch instead of the Catholicos of The East prior to the Synod of Udayamperor. According to them, the Portuguese concept of the Nazranis as Nestorians while they met them was false. Deacon P. T. Gevarghese wrote a thesis to prove the Nazranis were not Nestorians during the pre-colonial period. (Geevarghese, *Where the Syrian Christians Nestorians, Op. Cit.*)

The West Syrian prelates of the seventeenth century created an impression among Nazranis. Their role in administration is difficult to ascertain. However, it was a period of unending challenges to the survival of the Nazranis and it gave little scope for administration.¹⁸⁹ However, the role of Syrian prelates needed a redefinition under the new system that had an Indian prelate.

The Priests

The most affected segment of Nazranis by the colonial invasion was the priests. The Roman Catholics considered the *Kathanars* as inferiors and ignorant from the very beginning. The invaders understood that the best way to influence the Nazranis was the control over their clergy. For that the Jesuits started a seminary to train the priests. This failed because Nazranis refused its outcomes due to the lack of their knowledge in Syriac.¹⁹⁰ The Roman Catholics always tried to appoint the priests trained under them as the vicars even during the pre-Udayamperor period.¹⁹¹

The issue regarding the native priests that disturbed the westerners most was their marriage. All efforts to convert the *Kathanars* as celibates were fruitless during the pre-Udayamperor period.¹⁹² The Synod of Udayamperor not only prohibited the marriage of priests,¹⁹³ but also separated the wives of the already married priests.¹⁹⁴ During the regime of the Latin bishops from AD 1600 to AD 1653, the Roman Catholics were able to impose the clerical celibacy since the bishop refused to ordain anyone who was married. One of the first acts of Mar Thoma I after his consecration in AD 1653 was the withdrawal of the ban on the marriage of the priests.¹⁹⁵ Even though Paulinus reports that "a lot of deacons of Malabar, who were not permitted to marry earlier, get married"¹⁹⁶ and that there was a great pressure to such a permission, priestly celibacy became a custom among Nazranis. Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed¹⁹⁷ and Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah¹⁹⁸

¹⁸⁹ The depth of the gratitude towards the contribution of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah is reflected in the comment of an eighteenth century Syriac MSS as "This holy Mar Ivanios interred in the Mulanthuruthu church. This Mar Ivanios was the second Saint Thomas, the apostle." (*The Seminary Case Book Vol. I, Case No. III of 1061, P 459*)

¹⁹⁰ Perumthottam, *Period of Decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 18

¹⁹¹ Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...* *Op. Cit.*, Pp 25-6

¹⁹² Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...* *Op. Cit.*, Pp 29-32

¹⁹³ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 190-1

¹⁹⁴ Menezes used all methods to separate the wives from the priests. (Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 423-4)

¹⁹⁵ Tisserant, *Indiayile...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 88

¹⁹⁶ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 114

¹⁹⁷ In his bull dated February 5, AD 1668, Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed wrote as "Till now, priests were allowed to marry according to the canons. The Romanists forbade the marriage of priests and deacons.

strongly propagated and explained the canonical justification of the marriage of priests.

Under the Roman Catholic rule, the priests were reduced as the agents of the bishop from their earlier status of extreme authority. The Synod of Udayamperor made the following provisions on the appointment, tenure and removal of the priests.

1. That the priests must obtain the permission of the bishop to preach.
2. That the priests must receive Holy Eucharist at least every Sunday.
3. That the priests required special permission to hear confession.
4. That certain basic qualifications are required for the ordination.
5. That one must be at least twenty five years old to be ordained as priest.
6. That priests with contaminating deceases are prohibited from celebrating holy Eucharist.
7. That all priests must complete the canonical prayers at church every day.
8. That the senior priest should record the absence of other priests.
9. That the priests should not drink.
10. That the priests should wear their prescribed dress always.
11. That the priest should not enter in trading.
12. That the priests must remain celibate
13. That the already married priests must separate from their wives.
14. That the priests should not receive any fees for the administration of the sacraments
15. That they were provided with annual remuneration from the church and monthly salary from the king of Portugal.
16. That only the desired number of priests should be ordained. That too after the scrutiny.
17. That the control of the church is vested with the vicars.

Many of them fall into the impurity of fornication...These unholy people now curse holy matrimony and love adultery. The wrath of God awaits them. Know that marriage is holy and the marriage bed is undefiled and that God judgeth all adulterers and fornicators." (Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 146)

¹⁹⁸ In his Bull from Chengannor, he justifies the marriage of priests according to the canons of the West Syrian Church. (Johns Abraham Konat, *Mar Ivanios Hidaythullayude Kalppana...**Op. Cit.*, Pp 4 – 7) The fourth essay of Mar Ivanios in *Niranam Grandhavari* is about this subject. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 157)

18. That the right to appoint and remove the priests is vested with the bishop.
19. That no priest is appointed for more than one church and all priest must be transferred.
20. That the priests should preach and try to convert the 'Hindus' into Christianity.¹⁹⁹

Jacob Kollaparambil evaluates the net effects of these changes as follows.

The Synod of Udayamperor decided that the Church of Malabar should be divided into parishes, which were to be administered by the vicars to be appointed by the Bishop. As salaried officials of the *Padroado*,²⁰⁰ the Cassanars appointed as vicars had the duty to enforce the bishop's jurisdiction in the local communities, and to ensure hierarchical subjection of the faithful. This new arrangement naturally did curtail the autonomy of the local communities and their *Yogams*. With the imposition of the Portuguese *padroado*, the Bishop, the Archdeacon and the vicars were taken on the payrolls of the Portuguese colonial government... The support of the rest of the clergy, and other expenses for the church and church services, were left to the local communities as before. Thus, the once self-supporting Church of Malabar was made partially dependent on royal subsidies.²⁰¹

Even though his observation is right, it is limited only to the hierarchy. The impact of these reforms was much wider than the implementation of the hierarchical system. It can be summarized as follows:

1. Celibacy, prohibition of secular professions etc., affected the social life of the priests adversely.
2. Their role as the part of the *Padroado* perhaps made their life difficult due to the opposition of Nazranis
3. The selection and appointment went purely to the will of the bishop rather than the participation of the laity in the traditional way.
4. The appointment of vicars terminates the chances of the natural succession as *Mooppan Kathanar* by seniority.
5. The preventing of fee for the discharge of priestly duties stopped their natural source of income.

¹⁹⁹ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp, 141, 162, 175, 184-93, 205-7, 227

²⁰⁰ The *Padroado* (=Patronage), granted to the king of Portugal by a series of Papal bulls have several privileges and obligations. For details see Perumthottam, *Period of Decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 97

²⁰¹ Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...* *Op. Cit.*, Pp 40-1 By AD 1627 the number of clergy was increased to more than three hundred. This was far beyond that required to serve sixty seven churches. (Feroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 367) This was again reduced their income.

It may be argued that some of these reforms were essential for the uplifting of the standard of the clergy. On the contrary, the European missionaries working among the Nazranis were worse than the natives.²⁰² Misappropriation of funds was immense even at the top level. That was one of the major reasons that led to the *Coonen Cross* revolution of AD 1653. The king of Portugal allotted a royal grant of 2100 *Xerafims* per annum for the salary of the vicars. It has to be divided equally among seventy five vicars of Nazranis after setting apart forty for the priest of Thiruvamcodu. However, most of it was never paid.²⁰³ According to Ferroli "The Archbishop needed money, but that was rarely forthcoming. To reach Cranganore, it had to pass through many hands, and each one kept some"²⁰⁴ Even the bishops too took their share of cut from this amount.²⁰⁵ Ferroli observes: "The Cassanars were being hit in their tenderest spot: the love of money. They considered they had done a favour to the Portuguese and Jesuits in accepting the Synod of Udayamperor. Now the Portuguese were not keeping their word. Why should they keep theirs."²⁰⁶ The *Kathanars* were prevented from their life supporting system of fee from their priestly duties and the Synod of Udayamperor prohibited them to engage themselves in other professions. In addition to this difficult situation, they did not get the offered salary for years. Naturally they rose in revolt against the Roman Catholics. The ultimate result was the *Coonen Cross* oath of AD 1653.

The post-*Coonen Cross* period was a return to the past habits. Even though the post of vicar remained, the selection of priests went back to the *Yogam*. The priests were remunerated for their administration of the sacraments.

The Yogam

The Greco-Roman administrative system, which was centred to the bishop, had no room for the laymen participation. The Synod of Udayamperor gives no provision for the *Yogam* in the administration since it clearly stated that the administration of the church is vested with the Vicar.²⁰⁷ The 'Yogam concept'

²⁰² For example, the *Angamaly Padiyoia* of February 2, AD 1787 of Romo-Syrians accusing that the European priests were committing adultery both secretly and publicly while they visiting churches (Thomman Kathanar, *Vrthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, P 380)

²⁰³ Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, P 57

²⁰⁴ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 31

²⁰⁵ Dom Britto, the Archbishop of Cranganore, send 2,000 *Perdoas* to Portugal to pay the dowry of his niece which is equal to one years salary for all the vicars (Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, 235)

²⁰⁶ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, Pp 30-1

²⁰⁷ Zacharia, *Udayamperor... Op. Cit.*, Pp 205-6

that deriving the ecclesial identity of a local community was lost by the division of the Nazranis into seventy two parishes.²⁰⁸ The right of the *Pally Yogam* for self-definition was taken away by reserving the right to form a parish to the bishop,²⁰⁹

Even though the Synod of Udayamperor reduced the *Malankara Pally Yogam* to nothing, it became more powerful during the Roman Catholic regime. It was not due to the grace of the Roman Catholics but by the rebellion of the Nazranis. The Archdeacon called several *Malankara Pally Yogams* during the Roman Catholic rule to take decisions to protect their identity and autonomy. The following important meetings of the *Malankara Pally Yogams* during the seventeenth century are worth to note.

1. Edappally - December AD 1632 - Decides that "the Archbishop would not ordain priests, appoint or remove vicars, excommunicate or absolve anyone, in short, would do nothing of importance without the consent of the Archdeacon." The same *Yogam* also decided to reinstate the *Malpan* system of training of clergy.
2. Udayamperor – AD 1652 (probably from August onwards) - Decides to bring Mar Ahatallah to Malabar.
3. Mattanchery - from December, AD 1652 - Took the oath of *Coonen Cross* on January 3, AD 1653.
4. Edappally - during the Lent of Ninevits of AD 1653 – Accepted Archdeacon Thomas as their governor, and appointed four priests as his councillors.
5. Alangad - May 22, AD 1653 - Appointed Archdeacon Thomas as Bishop Mar Thoma. Consecrated him by twelve priests and accepted him as their bishop.²¹⁰
6. Chengannor - AD 1686 – Officially accepted five basic principles (the Church, the person of Christ, the holy Ghost, the holy Eucharist and the lent) of the West Syrian Church.²¹¹

The meetings of Mattanchery, Edappally and Alangad are treated together in *Niranam Grandhavari*. It reads as:

²⁰⁸ In several cases, there were more than one church under single *Yogam* like Angamaly and Akapparambu, both the churches of Kotamangalam etc.

²⁰⁹ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 207

²¹⁰ Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...**Op. Cit.*, Pp 51-2, 55, 115-6, 135-40, 142, 147-8

²¹¹ Curian Cor – *Episcopa, Suriyani Sabha, Op. Cit.*, P 155

While the people, who are Syrians, came to know about all of what happened, they gathered together at Mattanchery church...they took an oath by touching the rope on *Makaram* 3, that we should not associate with the Franks and not see them even during the period of our successors. Then they met at Alangad. As per the instruction in the *Staticon* of the Patriarch, Archdeacon Thomas was consecrated as the Mar Thoma Metran. Kadavil Chandy Kathanar of Kaduthuruthy, Pallyveetil Chandy Kathanar of Kuravalingad, Vengoor Geevarghese Kathanar of Angamaly and Kallichery Ittithomman Kathanar were [appointed as his] councillors then. They were replaced in every three years when the meeting held²¹²

From the decisions of the above stated *Malankara Pally Yogams*, it is found that the *Malankara Pally Yogam* executed its powers to appoint, control and recognize the bishop, decide the faith and appointment of the councillors to the bishop. The appointment of the four councillors in AD 1653 needs more attention. Their traditional president, the Archdeacon, was promoted as the first Indian bishop. Even then, four priests were appointed for a period of three years, as his councillors. It indicates that the *Malankara Pally Yogam* wants to keep their control over the bishop even if he was their traditional head. Perhaps their bitter experiences under the Latin bishops made the Nazranis think that a control is necessary to avoid such misuse of the Episcopal authority in future.

It is true that the dissatisfied clergy and the powerful *Yogam* lead the way to the first struggle of independence in Asia against the colonialism, the *Coonen Cross* oath of AD 1653. But in a short while, the control over the bishop through the councillors was lost. There was no further appointment of councillors till AD 1809. Even then, the *Malankara Pally Yogam* remains as the most powerful decision maker of Nazranis in all respect.

The Relation with the Local Chieftains

The Portuguese attempts to reduce the Nazranis under the Roman obedience made drastic results in the relation between the local rulers and the Nazranis. Earlier the Nazranis were powerful enough for collective bargaining with the local rulers in the matter of their rights and grievances.²¹³ From the time of the Synod of Udayamperor, the Portuguese used their political as well as monitory power to influence the local rulers to force the Nazranis under their

²¹² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 84

²¹³ See above Chapter III

jurisdiction to accept the supremacy of the Pope of Rome.²¹⁴ Gouvea describes one such instances when Archbishop Menezes tried to force a priest of Chengannor to divorce, which the latter refused. According to Gouvea, "Seeing this the Archbishop tried to arrest him, using for this a lot of influence and gifts to the neighbouring kings, and to the Brahmins of the temple, and the *Regedors* of the land, but as he was so powerful and connected, nothing could be done, with which the Archbishop"²¹⁵ This statement also indicates that both the sides used their influence to get the support of the local rulers. It became a fight between the Portuguese armada and money on one side and the Nazrani population and money on the other. The local rulers took this as an opportunity not only to collect bribe but to curtail the collective bargaining power of Nazranis also. During the troubled period after the Synod of Udayamperor, the kings supported the division with this intention.²¹⁶ The conflicts within the Nazrani community became a goldmine to the local rulers after the *Coonen Cross* revolution. Ferroli gives the following examples:

In the North, he [Archdeacon Thomas] was more ruthless, for he imprisoned some of the Cattanars who obeyed the Archbishop. In this, he was helped by the Raja of Cochin, who sided with either party according to the wine barrels he received as a bribe...The sympathy of Princes and Rajas was sought. Even money was offered to them; but all in vein. If the Archbishop promised one thousand, the rebels promised four thousand...Archdeacon to offer a gift of 18,000 *fanams* to a Raja to secure his help. No doubt, the help was needed.²¹⁷

Z. M. Paret points out that it may be true that even the Nazranis were ready to pay the bribe since it was necessary to save the life of their prelate, Mar Thoma I from death to retain their independence.²¹⁸ As the ultimate result of all these, the collective bargaining power of Nazranis was lost for ever and they forced to buy the favours from the local rulers for a price.

The Impact on the Sacraments

The Portuguese discovery of Nazranis and the wandering of the Roman Catholic missionaries thereafter made the westerners realize that though the

²¹⁴ The Synod of Udayamperor was realized by the support of the King of Kochi (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 83) According to Ittoop, the persuasion of the King of Kochi was 40,000 Cruzados (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 105)

²¹⁵ Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 423

²¹⁶ Ferroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 299-300, 309

²¹⁷ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 28, 34-5, 59

²¹⁸ Paret, *Nazranikal ...Vol. II*, *Op. Cit.*, P 498

Nazranis are Christians, they were following the tradition of their own that is different from the same of the Roman Catholics. The following evaluation of Jacob Kollaparambil summarises the western view on the religious life of the Nazranis.

One thing disturbed the missionaries - the difference in rites and customs. Quite a number of practices and customs - canonical, liturgical, and social - of the St. Thomas Christians were different from those of the Portuguese...In the missionaries' view, such practices were wrong. They wished that the St. Thomas Christians should abandon those "wrong" practices and conform themselves to the Western Christians in everything. Obviously, the missionaries were under a mistaken concept that whatever was in use in the West by positive laws of the Latin Church was binding on every Christian all over the world, and that for the very salvation of one's soul. They had, however, various schemes to remedy the situation. The most rigid wanted to strike a perfect uniformity, while others, considering the fact that the Western positive laws had never been promulgated among the St. Thomas Christians, thought that some of the practices could be, allowed to continue under dispensations granted by the Holy See.²¹⁹

Keeping this western attitude in consideration, the request of Fr. Alvaro Penteado²²⁰ for baptizing the Nazranis should be taken as an attempt for re-baptising them. However, the later East Syrian bishops of the Nazranis forced to introduce Latin liturgy as their Syrian translation. But it had little effect. Jacob Kollaparambil describes these attempts as follows.

To achieve their goal, the missionaries tried to coerce the Chaldean bishops into changing some of their traditions, rites, and practices in Malabar, and into accepting some Latin ones instead, but such efforts scored only limited success...Mar Jacob introduced private confession, translating the formula of absolution from *Rituale Romanum* into Chaldean...Mar Joseph and Mar Elias celebrated the Holy Mass in the Latin rite while they happened to be among the Portuguese. Mar Joseph introduced Latin vestment, and accepted Portuguese wine and unleavened host for Eucharistic matter. The same prelate likewise translated the rite of extreme unction...the people did not seem to mind such changes as long as they were presented in the Chaldean language, and approved by their Chaldean bishops. The Portuguese missionaries were welcome guests in their churches. They were given hospitality and were allowed to celebrate the liturgy. As a novelty, the people enjoyed the

²¹⁹ Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, Pp 16 -7

²²⁰ Mar Jacob strongly opposed this request in AD 1523. (Ferrolli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 112 -3)

liturgical celebration of the missionaries, but they had no inclination to accept the Latin liturgy as their own.²²¹

Such efforts of the sixteenth century did not make any substantial progress. By the time of the Synod of Udayamperor, the definition given to the sacraments by the council of Trent in AD 1547 dominated the Roman Catholic attitude.²²² The twenty first decree of the third session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version declares the canons of the council of Trent as the basis for the Synod of Udayamperor.²²³ Gouvea gives a clear picture of the Roman Catholic attitude towards the sacraments of Nazranis:

In the sacraments...they knew not more than Baptism, that of Ordination, and that of the Eucharist, and in that of Baptism they had so much confusion in the form...the *Cassanars*...did not administer the Sacrament. As the Archbishop found out that the entire senior people of the Bishopric baptized, he secretly ordered them again to be baptized, giving the Baptism to each one in his home in particular, for it seemed that it was a scandal in the Christian community...Neither in the baptism nor in any other sacrament were they using holy oils, ...Of the Sacrament of Confirmation they had no knowledge at all, nor of the Extreme Unction; to those of Confession and penitence they had particular hatred and were fed up with them...The Mass which the priests were saying was expanded in many things by Nestor... they were attached to the Sacrament of Holy Orders.²²⁴

By the Synod of Udayamperor, The Roman Catholics tried to establish the sacraments and its administration according to the formula of the council of Trent. Prasenna Vazheparambil summarized the reformations made on the sacraments of the Nazranis by the Synod of Udayamperor as follows:

The liturgical discipline regarding the other sacraments was also conformed to that of the Roman Church. The Synod prescribed the use of the Roman baptismal formula. It also ordered that all Chaldean baptismal formulae customarily inscribed on the walls of the Malabar baptisteries be blotted out...The Synod recommended that all the Thomas Christians above the age of seven should present themselves for Confirmation...The Chaldean Pontifical, which was followed in Malabar, was conformed to the Roman Pontifical. A complete transition to the Roman Pontifical was effected by the enumeration of seven Holy Orders instead of the hierarchy of nine Holy Orders in the Chaldean Pontifical. The Synod strongly objected

²²¹ Kollaparambil, *Revolution of 1653...Op. Cit.*, Pp 16-7

²²² For more details on the definition given to the Sacraments by the Council of Trent see *New Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. XIV*, Washington D. C., Catholic University of America, 1967, Pp 273-4

²²³ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 108

²²⁴ Malekandathil, *Jornada... Op. Cit.*, Pp 237-9

to giving local names to children, instead of baptismal names and prohibited heathen musicians from the churches. The penitential discipline was centered on private penance, suppressing the tradition of public penance then prevalent in Malabar...Priests were given strict instructions with regard to the administration of the sacrament of anointing the sick in the Roman way.²²⁵

The implementation of the Roman sacraments not only affected the Nazrani tradition regarding them, but its related social customs also. There was a social impact on the introduction of all the seven sacraments according to the Roman Catholic tradition.²²⁶ The case of confirmation stood as the best example. The Synod of Udayamperor officially imposed the Roman Catholic sacrament of confirmation as compulsory under the pain of excommunication.²²⁷ Decree one regarding confirmation in the fourth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version commanded the Episcopal visits to the churches immediately for performing the sacrament of confirmation to all. It also commanded "That all masters of families, and others having the charge of children, are duty bound to command their children and slaves to receive the said sacrament."²²⁸ Bishop Francis Roz, the successor of archbishop Menezes, elaborated the performance of the sacrament of confirmation in his statutes of AD 1606. In the fifth chapter of the same reserved the administration of confirmation for the bishop alone. He also ordered that this sacrament should not be conferred along with baptism and fixed the minimum age for it as seven²²⁹ against five, fixed by the Synod of Udayamperor.²³⁰ But, the Roman Catholic attempts to give confirmation faced hard resistance. The experience of Archbishop Menezes at Praur is a good example. Even after his speech about the sacraments for one and a half hours, the Nazranis reacted violently while he attempted to give confirmation to them because "their Bishops never did so to the Christians, nor was that Sacrament instituted by Christ, but his invention, with which he wanted

²²⁵ Vazheeparambil, *The Making...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 124-5

²²⁶ It is said in the profession and oath of faith at the Synod of Udayamperor that "I do confess likewise, that there are seven true and proper Sacraments of the New Testament, instituted by Christ our Lord, which are all necessary to the health of mankind, though not to every particular person; they are, baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, Order, penance, matrimony, and extreme unction, which do all confer grace on those that receive them worthily; and of these seven sacraments, that baptism, confirmation, and orders, are to be received but once, neither can they be repeated without great sacrilege"(Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 79)

²²⁷ The second decree regarding the confirmation in the fourth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version made it statutory. (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 123-4)

²²⁸ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 123

²²⁹ Zacharia, *Randu Praacheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 127-8

²³⁰ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 156

to make them captives, and vassals of the Portuguese by putting the seal of Portuguese in their forehead." ²³¹ Those attempts to give confirmation to Nazranis during the visit of Archbishop Menezes, led to a serious political consequence. Pius Malekandathil observed the political consequence of the confirmation as follows:

The inland rulers read more than what was communicated: They saw the entire exercise of the Archbishop as an attempt to subjugate "St. Thomas Christians into vassals and subjects of the king of Portugal." They misunderstood the Sacrament of Confirmation, which the Archbishop administered in all the churches in spite of resistance from this community; as a part of the ceremony to convert the St. Thomas Christians from the vassalage of the native kings to the vassalage of the king of Portugal. The anointing of the oil on the forehead of the recipient with an admonition to be a soldier of Christ was misunderstood as a ceremony to make him a soldier of the king of Portugal.²³²

It is just reasonable that the local rulers and the Nair militia thought this newly imported ritual was an act of changing the political affiliation of the Nazranis from them to the Portuguese since it was unknown to the Nazranis with their East Syrian prelates. The European origin of the Roman Catholic bishops and their political involvement increased their suspicion. The Nazranis treated the process of confirmation as 'the sign of the Cross which with the holy oil he was making on their foreheads, and soon as a sign of captivity.'²³³ Even though the Nazranis did not take confirmation as a necessary sacrament for their Christian life in the beginning, it is reasonable to think that it was implemented to Nazranis within the half century from the Synod of Udayamperor under the name *Mumpiluthe Opprusma*.²³⁴ Since confirmation was alien in the East Syrian tradition, there was no *Taksa* to fit the Roman Catholic usage. It may remain in Latin language since it was a Pontifical during the Roman Catholic administration of Nazranis.

²³¹ Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 130

²³² Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp LX-LXI

²³³ Malekandathil, *Jornada...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 130-1

²³⁴ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 155. *Mumpiluthe* (in Malayalam) = the first and *Opprusma* (a corruptive form of the Syriac word *Roosma*) = blessing.

Burial

The Roman Catholics propagated the burials in the church²³⁵ and at the blessed cemeteries. The Synod of Udayamperor brought it into effect.²³⁶ It also made the presence of a priest as essential for burials. The presence of some pre-Udayamperor tombstones of the sixteenth century²³⁷ indicates that Roman Catholic missionaries were able to convince the Nazranis to bury their dead at churches prior to the Synod. By the next few decades, burial inside the churches became a common practice. It seems that the Nazranis adopted a hierarchy for the burial as the bishops in the sanctuary; priests are within the rails at the eastern end of the nave and the laymen in the nave. Even after the separation of AD 1653, this practice continues.²³⁸ Even though the burial in the church premises was according to the universal Christian practice, it affected the lifestyle and concept of sacredness of the Nazranis adversely. It was difficult for the Nazranis who lived far away from the churches, especially in *Kudikal*, to bring the dead to the churches for burial, since it took several days in some cases. This situation forced them to build new churches in more convenient places.²³⁹

Burial within the churches affected the concept of sacredness of Nazranis in terms of their Indian background. The Indian concept demands burial-free premises to establish places of worship. The places of worship were treated as impure by the presence of dead body.²⁴⁰ Hence, the Indian concept of sacred places was disturbed by this new act not only to the Nazranis but to their Hindu brethren too since several churches share common walls with Brahmanic

²³⁵ From the twenty sixth canon of the seventh session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Malayalam version, it is clear that the Roman Catholics gave first preference to the church building for the burial. (Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 225)

²³⁶ Thirty second decree of the eighth session according to the Portuguese version (Geddes, *Church of Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 94)

²³⁷ The first known tombstone of the Nazranis at all church is found at Niranam. It dated as *Medom* 9, 742 ME (AD 1567). (Alexander, *Kaniantira...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 92-3)

²³⁸ Among the leaders of the Nazrani revolution of AD 1653, Mar Thoma I was buried in the sanctuary of Angamaly church and Itty Thomman Kathanar in the rails of Kallissery church. Among the West Syrian bishops arrived in the seventeenth century, Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed, Mar Baselius Yeldo and Mar Ivanios Hadiyatallah were buried in the sanctuaries of North Parur, Kothamangalam Mar Thoman Cheriya and Mulathuruthy churches respectively.

²³⁹ The legends about the foundation of several churches associated with the difficulty of burial at faraway places. Even though the date is not suit, the story about the establishment of Kalliooppara church is a typical example for this. (Mathew, *Kalliooppara Pally...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 58-61)

²⁴⁰ The legend about the foundation of Thalipparamba temple should be taken as an example for this concept. (Krishnapilla, Nalankal, *Mahaksatrangalkku Mumpil*, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 1980, Pp 75 -6. Also See Rajandren, *Keshetravijanakosham*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 1169 -70)

temples.²⁴¹ Further, this may lead to the alienation of Nazranis from the *Jathy* system.

Feasts and Festivals

In the attempts to transform the liturgical tradition into western, the Roman Catholics converted the church calendar of Nazranis also into the western system. The Nazrani religious calendar became western after the Synod of Udayamperor even though fragments of old East Syrian system persists. According to Prasenna Vazheparambil, "The Chaldean liturgical calendar in use in Malabar was made to conform to the Roman calendar except for a few feasts. While approving the particular fasts of the Thomas Christians, the Synod also recommended a list of fasts of the Roman Church."²⁴² The ninth decree of the eighth session according to the Portuguese version of the Synod of Udayamperor gives a detailed description of the changes imposed by the Roman Catholics.²⁴³

Observation of the Lent

As seen earlier, the Lent was the centre of the Christian life of Nazranis. Hence, the modification in Lent and its observation affected with much wider scope than that of the feasts. The Nazrani adherence to lents was too strong to force Archbishop Menezes to accept the Nazrani practice of beginning of the great Lent, instead of his proposed Latin date. However, he introduced Ash Wednesday according to the Roman custom.²⁴⁴ The attempt to alter the days and style of lent was there from the beginning of the Portuguese connection. The Nazrani resistance towards those attempts also begins along with it.²⁴⁵ It was difficult for the Europeans not only to accept the strict eastern and Indian style of observation of the lent, but difficult to follow it.²⁴⁶ The lent observed by the Roman Catholics was not satisfactory for the Nazranis. Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed put

²⁴¹ Even though the sacred places were become impure by dead body, it is exempted in the cases of *Sanyasis* (monks), who are buried within the temple compound or built temples over their tombs. Hence, the burial of Mar Sabor and Mar Afroth or any other bishops within the churches during the pre-Portuguese period is justified because they were monks and treated as saintly persons

²⁴² Vazheparambil, *The Making...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 124

²⁴³ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 184-5

²⁴⁴ The fourteenth decree of the eighth session according to the Portuguese version of the Synod of Udayamperor is dealing with this subject. (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, P 188)

²⁴⁵ Ferri de Sausa states in his *Oriente Conquistado* that "when the Portuguese wanted to force them to eat fish on fasting days and to commence Lent on Ash Wednesday and did not allow their priests to consecrate leavened bread in the Mass, they went back to the mountains- to live with the Hindus." (Quoted by Ferrioli, *Jesuits ... Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 100)

²⁴⁶ From Jerome Xavier's letter of AD 1590. (For the full text see: the title 'Impact on Social Customs' in this chapter.

forward the following accusations against the Roman Catholics in his letter dated February 5, AD 1668:

Again, the Romanists have not the fast of Nineveh, which we have. They do not observe the Assumption fast of fifteen days in August, which we observe. They do not keep the Advent fast of twenty-five days in December, which we keep. In Lent, they eat fish and drink liquors, which the Syrians do not. So there are many differences in practices between them and us.²⁴⁷

Even though Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed accused that the Roman Catholics did not observe the lent of Assumption and the lent of Ninevites, the tenth decree of the eighth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version introduced the first and acknowledged the latter.²⁴⁸ Perhaps the Nazrani resistance towards the changes in lent led the Roman Catholics to accept some of the Nazrani practices like starting of the great lent, observation of Wednesday lent etc.²⁴⁹ However, the Roman Catholics enforced all their practices on the Nazranis, like observation of Saturday lent etc. The eleventh decree of the eighth session according to the Portuguese version of the Synod of Udayamperor testifies that the Roman Catholics were forced to compromise at least in some aspects but without sacrificing any of theirs.²⁵⁰

After the *Coonen Cross* oath of AD 1653, these laws became meaningless. However, there were no immediate changes appearing in the Romanised practices that existed among Nazranis. According to Paulinus, Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed introduced the West Syrian tradition of lent. It was later strengthened by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah.²⁵¹ *Niranam Grandhavari* confirms that one of the five doctrinal changes made by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah was regarding lent.²⁵² It was not difficult for the Nazranis to accept the West Syrian tradition regarding lent introduced by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah²⁵³ since it was almost similar to the East Syrian tradition.²⁵⁴ In this context, it might be said that the old tradition of lent was restored by the end of the seventeenth century.

²⁴⁷ Phillip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 146-7

²⁴⁸ Zacharia, *The Acts...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 186 -7

²⁴⁹ Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 214 -5

²⁵⁰ Zacharia, *The Acts...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 187

²⁵¹ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 100, 114

²⁵² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 85

²⁵³ For the details of the West Syrian tradition introduced by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah, See the title 'The West Syrian Prelates' in this chapter.

²⁵⁴ Mar Aprem gives the following description about the East Syrian tradition of lent "The Church teaches the following fast days as obligatory. 1. Twenty. Five days' fast (*Soobara*) 2. Three days' fast (*The Ninevites*) 3.

Conclusions

The Nazranis had a well-defined social system that included their religion known as *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum* in the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Portuguese and the Nazranis associated each other with different interests. The Nazranis hoped to regain their maritime trade that was lost to the Calicut based *Zamorin- Arabs-native Muslims* axis by creating a Kochi based trade system along with the Portuguese, whereas, the Portuguese wanted to include the Nazranis as a part of the proposed Portuguese empire from whom they expected to build their empire in India. They believed that a monoculture society alone will remain loyal to the empire and hence they wanted to convert the Nazranis into their social system.

The Portuguese found that the East Syrian Christianity and the *Jathy* consciousness were the obstacles to attach the Nazranis into their social system. The protection the Nazranis had with their *Jathy* dignity leaves no chance for the Portuguese to attain their political dependency. The *Jathy* dignity of the Nazranis prohibits the Portuguese from mass conversions into the Roman Catholic Church that they considered as essential for sustaining their dominance. They also considered that the spread of the Roman Catholic Church was a primary duty of theirs. The Nazranis refused to surrender to The Roman Catholic Church or alter their traditions according to the Roman Catholic norms. The Nazranis refused to accept all their demands by denouncing all such European proposals as *Keppayude Maargam*, to which they had nothing to do.

Since the Portuguese failed to attain any political control over the Nazranis, the only means to the subjugation was the Roman Catholic Church. After a century's work, the Roman Catholic missionaries understand that they cannot succeed unless the *Jathy* consciousness and the East Syrian connection of the Nazranis are broken. The Synod of Udayamperor was the top of such efforts to break the Nazrani system to restructure it to implement the Roman Catholic system. Even though the Roman Catholic hierarchy was established with Greco- Roman administrative system, they failed to abolish the *Yogams* or

Fifty day's lent (Great Fast) 4. The Apostles' Fast (Fifty days after Pentecost) 5. Prophet Eliyah's fast (Fifty days) 6. St. Mary's Fast (fifteen days). These are besides the fasts observed on all Wednesday and Fridays. The church teaches that 50 days lent and three day fast is compulsory. 25 days fast are also observed in general. Apart from these three generally observed fasts, the fifteen days fast is also observed by some in India. The 50 day fast of the Apostles and the 50 days fast of Prophet Elijah are never observed at present." (Aprem, *Sacraments...Op. Cit.*, Pp 109-10)

Archdeacon, in which the real power was vested. The Roman Catholics also failed to eliminate the *Jathy* consciousness of the Nazranis.

The efforts of the Roman Catholics were found disastrous to the Nazranis especially in their *Jathy* dignity and social status. The Nazranis realized that the trade with the Portuguese was not beneficial and their dream to create a Kochi-centred maritime trade system of their own collapsed in the sixteenth century itself. Hence, the Nazranis intended to topple the Roman Catholics for retaining their own social system. The *Coonen-Cross* oath was the result. The *Coonen-Cross* oath was neither a religious quarrel nor an administrative dispute, but a revolution against all European introductions that was classified as *Keppayude Maargam*. Even though the revolution was a total success, the Roman Catholics were able to take half of the Nazranis back to the Roman fold by betraying the oath. This divided the Nazrani community for the first time and that led to the need of a religious identity for them for the first time.

Even though the Nazranis were able to expel the Roman Catholic rule, their system was highly infiltrated by the western doctrines and traditions. Even though the Nazranis created their own administrative system by upgrading the archdeaconate into a bishopric, they passively admitted the Greco-Roman administrative system by the same. But the *Yogams* remains as powerful in the pre-colonial period. By the end of the seventeenth century, The Nazranis stabilized with status-*quo* traditions, Alexandrian theology and the newly engaged West Syrian connection under the Mar Thoma bishops of Pakalomattom. Moreover, the Nazranis were able to create their own administrative system incorporating the *Yogams* and the Episcopacy without any foreign interference by the end of the seventeenth century.

After the collapse of the Portuguese in Kochi, the suppression attempts of the Nazranis stopped. The reunification attempts also ended after Rome refused to accept the Mar Thoma bishops, and the Nazranis refused to surrender the bishopric. This marked the division certain and the appellations of the Nazrani Community became imperative. Even at this stage, the Nazranis did not lose their *Jathy* dignity in the Kerala community. The newly arrived Dutch favoured the Nazranis against the Roman Catholics due to the anti-Catholic attitude of both. Even though this created a favourable political condition, the collective bargaining power of the Nazranis was lost because of the division.

Chapter VI THE NAZRANIS: AD 1708 – 1815

Mar Gabriel – The Beginning of Confusion

The dawn of the eighteenth century brings confusion to Nazranis in the form of the arrival of Mar Gabriel, the first East Syrian bishop with true Nestorian faith during the post-Udayamperor period.¹ Mar Gabriel, who arrived by order of Mar Eliah, the Nestorian Catholicos² in AD 1708, made a tremendous impact on both the factions of Nazranis. During his arrival, the ecclesial situation of the Nazranis was quite favourable to him to win a considerable following. Apart from the independent reasons of both the factions, there were some common reasons for both the factions. The magical influence of the term Catholicos over Nazranis and the East Syrian tradition were the common reasons favourable to him. Travancore State Manuel gives the following narration about the arrival of Mar Gabriel.

A new disturbing factor was, however, not long in coming. In 1708 there arrived in Malabar Mar Gabriel who was appointed by the Nestorian Patriarch of Babylon. He had served as Archbishop of Oburbigan, a diocese of the Nestorian Church. He appears to have been a man of no settled conviction, oscillating between Rome and the several Eastern churches in a manner, which suited his ambition. No sooner did he arrive in India than Propaganda sent him orders to quit. But Gabriel was not the man to obey, nor was he prepared to tolerate the interference of Mar Thomas IV.³

Mar Gabriel had a good influence among the Roman Catholics. The influence of Mar Gabriel over Romo-Syrians is confirmed by several Roman Catholic historians.⁴ He got the control over several churches belonging to them for which he pretended as a Roman Catholic and made his profession of faith.⁵ The number of parishes that obeyed him rose from fourteen to twenty-two.⁶ The major reason for the Romo-Syrians to follow Mar Gabriel was their humiliation. After the death of bishop Parambil Chandy in AD 1687, the Romo-Syrians were neither allowed to consecrate archdeacon Mathai nor any other native priest as

¹ There was a Syrian bishop Mar Antrayos, who seems to be a Nestorian, who was in Kerala from AD 1678 to AD 1692. He is not considered here since his credentials are not beyond doubt and his activities had no effect.

² *Niranam Grandhavari* confirms his Nestorian faith and his appointment by the Nestorian Catholicos. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., Pp 85-6)

³ Velu Pillai, *State Manuel Vol. I ... Op. Cit.*, P 711

⁴ Perumthottam, *Period of Decline...*, Op. Cit., Pp 131-5

⁵ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, Op. Cit., P 115

⁶ Perumthottam, *Period of Decline...*, Op. Cit., Pp 131-5

his successor nor even appointed any Roman Catholic Chaldian as their bishop. They were simply resubjected to the European bishops as in the pre-*Coonen Cross* period.⁷ Mar Gabriel was landed into such a situation. The cheated Roman Catholics welcomed him. They were also disappointed by not having received any reply to their petitions to Rome for the previous six years regarding a bishop of their own. Mar Gabriel exploited these favourable conditions to create a foothold among the Romo-Syrians by pretending as one among them that was later refused to be accept by Rome.⁸ Perhaps at this stage, he turned his attention to the Nazranis. E. M. Philip counted him as an opportunist without any firm faith.

Mar Gabriel was a timeserving man. He had to serve his own interest rather than the interest of Nestorianism. When he started for Malabar, he submitted his Confession of Faith to the Pope, with a request that he be confirmed as the Bishop of Malabar. Failing in that direction, he tried to exact the sympathy and acknowledgement of the Jacobites, by imitating Jacobite rituals and practices in his worship, and this enabled him to win the partial acceptance of a few parishioners. A Carmelite friar of Verapoly obtained from him that agreement that he would live a retired life.⁹

Mar Gabriel gained the confidence of the Dutch authorities of Kochi that helped him to bid for govern Nazranis.¹⁰ In his letter to Carlos Schaaf around AD 1720, in the handwriting of a Mathai Kathanar,¹¹ Mar Gabriel explains his strategy.

Then in the year 1705, the Syrian Archbishop, Mar Gabriel, came to India by order of the Catholicos of the East. He noticed the two hostile camps among the Syrians and was struck by the great number of them who had followed the Franks...this Syrian Metropolitan Gabriel did not follow the Syrians his kinsmen, nor did

⁷ Bernard, *Marthoma Christianikal*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 573 –80

⁸ Feroli, *Jesuits ...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 144

⁹ Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 153 According to Joseph Perumthottam "Gabriel wrote to his Nestorian Patriarch Eliä of Ninive to send to the Serra a bishop and two monks of his Church, and that he had instructed him that they should come without being detected by the Catholics. Thus, his inconsistency came into open. He made himself a Catholic with the Catholics, and a schismatic with the dissidents." (Perumthottam, *Period of Decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 134-5)

¹⁰ Jacob Canter Visscher was well impressed by Mar Gabriel. He gave a bright picture about Mar Gabriel as "Mar Gabriel, a white man, and sent hither from Baghdad, is aged and venerable...He is courteous and God fearing... He holds the Nestorian doctrine respecting, the union of the two natures in our Savior's person." (Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 42) According to Joseph Perumthottam "On 6 February 1710, accompanied by representatives of some churches, both Catholic and dissident, Gabriel visited the Dutch commander of Cochin in Cranganore. He was well received by the commander, who declared that the government of the church belonged only to Gabriel." (Perumthottam, *Period of decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 133-4)

¹¹ According to Van Der Ploeg, This letter is of Mar Gabriel. Only the handwriting is belongs to Mathai Kathanar. (Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 255-64)

he follow those Syrians who had followed the Franks, but he followed a middle course in order to attract those Syrians who had followed the Franks. Many people from both the camps followed him; indeed forty-two churches from the camp that had followed the Franks attached themselves to him; but now...twenty churches from them detached themselves from him.¹²

The presence of Mar Gabriel with the political support of the Dutch effectively created three power centres among Nazranis.¹³ This made the Nazranis change side at any time in between those three at their will. His dwindling nature in ideologies and, perhaps, the pious living¹⁴ of Mar Gabriel attracted a lot of followers from the both sides. *Niranam Grandhavari* gives the Nazrani impression about Mar Gabriel as follows.

In AD 1708, that is 883 ME, a bishop, Gabriel, a Nestorian, came to Malayalam by the command of Mar Elia, the Catholicos. His faith is that there are two persons and two natures in Messiah. [He] celebrates the holy Eucharist with leavened and unleavened bread. [He] observes lent according to the tradition of the Syrians. A few from the *Puthenloor* and from *Pazhayakoor*, who are the Portuguese, joined with him. Since there was no such bishop [to succeed], those who followed him turned towards the previous two [faiths] after his death¹⁵

Mar Thoma IV wrote to the Patriarch of Antioch regarding Mar Gabriel and the consequences of his presence as "We did not believe him except a certain priest called *Mathew Beticutel* and a few Portuguese Roman Catholics. We, However, have not wisdom that we may answer him. Therefore, we report it to thee, our Lord."¹⁶ According to E. M. Philip, some Nazranis used Mar Gabriel as a tool for their opposition to Mar Thoma IV without any dogmatic reason.¹⁷ After the demise of Mar Thoma IV in AD 1728, a faction among Nazranis challenged the Episcopal authority of Mar Thoma V since he was consecrated by Mar Thoma IV "without consulting and without requesting Mar Gabriel to participate."¹⁸

¹² Mingana, *Early Spread...*, Op. Cit., Pp 42 – 8

¹³ The internal conflict among Romo-Syrians between Propaganda and *Padroado* is not taken into consideration.

¹⁴ Ittoop gives the following information." Though this Mar Gabriel Metropolitan was a Nestorian; he is still spoken of as one who was very piously devoted to Messiah and a firm believer. Tradition says that he foretold the date of his death, that he died on that very date and that on his fortieth day after burial; his body was found, on opening of his tomb, in the same state when it was buried; but the truth of this cannot guaranteed. The *Edathil Thampurans* themselves used to call this person a sage and deeply reverence him. " (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, Op. Cit., P 124)

¹⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., Pp 82 –6

¹⁶ Quoted by Velu Pillai, *State Manuel Vol. I...* Op. Cit., P 712

¹⁷ Philip, *Indian Church...*, Op. Cit., Pp 152-4

¹⁸ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, Op. Cit., Pp 123-4

Like the Roman Catholics, Mar Gabriel too did not consider Mar Thoma IV as a bishop or at least pretended so.¹⁹ According to Paulinus, Mar Thoma V wished to be re-consecrated by Mar Gabriel in AD 1731, that did not happen since the latter's demise before it.²⁰ However, all other historians state that Mar Thoma V considered him as an intruder and kept away from him.²¹ The Gabriel faction ended along with his demise in AD 1731. But the impact of the Gabriel factor were manifold such as

1. It reintroduced the Nestorian theology. It forced Nazranis to lean more over the Alexandrian theology that they possess from AD 1686
2. It opened the theological warfare. For this the Nazranis had no manpower. Hence, they have forced to request the Patriarch of Antioch to send prelates for this purpose.
3. It destabilized the authority. The Syrian bishops were found as effective tools to challenge the authority of the legitimate prelates in faction fights.
4. It introduced a controversy within the Nazranis about the validity of consecration.

The above-mentioned results of the Gabriel factor sustained throughout the eighteenth century. Perhaps the ignition of most of the internal troubles of Nazranis throughout the eighteenth century was the Gabriel factor.

Personal Conflicts

The eighteenth century documents pointing out that the disputes within the Nazrani community were personal rather than doctrinal or ecclesial. It was so common in that century to give doctrinal colour to personal quarrels. Changing sides for convenience was also common. A story reported by E. M. Philip in connection with the arrival of Mar Gabriel is a typical example of this.

There is a story concerning him that a Syrian Christian discontented with Mar Thoma, hearing of Mar Gabriel's arrival at Cochin, paid a visit to him, and on his return, referred to him in words which have since become a proverb, viz., that he was "neither a father nor an uncle, but fit for the present purpose" [of opposing Mar Thoma].²²

¹⁹ "But making a difference between the Catholics and the dissidents, because in the case of the dissident clerics he [Mar Gabriel] used to re-ordain them.." (Perumthottam, *Period of Decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 133)

²⁰ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 117

²¹ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 123

²² Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 152 -3

The dissidents to the ruling bishops always considered the Syrian bishops as the best tool to settle their scores. The proverb mentioned above is a typical example of this attitude. Mar Thoma IV, in his letter to Patriarch of Antioch, accused that the sole follower of Mar Gabriel from his party was an excommunicated *Kathanar* named Mathai.²³ Perhaps his excommunication led him to side with Mar Gabriel against Mar Thoma IV. *Niranam Grandhavari* gives enough evidences for such instances. During the fight between Mar Thoma V and Mar Mar Baselius Sakrallah, it is reported that one Kottarakkara Kochitty Tharakan, a subject of Mar Thoma V, used abusive words against Mar Thoma V in the presence of Raja of Travancore, which were intolerable even to Subbyan Delava, the prime minister.²⁴ Leslie Brown evaluates this phenomenon as follows "It is likely that doctrinal differences and ecclesiastical affiliations often concealed quarrels of a more personal nature between the Indian leaders of each side."²⁵ The author of *Niranam Grandhavari* observes as follows "It is difficult to write how nineteen years passed when the noblemen of each place, even of the same family, disputed one another. Both the parties with the help of other *Jathys* and [all] at the expense of the churches."²⁶ These words also justify the comment of Leslie Brown.

Mar Thoma VI realized that the Nazranis with vested interests were the real reason behind the ongoing disputes. Upon this revelation, he "removed those with bad character"²⁷ (probably from his consultations) in the preparation for the reconciliation with the West Syrian bishops. When he met Mar Ivanios Yoohanon at Kallissery, "both the parties neglected the words of enemies and united."²⁸ Even during the powerful regime of Mar Dionysius I, such acts of enmity existed. Even the political situation was used for personal gains.²⁹ After his period, such personal rivalries are found more assimilated with the church affairs.

²³ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 145

²⁴ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 89.

²⁵ Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 115

²⁶ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 89-90

²⁷ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 90

²⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 90

²⁹ After Col. Maculay, the British resident of Travancore and Kochi, ordered the deportation of Mar Diescoros, a priest and a few laymen present Mar Diescoros in front of Velu Thampi, then prime minister of Travancore. They convey to him that Mar Dionysius I and Col. Maculay are 'at the same side' and hence the resident ordered the deportation. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 115) It is clear that they were tried to get benefits from the uprising disputes in between Col. Maculay and Velu Thampi.

In their counter-complaint to Col. Munro, the supporters of Mar Thoma VIII accused that the leader of the original petitioners, Pulikkottil Ittoop Remban, initiated such an action because of his enmity towards Mar Thoma VIII since the latter issued a bull against him regarding the faction fight between the priests of Kunnamkulam church.³⁰ *Niranam Grandhavari* confirms that there existed a quarrel.³¹ *Naalagamam* discloses that Kidangan Geevarghese Kathanar, the opponent of Ittoop Remban at Kunnamkulam, complaints to Mar Thoma VIII about Ittoop Remban.³² Later he had turned back and joined Ittoop Remban, when he found that Ittoop Remban was 'getting the upper hand'.³³ This twisting indicates that there were no principles followed to stand with or shifting sides except one's own convenience. Perhaps the inconsistency like this of the people around him led Mar Thoma VII to make the following statement.

He [Mar Thoma VII] said at Niranam that all are cheaters and unfaithful. They have no [spiritual] life but only the name of Jacobities. Therefore they are likely to join the English *Maargam*.³⁴

This assessment of Mar Thoma VII about his folks that the opportunistic attitude and decaying moral of the Nazranis may betray the community to personal benefits in front of the British may taken as a well judged statement since the British already had got total control over Kerala by the time of this statement of AD 1808, and also had hidden religious interests.

Unification of Nazranis

Even from the time of the division, attempts to unify Nazranis began. It was easy in the beginning since there was no difference between both the factions except in administration. The Nazranis refused to surrender their newly accrued native bishopric to the Western prelates, as they demanded. Hence, the unification attempts of the seventeenth century failed.

Then the Romo-Syrians, named *Pazhayacoor* were less interested in a unity favouring the succession of Mar Thoma Metrans since they had Parambil Chandy as their bishop. They believed that a native line would continue from him by consecrating Archdeacon Kunju Mathai, a nephew of Parambil Chandy, as the successor of his. But they were humiliated by the appointment of an Indo-

³⁰ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 170

³¹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 120

³² *Naalagamam MSS*, P 166 -7

³³ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 175

³⁴ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 119

Portuguese coloured man as the successor of Parambil Chandy.³⁵ Even an Archdeacon of their own *Jathy* was denied.³⁶ They were also divided into two under Kodungallor and Varappuzha bishoprics.³⁷ In such a stage, the Romo-Syrians were interested in a unification to retain the dignity of their *Jathy*.³⁸ However, it was not easy as in the beginning. The Nazranis had accepted the Alexandrian theology in AD 1686. The West Syrian traditions and ecclesiology were gradually spreading among the Nazranis. During the first half of the eighteenth century, the bishopric of Pakalomattom also established their Episcopal continuation. Hence, their interest in unification was diminished.³⁹ Yet, some efforts were made but they became fruitless. It may be due to the lack of interest of the Roman Catholic Church to recognize the self-government of Nazranis.⁴⁰

The Romo-Syrians realized that their only hope to obtain a bishop of their own *Jathy* depended exclusively on Mar Thoma Metrans since their attempts for raising one among them as bishop⁴¹ or get any East Syrian bishop, obedient to the Roman Catholic church, instead of European bishops were denied.⁴²

³⁵ For More details about the successors of Parambil Chandy see the title 'Dissident lineage' in chapter V

³⁵ Bernard, *Marthoma Christianikal, Op. Cit.*, Pp 567 –82

³⁶ Thomman Kathanar, *Varthemanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, Pp 45 –6

³⁷ After the Synod of Udayamperor, the Roman Catholic diocese of Kodungallor was established under the Portuguese *Padroado* and the Carmelites established the diocese of Varappuzha after the *Coonen Cross* oath under the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide.

³⁸ According to Whitehouse "There is no doubt that the Syrians and Romo-Syrians were very much mixed up together at this time and approached one another far nearer in sentiments and practice than they do nowadays; for no fewer than eighteen churches were regarded as the common property of both parties. In some the services were performed by the Syrians indifferently." (Quoted by Velu Pillai, *State Manuel Vol. I ... Op. Cit.*, P 717)

³⁹ According to various Roman Catholic historians, Mar Thoma IV and V attempted the unification of both the factions. But it was never materialized. (Bernard, *Marthoma Christianikal, Op. Cit.*, Pp 617-19, 641) Even in their hardships, Mar Thoma Metrans never found as attempted for any unconditional surrender. It indicates that they were interested only in the unification of Nazranis under their jurisdiction and not fascinated in anything of Roman Catholic Church.

⁴⁰ P. Cherian suggests that the difference in the sacramental tradition was the reason for the failure of the attempts of Mar Thoma V (Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, P 53). Velu Pillai comments about the unification attempts of Mar Dionysius I as "Mar Dionysius I was determined to establish and maintain the independence of his church. At the same time he was anxious to be in the good books of the Papal power." (Velu Pillai, *State Manuel Vol. I ... Op. Cit.*, P 717) Comparing both, the unwilling of Rome to recognize the Nazrani identity was prevent the unity since Nazranis were ready to accept the Roman Catholic faith and the supremacy of the Pope of Rome for a unity.

⁴¹ "Propaganda added that the Vicar apostolic would be well advised to admit no discussion concerning the desire which this nation has to have a bishop or head of their own rite." (Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, Pp 122-3)

⁴² The European missionaries always tried to reserve the office of the bishops for Europeans alone. It is confirmed from the letter of the Carmelites of Varappuzha to the Papal delegate in Portugal against Kariyatti Malpan. They wrote that this was the long standing policy from the beginning of Roman Catholic invasion. They wrote clearly regarding the appointment of the East Syrian or native bishops for Nazranis that "If the door locked by Alaxios [Alexis De Menezes] Metropolitan will unlock, [You] will realize the problems and grievances incurred for all the missionaries within three years from the arrival of Kariyatti to Malayalam. You can realize if you enquire that how he [Manezes] closed the eyes of this people, how much he suffered [for that] and how much money spend... You will realize the gravity of the situation yourselves if unlock the door

Accepting Mar Thoma Metrans to the Roman Catholic Church along with the Nazranis was found as the remedy against the humiliation of Romo-Syrians.

The European Roman Catholic missionaries were well aware of this. They were afraid that the acceptance of Mar Thoma bishops with succession right would eliminate their control over Nazranis who were then under their jurisdiction.⁴³ They always challenged the validity of consecration of Mar Thoma bishops⁴⁴ to prevent any kind of unification of Nazranis under Mar Thoma bishops even though they were keenly interested in bringing the entire Nazrani folk under the Roman Catholic Church. The challenge made by the West Syrians over the validity of consecration helped them to strengthen their argument.

After the enthronement of Mar Thoma VI as Mar Dionysius I, there was no ground to challenge the validity of consecration. Mar Dionysius I, with a great vision of the unification of the Nazrani *Jathy*, turned his interest towards the Romo-Syrians after the internal disputes of Nazranis were settled by accepting enthronement suggested by the West Syrian bishops. Mar Dionysius I extended his willingness to unite with the Roman Catholic Church if he would be accepted as the bishop of all Nazranis. He also insisted on an assurance to retain the hereditary succession of bishops from his family.⁴⁵ Since it was the peak time of their humiliation under their western prelates,⁴⁶ the Romo-Syrians immediately

locked and open the eyes closed by Mar Alaxios Metropolitan." (Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, Pp 373 -5)

⁴³ Paramakkel Thomman Kathanar observes about this as "You wrote against the matter of Mar Thoma [absorbing him into Roman Catholic Church] not because of your zeal to the Church or not because of the interest to say only truth. But if Mar Thoma joins with the holy [Roman Catholic] church, you afraid that there is no further way for you to stay in Malankara and you are not interested in releasing the people of Malankara from [your] slavery." (Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, P 334)

⁴⁴ For more details, see the title 'Validity of Consecration' in this chapter.

⁴⁵ According to Ferroli, "There is a letter dated May 7th 1787 from the Vicar Apostolic of Varapoly to Propaganda where it is stated that Mar Dionysius was willing to submit to Rome, on condition that he was recognised as Metropolitan of all the Syrian Christians of Malabar, both his own and all those in communion with Rome. Further, his submission could be postponed, but the appointment of his nephew as his successor had to be made sure" (Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 154). According to Mar Selinaus, in a meeting of all *Pallikkar* on *Thulam 7*, AD 1796, Mar Dionysius I demanded that the *Yogam* must give an assurance in writing that he or, upon his death his nephew, should be accepted as the metropolitan of all Nazranis if he should accept Roman Catholic faith. (Mar Selinaus, *Keralathile Satya Veda Charithram, Op. Cit.*, P 248) Paulinus, as the delegate of Papal enquiry to the unification of Mar Dionysius I, visited him at Niranam on December 22, AD 1785 reported that "I tried him in a long discourse. I found him shrewd enough, talking grandly of his house and dignity, putting by the matter of his conversion for some other occasion, and striving that his nephew may succeed him. I knew the beast by his horns and having left it, hastened on my journey" (Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 118). While considering the fact that Mar Thoma VII was consecrated only in AD 1796 (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 98), it is clear that Mar Dionysius I was insisting on retaining the hereditary succession of Pakalomattom from the beginning.

⁴⁶ *Varthamanappusthakam*, a travelogue of Kariyatti Malpan and Parammekkal Thomman Kathanar to Portugal and Rome in connection with the unification of the Nazranis, gives a detailed picture of the humiliation of Romo-Syrians under the European bishops and missionaries. It was both mental and physical along with the discrediting of the *Jathy* pride of the Nazranis.

responded. They sent a delegation to Portugal and to Rome⁴⁷ since they were aware that the European missionaries would not permit any move like that.

It is very clear that their interest was not the adoption of Mar Dionysius I to the Roman Catholic Church but to get a bishop in their *Jathy* since they dropped the aim of the delegation after Joseph Kariyatti, one of the delegates, offered the post of Archbishop of Kodungallor.⁴⁸ But the sudden demise of his at Goa turned their plans and they were forced to satisfy with the Governorship of Parammekkal Thomman Kathanar.⁴⁹ This tragic event and its reaction of the Romo-Syrians led them to a critical situation that they were refused to ordain by their European bishops.⁵⁰ In such a situation, they restored the attempts to absorb Mar Dionysius I to Roman Catholic Church to overcome their dilemma. The newly accrued wealth and power of one of their members, Thachil Mathu Tharakan, became a great support to them.⁵¹ The European hierarchs of Romo-Syrians were adamant that Mar Dionysius I would not be permitted to govern.⁵²

⁴⁷ According to *Niranam Grandhavarī*, Kariyattil Malpan and others met Mar Dionysius I at Niranam on Chingam 30, 953 ME, and collected a letter to the Rome. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarī*, *Op. Cit.*, P 93) Ittoop argue that they misled Mar Dionysius I by stating that they may meet the Patriarch of Antioch on their return journey and collected a letter from him to the Patriarch. (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 134-5) The authenticity of Ferroli's statement is doubtful about the letter of Mar Dionysius I to Pope Pius VI carried by Kariyatti Malpan in which Mar Dionysius I doubted about the validity of his consecration, (Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 152-3) since his enthronement was took place in AD 1770. Perhaps the observation of Leslie Brown as "Mar Dionysius had a clear objective. He wished to re-unite all the Christians of St. Thomas and he was determined to be their Metropolitan. The first step seemed to be submission to the Pope, because without recognition from Rome it was certain the Romo-Syrians would never come under his jurisdiction"(Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 122) may be true

⁴⁸ Even though the delegates mentioning about their attempts to absorb Mar Dionysius I to the Roman Catholic Church after the consecration of Kariyatti, it was just as a salvation work of "Fallen souls of Mar Dionysius and other Schismatics." The *Angamaly Padiyola* of the Romo-Syrians organized by Parammekkal Thomman Kathanar on February 1, AD 1787 after the demise of Bishop Kariyatti was elected him as their bishop without considering Mar Dionysius as a choice. (Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, Pp 378 -81)

⁴⁹ Some Roman Catholic historians accused that Parammekkal Thomman Kathanar made a secret deal with the Archbishop of Goa under *Padrado* of Portugal to expel the Carmelites who are under the sacred congregation of Propaganda Fide from Kerala to obtain his governorship. (Mar Selinaus, *Keralathile Satya Veda Charithram*, *Op. Cit.*, P 240) Perhaps the *Angamaly Padiyola* of February 1, AD 1787 not considered Mar Dionysius I as the bishop of Romo-Syrians due to this deal. But the Roman Catholic authorities decide neither to consecrate Thomman Kathanar nor to give any Chaldean bishop to Nazranis. *Mar Thoma Nazranikalude Sathya Visvasam* stated that "However, the authorities at Rome did not listen to the request for a Chaldean Bishop and in a letter dated 6th October 1790, Cardinal Antonelli [Prefect of Propaganda, Rome] informs Bishop Louis [of Verapoly] that he obtained an assurance from the Court of Lisbon that Thomas Parammekkal would not be consecrated as bishop" (quoted by Ookken, C. C. Lonappen, *Thachil Mathu Tharakan*, Irinjalkkuda, 1966, P 84)

⁵⁰ Ookken, *Thachil Mathu Tharakan*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 9-10,94-6

⁵¹ For the details of Thachil Mathu Tharakan's role in this affair see (a) Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarī*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 96-109 (b) Ookken, *Thachil Mathu Tharakan*, *Op. Cit.*, (c) Bernard, *Marthoma Christanikal*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 640-701 (d) Sivasankaran Nair, K., *Marthanda Varma Muthel Munro Vare*, Kottayam, D. C. Books, 1996, Pp 110-20

⁵² After Kariyatti Malpan met Mar Dionysius I at Niranam, bishop De Sales of Varappuzha insisted that "He [Mar Dionysius I] will not be permitted to govern Malankara. If Mar Thoma Metran wishes to become obedient to Rome, I will try to get some other office except that of bishop. If he insists to remain as a bishop, I will arrange to send him to Europe." (Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 59) In a negotiation on *Vrischkam* 20, 972 ME at Alappuzha, "Friar and Tharakan arrived and said ...No change in

Mar Dionysius I, who in turn, realized the lack of sincerity of the Roman Catholic Church⁵³ as well as of Romo-Syrians,⁵⁴ withdrew from all unification attempts. He always raised objections to such attempts.⁵⁵ Even in these circumstances, the Romo-Syrians succeeded in capturing Mar Dionysius I under brutal persecution. But it was short-lived since Thachil Mathu Tharakan lost his political power⁵⁶ and Mar Dionysius I escaped from the Roman-Catholic fold.⁵⁷ This attempt closed the chapter of unification of Nazranis permanently. The evaluation of the failure of the unification attempts led to the following conclusions

1. The European missionaries and the Roman Catholic authorities wished to keep Nazranis under their colonial administrative structure even after the loss of political power in India.
2. The religious consciousness overrides the *Jathy* feeling. Otherwise the Romo-Syrians would have declared independence and joined Mar Dionysius I after the great humiliations and the tragic death of bishop Kariyatti.

Division

The process of the division of jointly owned churches⁵⁸ begins in the first half of the eighteenth century itself. The Dutch played a prominent role in such

what said earlier. Then the friar said that there is no way to attain peace until [Mar Dionysius I] agreed to relive from administration for three years after take the oath of obedience to Rome. "(Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 101)

⁵³ Regarding the issue of Mar Dionysius " Propaganda formally discussed his case on 22 July 1774 and sent to the Vicar apostolic at Varappoli instructions empowering him to offer to Mar Dionysius the temporal, but not the spiritual, superintendence of his subjects and to succour his poverty by an annual allowance of a hundred rupees or more"(Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 122)

⁵⁴ Considering the detailed account of the unification attempts from AD 1778 to AD 1799, it is very clear that whenever the Romo-Syrians had a faint hope of receiving a bishop of their own, they dropped the unification attempts under Mar Dionysius I like when Kariyatti Malpan was consecrated as the bishop of Kodungallor. According to Fr. Bernard, Kariyatti Malpan went to Rome for eliminating the objections of European missionaries in accepting Mar Dionysius I to the Roman Catholic faith. But after the consecration of Kariyatti as bishop, his companion Parammekkal Thomman Kathanar wrote in the tune that the consecration of Kariyatti was one of the aims of their travel. (Bernard, *Marthoma Christanikal*, Op. Cit., Pp 644-5, 658-9) After the death of Kariyatti, the Romo-Syrians decided to consecrate Thomman Kathanar as a bishop (Ookken, *Thachil Mathu Tharakan*, Op. Cit., Pp 91-3) *Niranam Grandhavari* accusing that the Romo-Syrians decided to get Thomman Kathanar consecrated as a bishop through Mar Dionysius I since their attempts were failed to get it through Rome. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 94)

⁵⁵ If he went for unification with the Roman Catholic Church just to 'save his soul,' there was no need for the negotiations of about twenty years. Also, he could avoid the rigorous persecution and confiscation in the hands of Thachil Mathu Tharakan. He can simply enter into the Roman Catholic fold. Instead, he always raised objections like the presence of Mar Ivanios Yoohanon, consent of *Malankara Pally Yogam* etc., to avoid a surrender (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., Pp 97, 99, 211)

⁵⁶ For the details of the persecution see (a) Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., Pp 101 -7 (b) Sivasankaran Nair, *Marthanda Varma...*, Op. Cit., Pp 110-20

⁵⁷ Immediately on Tharakan's fall, Mar Dionysius I escaped from Alappuzha and did the reparation for his short attachment to Roman Catholic Church. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 107) According to Mar Selinaus, the reparation did by Mar Dionysius I at Chengannur was a penalty imposed by the Church over him (Mar Selinaus, *Koralethilo Satya Veda Chanthram*, Op. Cit, P 251)

⁵⁸ Eighteen churches were in joint ownership (Velu Pillai, *State Manuel Vol. I ...Op. Cit.*, P 717)

acts.⁵⁹ The Angamaly and Akapparambu churches, once under the administration of single *Yogam*, was divided as two in AD 1760.⁶⁰ However, the divisions were not found during the unification attempts of Mar Dionysius I were proceeding.

After the unification attempts failed, the partition process re-started. Since most of such churches were in the north,⁶¹ the problems of division were mainly stayed in Kochi and northern Travancore. The domination of religion over *Jathy* made it clear that there should be no unification. Hence, both the factions tried to get the total control over the church and expel the other. In such cases, the civil administration entered and settled the dispute by the division.⁶² In several cases, people themselves made the division. By the mid nineteenth century, all churches were divided. This cut the last string, which attached both the factions together at least in some pockets.

The Saint Thomas Consciousness

The Mar Thoma Bishops

The eighteenth century documents do not show much about the *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*.⁶³ Even though that phrase is not found as it is, there existed this consciousness. The best example for that is the title 'Mar Thoma' of the Pakalomattom bishops. It is a mistaken notion that this title emerged because Archdeacon Thomas was elevated first to the post of the bishop. According to the East Syrian tradition, a new name will be given while consecrating someone as a bishop.⁶⁴ It indicates that the baptismal name of Archdeacon Thomas need not be the reason for his titular name Mar Thoma. His successors until the Ninth used the same title. At least three of them had a different name of their own. However, they all used the title Mar Thoma.⁶⁵ While consecrating his successor, Mar Dionysius I, who sacrificed his title Mar Thoma VI for compromise, gives the title to his successor Mar Thoma VII.⁶⁶ This should

⁵⁹ Probably the first among them were Malayattoor and Karingachira, according to the Dutch records, in AD 1733 (Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 208) The Romo- Syrians were expelled from Kandanadu around AD 1748 (Perumthottam, *Period of decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 196 -8)

⁶⁰ Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam*. *Op. Cit.*, P 371

⁶¹ Only Kottayam Valiya Pally, Chenganassery and Alappuzha in the south had both the factions (Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...* *Op. Cit.*, P 143)

⁶² The best example is the division of Aarthattu church by Sakthan Thampuran of Kochi. (Kunjathu, *Aarthattu Pally...* *Op. Cit.*, Pp 56 -61)

⁶³ The Nazrani way of life is generally described in the eighteenth century as *Edathele Maryada*.

⁶⁴ The present bishop of the Church of the East India, Mar Aprem, was formally Fr. George Mookan.

⁶⁵ Mar Thoma VI was Joseph (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, Pp 55- 6), Mar Thoma VII was Mathen and Mar Thoma IX was Ipe (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 97 - 9, 121)

⁶⁶ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 98-9

be taken as a deliberate act to express his disagreement to the new title, Mar Dionysius. In other words, it shows the affection of Nazranis to the name Mar Thoma.

The eighteenth century Nazranis considers the patronage of Saint Thomas with great esteem. The settlement of long-term disputes between the West Syrian prelates and Mar Thoma VI after the enthronement of the latter in AD 1770 was recorded as "the disharmony was over by the grace of the Lord and by the blessings of Saint Thomas, the apostle."⁶⁷ Susan Bayly evaluates the relation between the Nazranis and Saint Thomas as "Thus St. Thomas has played a complex role in the Syrians' religious culture." He is the group's special guardian and patron, and so provides a focus for their identity as an elite and distinctive population within the wider society of the Malabar Coast. But while the cult helped to delineate this shared identity and has distinguished the Syrians from lower-ranking Malayali caste groups and communities,⁶⁸ however, this Saint Thomas identity was challenged during the eighteenth century.

The West Syrian bishops in India and Patriarch of Antioch himself show great intolerance to the title Mar Thoma in the eighteenth century. They not only asked the Mar Thoma bishops to be re-consecrated by them, but to change their title from Mar Thoma also. In his letter dated *Chingam* 19, 1056 ME, Mar Ignatius Geevarghese Patriarch of Antioch asked Mar Thoma V to do so. He wrote back "We send you a letter. If you say that we called you Dionysius, you should not think that I confirmed you except on the agreement that you should receive imposition of hands from the Bavas I sent on you."⁶⁹ The *Staticon* given to Mar Thoma VI during his enthronement as Metropolitan by the West Syrian bishops on 19 *Mithunam* 2081 Greek era⁷⁰ states the name as "Joseph, of the other name of Mar Thoma was, by the hands of us...Consecrated by the Holy Ghost as the Metropolitan of our Jacobite Syrians residing in the country of Malayalam...This is our brother, Mar Dionysius Metropolitan."⁷¹ The change of title was not only made to subject Mar Thoma Metrants to the supremacy of Antioch, but to eradicate the symbol of the 'way of Thomas' presented in the title *Mar Thoma*.

⁶⁷ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 91

⁶⁸ Bayly, *Saints...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 280

⁶⁹ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, P 54

⁷⁰ According to *Niranam Grandhavari*, this date was 29 *Mithunam*, AD 1770 that is 945 ME (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 91)

⁷¹ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, Pp 55-6

The Throne of Saint Thomas

The post-Pakalomattom primates of the Nazranis give a clear evidence for the titular nature of the phrase Mar Thoma. None of the successors of Pakalomattom lineage after its collapse used the title Mar Thoma. They used the 'Throne of Saint Thomas' instead. Mar Philaxinos, Metropolitan of Thozhiyoor, who became interim Malankara Metropolitan after the demise of Mar Dionysius II, used the following title in the *Staticon* given to Mar Dionysius III on *Vrishikom* 2, AD 1817. "Mar Philaxinos Metropolitan, having the name of Geevarghese, of the Throne of Malankara and whole India, which is the throne of Apostle Thomas"⁷²It is clear from another bull of Mar Philaxinos dated *Dhanu* 9, 991 ME⁷³ to Chengannor church that the throne of Saint Thomas was the title of the Malankara Metropolitan. In that bull, he used his title just as "Mar Philaxinos Metropolitan of Tholyur Edavagay."⁷⁴ At that time he was not appointed as the interim Malankara Metropolitan. The use of the 'Throne of Saint Thomas' was not an exceptional act of Mar Philaxinos. Mar Dionysius IV, used the same title in the *Staticon* given by him to Mar Coorilos of Thozhiyoor on fifteenth *Meenom* 1005 ME⁷⁵ as "Dionysius Metropolitan who is Philipose by divine grace, the father of the Jacobite Syrian Christian Community and the tender of Christ's lambs and she-goats that live in Malayalam, the extremity of India, the throne of the holy and fortunate apostle Mar Thoma writeth that I, Dionysius Metropolitan who is weak."⁷⁶

Again, Mar Mathews Athanasios has his title as "In the Holy name of Him the self-created, and he Unbeginning and the Endless and the Almighty and who is full of Essence: Mathews Mar Athanasios Metropolitan of the Throne of Malankara and whole of the Hindu [land], being the throne of Apostle Thomas,"⁷⁷ in the *Staticon* given by him on forth *Mithunam*, AD 1868. It all indicates that Pakalomattom bishops of Nazranis had used the title Mar Thoma with clear consciousness that it is a symbol of *Marthoamyude Maargam*. They consider the title 'Mar Thoma' as the clear indication of the apostolic succession of Saint Thomas. During the post-Pakalomattom period, this concept was strengthened

⁷² *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III, Op. Cit., P 259*

⁷³ AD 1815

⁷⁴ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III, Op. Cit., P 271*

⁷⁵ AD 1829

⁷⁶ Oommen, P.A., *Chappattu Mar Dionysius*, Chappadu, Fr. I. David (Pub.) 1956, P x

⁷⁷ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III, Op. Cit., P 63*

and a more clear terminology based on ecclesiology, the throne of Saint Thomas, came into use.

The Nazranis and the Society

Appellations

The Roman Catholic missionary activities forced the Nazranis to found an appellation to distinguish them from the neo converts. This was essential for retaining their *Jathy* dignity⁷⁸ and political affiliation.⁷⁹

The Dutch was aware about the differences among the Christians in Kerala. The Dutch Governor van Rheed, observing in late seventeenth century, says "There are three kinds of Christians found in Mallabaar, namely, The St. Thomas Christians, the indigenous Christians and the Toeppasse Christians."⁸⁰ It becomes necessary for the Dutch to differentiate between them for administrative reasons. Hence, the Dutch Governor Moens classify the Indian Christians as 'Syrian Christians' and 'Latin Christians'.⁸¹ The neo converts are known as the Latin Christians in general whereas the Nazranis as Syrian Christians based on their liturgical tradition and language. K. P. Padmanabha Menon gives the details about the Nazranis after describing the neo converts as follows.

The old Christians were known as St. Thomas Christians and Syrian Christians; St. Thomas Christians, because of the belief that St. Thomas preached the Gospel for the first time in Malabar, and succeeded in establishing Christianity there, and Syrian Christians, because of the observance of the Syrian ritual and language. It is also believed that a colony of Syrians had settled in Malabar in the early years of the Christian era, and that the present Syrian Christians are the descendants of that colony by intermarriage with the native population. These are also locally known as *Nasrani*, because of their original home, or because of their being the first followers of Jesus of Nazareth.⁸²

After the first requirement of both the factions of Nazranis to distinguish themselves from the neo converts was satisfied, the Nazranis further need the

⁷⁸ According to Adriaan Moens "They [Nazranis] do not mix or inter-marry with newly converted Christians of lower castes or classes." (Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 178)

⁷⁹ Adriaan Moens confirms that. "The Company has never had any authority, nor could have, over the St. Thomas' Christians, who were always subjects of the country princes. Not even the Portuguese exercised any Jurisdiction over them...The authority and the protectorate of the Company over the Roman Christians, extend chiefly to those who live on the Cochin shores, the topasses and Iascorins and fishermen who were subject to the Portuguese, and as such taken over by the Dutch Company." (Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 180)

⁸⁰ Quoted by Joseph., *Pracheena...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 70

⁸¹ Abraham, Rev. Dr. C. E., *Sabha Charithra Samgraham*, Thiruvalla, CLS, 1959, P 268

⁸² Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 443 -4

names to distinguish between both the factions. As a divided body, the Nazranis need new terms to express their identity in the eighteenth century. As individuals, they retain the ancient term of *Nazrani* and *Nazrani Mappilai* for expressing their *Jathy* identity. But it was not sufficient to explain their ecclesial identity. The terms 'Saint Thomas Christians' and 'Syrian Christians' were not feasible since both the factions claimed the same. Adriaan Moens classified the Christians in Kerala as follows.

The Christian Malabar is again divided into two sorts, viz., old and new Christians... The old Christians are unanimously supposed to be the survivors of the so-called St. Thomas' Christians who are usually called Syrian Christians here. Here the liturgical language determined the identity... [After the oath of *Coonen Cross*] The consequence was that these Christians became divided among themselves and a good many of them remained faithful to the see of Rome... The remaining or greater part of those Christians adhered faithfully to their bishop Mar Thome.⁸³

During the post *Coonen Cross* division, both the factions get the names as *Puthencoor* and *Pazhayacoor*. The Roman Catholics took this new appellation, *Pazhayacoor* as an acceptance of their right to the succession of the Nazrani tradition. Joseph Perumthottam gives the Roman Catholic interpretation of this terminology as "*Puthenkoottukar* [= the new party or those having a new alliance] as against the *Pazhayakoottukar* [= those who kept up the old alliance.]"⁸⁴ However, the non-Roman Catholic authors did not agree with the Romo-Syrian claims as the rightful successors. Jacob Canter Visscher gives the following explanation for the appellations of Nazranis in the eighteenth century.

The old Christians were called Christians of St. Thomas... We must first notice their different appellations; for they are sometimes called St. Thomas Christians, and sometimes Syrian Christians. The former name is derived without doubt from the Apostle St. Thomas.... These people are also frequently called Syrians because, for several centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese, their Churches have existed under the government of Syrian Bishops who have been sent out up to the present time, and they make use of the Syriac version of the Bible. Among these St. Thomas Christians may be distinguished, on the one hand, those who have remained constant to their first faith, and on the other hand the Apostates, not few in number, who have embraced the doctrines of Rome. The Papists call the first class schismatic, and place them in the same category with the Christians of the Greek Church; but we might with much more

⁸³ Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 171, 176

⁸⁴ Perumthottam, *Period of Decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 45

justice apply that term to the second class, who have abandoned the faith of their fathers.⁸⁵

Rev. Samuel Mateer openly challenged the Roman Catholic claim as the rightful successors through the name *Pazhayacoor*. According to him, "two great bodies that now exist, -the Syrians proper, who retain to a large extent the doctrine and ritual of the ancient church, but to whom the Romish party have succeeded in attaching the title *Puthen Kuttu*, -the new sect; and the Romo-Syrians, who are under the authority of and directly connected with the Church of Rome, governed by the bishop of Verapoly, and who call themselves *Paraya kuttu*, -the old set: After all there is something in a name"⁸⁶

Even though the Dutch and later the British treated the non-Roman Catholic Nazranis as true Syrians,⁸⁷ the terminology, *Puthencoor*, was established during the eighteenth century, as the title of the non-Roman Catholic Nazranis in the official records.⁸⁸ However, the Roman Catholics did not take interest in addressing the former with this appellation. Adriaan Moens comments about Nazranis as "They associate just as little with the Roman Catholics as the Jacobites, and are called schematics by the Romans."⁸⁹ After the Nazranis began their affiliation with the West Syrians in AD 1665, the Roman Catholics propagated the nickname of the West Syrians, Jacobites,⁹⁰ first used by their rebels and later accepted as their official name.⁹¹ The West Syrians used this name frequently in their official documents of the eighteenth century⁹² and the Nazranis too accepted it as the name of their liturgical tradition and eventually of the Church.⁹³ However, it seems that the pro-Pakalomattom faction declined to use this terminology in the early nineteenth century.⁹⁴ But the Nazranis were forced to defend this appellation by giving a historical background by the end of

⁸⁵ Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, Pp 40-1

⁸⁶ Mateer, Rev. Samuel, *The Land of Charity*, London, 1870, (AES reprint 1991), Madras, Asian Education Services, 1991, Pp 240-1

⁸⁷ Col. Munro referring several times as 'true Syrians' (Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, Pp 340-1, 366-9)

⁸⁸ several of the official document of Travancore and the British authorities like the documents of *Vattippanam* addressing Nazranis as the *Puthencoor Syrians* (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 156)

⁸⁹ Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 179

⁹⁰ Tisserant, *Indiayile...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 162-5, Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 107-13

⁹¹ For the history of this name see, *Sabha Vijananakoshem...Op. Cit.*, P 714

⁹² For Example, the *Staticon* given by Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem to Mar Dionysius I on *Mithunam* 19, AD 1770. (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 55-6)

⁹³ In the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809, it is stated as "everything according to the law of the Jacobite Syrians." (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 157)

⁹⁴ The compliant against Ittoop Remban and others by Mar Thoma VIII and others to the British resident was simply addressed as *the Suriyani Pallikkar* [the Syrian churches]. (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 169)

the seventeenth century itself. The first essay of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah in *Niranam Grandhavari* concludes as follows "We are called as Jacobites from the name of Jacob, the Patriarch of the lineages, from the name of Mar Jacob the first Episcopa of Jerusalem and the brother of Jesus Christ, from the name of the great Malpan Mar Jacob of Uraha, and from the name of Mar Jacob Srug, who accompanied Mar Aprem to the council of Niece."⁹⁵ Even if Dr. Buchanan referred to them as the *Hindoo Christians*⁹⁶, the term *Puthencoor* Syrians came in to effect along with the Jacobite Syrians by the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Settlements and Demography

In general, the Nazranis remain in the same territory where they were in the colonial period during the eighteenth century. After the formation of Travancore and after the expulsion of *Zamorin* from the territory of Kochi, the whole Nazrani population was limited to the princely states of Travancore and Kochi.⁹⁷ Internal relocation of Nazranis took place during this period. The Nazranis inhabited the newly developed trade centres like Trichur, Chalakkudy, and Alappuzha etc.⁹⁸ However, new settlements of Nazranis were formed during the late eighteenth century as agrarian communities. Nazranis occupied the virgin soil in the uninhabited parts of Travancore during this period.⁹⁹ The Mysore invasions also relocated the Nazranis of north.

The increase in the population of Nazranis was only by natural reasons and not by conversion.¹⁰⁰ According to Joseph Perumthottam, the number of Nazranis remained almost the same as 30,000 throughout the eighteenth century.¹⁰¹ Adriaan Moens states that they had about 50 churches.¹⁰² It had an average of six hundred people per church. According to Paoli, there were 32 churches and 50,000 Nazranis in the second half of the eighteenth century.¹⁰³ Dr.

⁹⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 150

⁹⁶ Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 107

⁹⁷ By the establishment of Anjoor Church by Mar Coorilos, it may say that the Nazrani settlement was little extended to the territory of the *Zamorin*. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 92) However, this place is in the vicinity of the territory of Kochi.

⁹⁸ These locations were mostly migrated by the Romo-Syrians for unknown reasons. In effect, there were no Nazranis except Romo-Syrians there in the early nineteenth century. Perhaps the Nazranis migrated there was change side for convenience. At least in the case of Alappuzha, there are evidences.

⁹⁹ For more details see the topics 'Military Service', 'Agriculture' and 'Trade and Commerce' in this chapter

¹⁰⁰ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 182

¹⁰¹ Perumthottam, *Period of decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 72

¹⁰² Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 179

¹⁰³ Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...* *Op. Cit.*, Pp 64 -5

Kerr reports that the number of Nazranis, as about 80,000 during his visit in AD 1806.¹⁰⁴ Col. Munro says about 52 churches of Nazranis, but he counts only 10,000 Nazranis, which is definitely under-estimation.¹⁰⁵ The statistics given in connection with the establishment of Puthencavu church states an average of 100 families associated with a church.¹⁰⁶ It leads to a calculation that more than 5,000 families of Nazranis existed. It is found elsewhere that a minimum of 50 families forms a local church.¹⁰⁷ Perhaps Col. Munro was speaking about the number of families in the way the Nazranis count their population for ecclesial purposes even today.

The Social Status

Even after the division, the Nazranis retained their dignity as a *Jathy* in the eighteenth century. In AD 1723, La Croze writes in his *Christianisme Aur Indess* that the Nazranis retains their nobility even above the Nairs and observed untouchability "in order to preserve their nobility."¹⁰⁸ Francis Day observes: "the Syrians were much esteemed; the greater the number of them, a native prince has in his dominions, the more he was feared by his neighbours."¹⁰⁹ In such a society, it was easy for the Nazranis to preserve their rights. An event happened in connection with the Dutch attempts to capture Mar Thoma V is a good example for the Nazrani status in the society around AD 1752.

When it was heard, [that the Dutch soldiers coming to capture Mar Thoma V] *Pallikkara Muthadathu Panicker*¹¹⁰ was invited to the church and was discussed [with him]. [Upon his opinion] They immediately moved to Rakkattu church. On the next day, sent four people and invited *Thechathu Moonnamkoor Kaimal*¹¹¹ to the church. *Moothedathu Panikker* handed over the responsibility to him and left. On the same day, the Dutch came to Pallikkara. Since they found nobody, they looted the church and *Angady* and tried to escape with it. But the local people surrounded the wall and prevented it...[When *Kuriyikkattu Thavazhi Karthavu* demanded a bribe for the safe passage of Mar Thoma V] *Perumittam Deshakkar*¹¹² knew about it, they went there [to *Kuriyikkattu*

¹⁰⁴ Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, Op. Cit., P 124

¹⁰⁵ Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...* Op. Cit, Pp 366-7

¹⁰⁶ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 96

¹⁰⁷ When Trichur *Puthenpetta Angady* and the church were established in 990 ME by order of Sakthan Thampuran of Kochi, there were 52 Nazrani families. (Rappai, N. V., *Paurasthya Suriyani Sabha Part I*, Trichur, Mar Narsai Press, 1982, Pp 66, 77)

¹⁰⁸ Ferrol, *Jesuits...Vol. II*, Op. Cit., P 160

¹⁰⁹ Day, *Land of Perumals*, Op. Cit., P 219

¹¹⁰ A local chieftain

¹¹¹ Another local chieftain of the land around Kothamangalam

¹¹² Perumittam is in between Rakkattu and Kothamangalam

Thavazhi Karthavu] and threatened him that they are dropping the soldiery given to them from there.¹¹³

This passage clarifies that the relation between Nairs and Nazranis was brotherly during the mid eighteenth century. La Croze confirms it as "The Nairs, who are the nobility and warriors of Malabar, respect the Syrian Christians very highly and consider it a great honour to be regarded as their brethren"¹¹⁴ The respect of the local rulers towards their privileges was confirmed by the senior *Kathanar* of Chengannur to Dr. Buchanan on November 10, AD 1806 as "They [the native Princes] indeed recognize our ancient personal privileges, for we rank in general next to the Nairs...The Hindoo Princes never touched our liberty of conscience."¹¹⁵ Adriaan Moens gives the following brief description of the social status of Nazranis towards the end of the eighteenth century.

The houses of these Christians are not mixed up with those of the other Malabaris, but they have separate quarters where they live among themselves. They also seem to be very exact in keeping their family registers. They do not mix or inter-marry with newly converted Christians of lower castes or classes. The majority of them belong to the Nair caste or class of nobles, and for this reason they, like the Nairs, carry a sword in the hand as a token of their dignity.¹¹⁶

It is evident from the report of Moens that the Nazranis took ultimate precautions to retain their nobility like keeping family registers and abstained from inter-marriages. Further, they denounced the conversion of other *Jathys* too.¹¹⁷ According to Susan Bayly, "in this period the Syrians' high status in Hindu society continued to be reflected in their rights of access to Hindu shrines and 'sacred space.' They were still identified as a ritually pure population, and neither their shrines nor their persons were regarded as polluting to caste Hindus."¹¹⁸ To retain this status, the Nazranis observed a strict lifestyle that suit the lifestyle of the *Nampoothiri*-oriented society. They, not only kept away from conversions, but

¹¹³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarī*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 87 –88

¹¹⁴ Ferrolī, *Jesuits...Vol. II*, *Op. Cit.*, P 160

¹¹⁵ Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 117

¹¹⁶ Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 178

¹¹⁷ As the answer to the thirteenth question of the Madras government on *Meenom* 8, 988 ME, Mar Thoma VIII confirms that the conversion to the church from the local folk is too little (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 182) Rare conversions from upper caste Hindus were there as in the case of the *Nampoothiri* seen by Dr. Buchanan at Chengannor. (Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 117)

¹¹⁸ Bayly, *Saints...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 275

observed the practice of untouchability also.¹¹⁹ Western writers like James Forbs says that the Brahmanic lifestyle of the Nazranis was a product of the late eighteenth or the early nineteenth century.¹²⁰ However, considering the pre and post-Portuguese lifestyle of the Nazranis, it is clear that the Brahmanic life style was not a trend of the late eighteenth century, but an on going practice.¹²¹ Perhaps the West Syrian monasticism influenced the priests, most of whom were unmarried, abstained from animal food even during the non-lent period and to live a semi monastic life.

However, the political changes of the eighteenth century along with the ecclesial division affected the social status.¹²² Even though Dr. Kerr confirms in AD 1806 that the Nazranis retained their social dignity during the post-Marthanda Varma Period as "they were respected very highly by Nairs; and the Raja's of Travancore and Kochi admit them to rank next to Nairs."¹²³ The political process made considerable change in their occupational pattern. The formation of Travancore, according to P. Cherian, stripped them from the offices they held with the small principalities. He evaluates the state of Nazranis after the formation of Travancore as "The Syrians felt inclined to withdraw from all share in the public activities of their country in which they had played so distinguished part in former days. It is no wonder that in these circumstances all appointments in the Sirkar service were entirely in the hands of Caste Hindu."¹²⁴

However, the new administration was not alien to Nazranis. They found allies in the new government. According to Moens, Mar Thoma V was able to

¹¹⁹ "A further consequence of acceptance as a caste was that untouchability was observed by Christians as by Hindus... The reason given for Christian observance of untouchability is thus pure expediency, so that the caste people would trade with and give or rent land to the Christians. Other evidence suggests that the attitude was more fundamental. Christians thought that the value of a fast was lost if they happened to touch an outcaste. Respectable landowners used to change their clothes and bathe in a special shed on returning from the fields, where they had inevitably had contact with outcaste labour, before entering the house." (Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, Pp 173-4)

¹²⁰ "Many of the St. Thome Christians now preserve the manners and mode of life of the Brahmins as to cleanliness, and abstaining from animal food. Francis Buchanan also found signs of a shift to vegetarianism and a 'clean' Brahmanical lifestyle among the Syrians of Cochin, particularly among the Katanars, who appeared to be leading this move to 'Brahmanise' the groups customs." (Quoted by Bayly, *Saints...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 284)

¹²¹ Based on ethnographers, Susan Bayly suggests that "These accounts link the Syrians with the upper Nayar groups, and yet they also describe periods of death, birth and menstrual pollution among the Syrians, which are closer to Nambutiri customs than those of the Nayars." (Bayly, *Saints...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 284)

¹²² For more details, see the topic 'Political Condition' in this chapter

¹²³ Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 148

¹²⁴ Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, P 63

cultivate a relation with the Travancore administration.¹²⁵ According to *Niranam Grandhavari*, the Nazranis, especially influential merchants, had developed relations with several high dignitaries in the Travancore administration.¹²⁶ Even after the persecution of Thachil Mathu Tharakan and some Travancore officials as his associates, Mar Dionysius and his close allies, who personally suffered by the persecution, were honoured with gifts by the same king who patronized the Mathu Tharakan regime.¹²⁷

Dress and Appearance

In the dress, the Nazranis keep their Indian identity in the eighteenth century.¹²⁸ Jacob Canter Visscher states "they resemble the other inhabitants of Malabar in custom, but wear more clothing. A veil or cloth is often worn over the forehead, wound round the hair."¹²⁹ Yet, their dress had its own distinction from the other native people.¹³⁰ In his *Voyage to the East Indies*, Bartolomeo gives full description of the dress of Nazranis as follows:

The people have the upper part of their bodies quite naked; but bind round their loins a piece of white linen, which is called *Bastra* [Vastra]. As long as this cloth is new, it is named *Cadi* [Koti]. If it has interwoven in it red stripes, it is called *Somin*: [Soman], *Zomen* and *Pudava* [Putava]. If such stripes are painted on this linen, it is called *Tuvadon* or *Toven*. If it consists of yellow or red silk, it is named *Pattu Pudava* [Pattu Putava]. *Citta* or *Pencuppayam* [Penkuppayam] is the name of a jacket lying close to the body, worn by Malabar female Christians when they appear in public.¹³¹ It reaches no lower than the girdle to which the *Pudava* is fastened, and which they wear as well as the men. On the head, they have no ornament whatever, but turn up their hair smooth behind, and fasten it in a roll on the crown.¹³²

¹²⁵ "After the death the last king of Travancore, which happened in the year 1758, after having secured by means of presents the support of the principal favourite of the new king, and of other Rajadores." (Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, Op. Cit., 177)

¹²⁶ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., Pp 86, 94 – 5, 99, 101, 103, 108. Even Thachil Mathu Tharakan, a Romo- Syrian, procures the control of Travancore administration for a while.

¹²⁷ "When said good by on twentieth [Mithunam, 975 ME] a *Neettu* for Rupees 5,130 according to their valuation against the properties confiscated, was given. As in the previous time, a ring and a gold lined walking stick was also gifted [to Mar Dionysius I]. Ittiyavirah and Kochuvarkey were gifted with *Veerarungala*, *Pichathy* and *Narayam* and *Neettu* for Remban [Philipose] that permitting him to use *Dolly*." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 108)

¹²⁸ The Neo converts by the Portuguese missionaries and later by the Carmelites accepted certain elements from the western clothing at least during the ceremonial occasions. For more details see Ayyar, *Anthropology...* Op. Cit., Pp 252-78)

¹²⁹ Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II*, Op. Cit., P 41

¹³⁰ Ferrolli also gives a detailed description (Ferrolli, *Jesuits...Vol. II*, Op. Cit., P 159)

¹³¹ Covering the upper half of the body was regarded as a privilege permitted only to certain castes that are not even included the Nairs. Nazranis were among the privileged ones. Rev. Samuel Mateer describing the Nazrani women as "the women wore neat white jackets, with long tight sleeves, some handsomely embroidered, and the ordinary cotton cloth worn round the waist by all classes of the Hindu women. A light muslin cloth is thrown over the head as a veil, and falls gracefully down the back." (Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, Op. Cit., P246)

¹³² Quoted by Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II*, Op. Cit., P 480

The West Syrians tried to alter the Nazrani appearance in to their style. They tried to remove the *Kudummi* not only of priests but of laymen also.¹³³ But such attempts made as a part of absorbing the Nazranis into their culture had little effect. In general, the western influence has not made the Nazranis to change their dress and appearance.

Language

Like all other communities of Kerala, the Nazranis also used Malayalam in its contemporary form as their language of daily life.¹³⁴ However, indications are there that Tamil was also used for their written communications.¹³⁵ In written language, the Nazranis had very high fluency.¹³⁶ Several Nazranis contributed to the Malayalam literature then.¹³⁷ Syriac was remaining as the liturgical language even in the eighteenth century.¹³⁸ The study of Syriac was essential to be enrolled in priestly orders.¹³⁹ The British, who wished to modify the Nazranis in the western way, too acknowledged the inseparable influence of Syriac language among Nazranis. While describing the establishment of the Seminary, Col. Munro wrote in AD 1816 as follows.

The principal object of the establishment of a College in Travancore was to instruct the Kattanars and officiating priests among the Syrians in a competent knowledge of the Syriac language in which they are at present too generally deficient. The ministers of the Syrians, in order to inculcate with effect the motives of religion, ought evidently to understand its principles and believe its truths. For these purposes a knowledge of the Syriac language is more necessary to them than a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek to our clergymen...with

¹³³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 86

¹³⁴ Jacob Canter Visscher states that they speak only Malayalam. (Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 43)

¹³⁵ A primary study about the Karthikapally church documents indicates that some of the inter-church correspondences like *Deshakuri* were in Tamil. While describing the Bible translation, *Niranam Grandhavari* states that there were Nazranis who know Tamil (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 114)

¹³⁶ The best example of the mastery of the Nazranis over Malayalam prose is *Niranam Grandhavari* itself. Its language is the best example of the Malayalam prose used by Nazranis without western influence. To evaluate the language of Nazranis, compare between the following contemporary works. (1) Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.* (2) Nampoothiri, *Vellayude Charithram, Op. Cit.*, and (3) Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.* The first is pure Nazrani, the second is non-Nazrani and the last is Nazrani but heavily influenced by the West.

¹³⁷ For the Nazrani contributions to the Malayalam language during this period see Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 199-202 and Thomas, *Malayala Sahithyavum ...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 139-75

¹³⁸ Adriaan Moens reported that "[they] make use of the Syrian [= Syriac] language and rites in their churches" (Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 179)

¹³⁹ On his visit to Chengannor on November 10, AD 1806, Kathanar Zacharias informed Dr. Buchanan that "the language that is most in use among the people is the Malayalim, (or Malabar) the vernacular language of the country. The Syriac is now only the learned language, and the language of the Church; but we generally expound the Scriptures to the people in the vernacular tongue." (Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 118)

the study of the Syriac language would, of course, be combined that of the scriptures and other religious books written in that.¹⁴⁰

But from the early eighteenth century, a shift from East Syriac to West Syriac was observed among Nazranis. The correspondence of Mar Thoma IV with Carlos Schaaf begins in East Syrian but in the mid course, it was shifted into West Syrian script due to the incapability of the latter in East Syriac. Based on the detailed study of Van Der Ploeg,¹⁴¹ the following points may bring up regarding the nature and process of this change.

1. The Nazranis were separated from the East Syrian heartland for a very long time, hence, their proficiency in that language was deteriorating in the early eighteenth century.
2. Their whole affiliation, both officially and in reality was only with the West Syrians, who propagated only that dialect and the books in that scripts.
3. By the end of the eighteenth century, the whole system was converted into West Syriac language.
4. The East Syriac Script was remaining in use even for writing the West Syriac.¹⁴²
5. Even after the full domination of the West Syriac, the pronunciations of popularly used word remain in their East Syriac form.¹⁴³
6. The use of *Karsuni* (Malayalam written in Syriac characters) was widespread during the eighteenth century.¹⁴⁴

Education

According to Leslie Brown, the Nazranis retained their pre-colonial education system in literature and martial arts. Hindus and Nazranis choose the teachers without discrimination from both the *Jathys* subject to the availability.¹⁴⁵ According to him, the education begins by "the teacher took the child's forefinger

¹⁴⁰ Cherian, *Malabar Syrians... Op. Cit.*, P 341

¹⁴¹ For more details see Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 1-41

¹⁴² Even in the early twentieth century, Nazranis used the East Syriac script to write West Syrian text. A lot of priests did not know the West Syriac script even in the late nineteenth century.

¹⁴³ It is still exist in the same form. For details see: Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 30

¹⁴⁴ Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 274 -5)

¹⁴⁵ Susan Bayly confirms this as "Hindu panikkar took Christian youths as their pupils, and there were also many Syrian panikkar lineages...a family of Christian panikkar who created their own networks of both Hindu and Christian trainee disciples." (Bayly, *Saints...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 250)

and traced with it in the rice the words *Hari Sri Ganapate Nama*¹⁴⁶...The teacher was, of course, given a present before he left. From this time he was considered to be in a special relation to the child and had to come to bless him on special occasions such as marriage¹⁴⁷...Boys also learned the use of weapons from eight years of age and the teacher or *panikkar* was held in great honour."¹⁴⁸ As in the pre-colonial period, the education system of Nazranis was directly linked with the military service. When Marthanda Varma created a Travancore army with European training, this *Kalari* system was integrated in-to a chain of institutions where the European military and artillery techniques were taught. This system collapsed by the disintegration of the military of Travancore and Kochi after the Velu Thampi revolution.¹⁴⁹ This indeed affected the Nazrani education system adversely. The British kept a view that the Nazranis were generally illiterate during the eighteenth century.¹⁵⁰ The collapse of *Kalari* system, occupational change along with its economic consequences and the dislocation of Nazrani population of the late eighteenth century were the reasons for the reduced level of the education of the Nazranis. Even at this stage, it is doubtful whether the Nazranis were more illiterate than their upper caste Hindu neighbours.

By the establishment of the Seminary, Col. Munro envisaged the development of an educational network that supports the British Empire beyond the education of Nazrani priests.¹⁵¹ His intentions of the Seminary as the centre of an education system are clear from his letter to the Madras Corresponding committee in AD 1816.

In the meantime, the College proceeds under the present superintendence of the new Bishop, Joseph; and it is my intention to adopt the best measures in my power for placing it in a state of efficiency, and combining its operations with a system of parish schools among the Syrians, which already exists in a certain degree and is susceptible of much improvement...The plan of the College was also intended to comprehend a system of instruction in Malayalam to priests and the laity, and of translating the scriptures

¹⁴⁶ "The ceremony known as *Ariyiliruthu*, or writing with the finger the first letters of the alphabet in rice, is performed when the children first go to school." (Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 157)

¹⁴⁷ "Next morning, after receiving the blessing of the *Asan* or teacher (often a Brahmin), the parties go to church [for marriage]." (Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 158)

¹⁴⁸ Brown, *The Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, Pp 186-7

¹⁴⁹ Bayly, *Saints...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 273-4,281-2

¹⁵⁰ "Educationally also the *Puthenoor Syrians* were in a low condition. Illiteracy was the rule." (Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, P 68)

¹⁵¹ For more details, see the title 'The Political Condition' in this chapter.

and the religious books into that language for general circulation and use.¹⁵²

This letter itself confirms that Col. Munro's attempts to introduce parish schools had begun by then. Rev. Joseph Fenn later confirmed it in AD 1818 that it was much popularised by then.¹⁵³ This leads the Nazranis to a new era of learning that is free from military or occupational bondage.

Art and Architecture

The influence of the art and architecture introduced by the Portuguese existed among Nazranis even during the eighteenth century. But, except the introduction of certain household utilities that was applicable for the whole Kerala,¹⁵⁴ these introductions were limited to the church and its interior alone.¹⁵⁵ Several of the European introductions still exist with Nazranis.

The change in the concept of sacredness initiated by the Roman Catholics during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the key factor behind the acceptance of their art and architecture. Naturally, further change in the concept of sacredness was affected by the art and architecture also. However, the Nazranis of the eighteenth century accepted the European art and architecture introduced by the Roman Catholics. But this acceptance was neither total nor a mere copy. Several of them were modified to suit the West Syrian theology.

The typical example that shows this adaptation process is the decorative woodwork covering the eastern wall of the sanctuary named *Rathol*, popularly known as *Erathazhu*. The original Iberian model is divided into rectangular spaces in between ornamental wood panels. Each of the space carries the sculptures of saints or of Christ.¹⁵⁶ This was introduced in the Kerala churches during the Portuguese period and remained in the Nazrani churches even after the *Coonen-Cross oath*.¹⁵⁷ After the zealous work of Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast and other West Syrian bishops, the sculptures were replaced by paintings that were allowed by the West Syrian theology.¹⁵⁸ In later constructions, perhaps due

¹⁵² Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit*, P 341

¹⁵³ Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit*, P 68

¹⁵⁴ For the household articles introduced by the Portuguese see: Joseph, *Parakeeya Padangal...*, *Op. Cit*, Pp 406-51

¹⁵⁵ For the changes imposed by the Roman Catholics over the Nazrani Church art and architecture see the title 'Art and Architecture' in chapter V.

¹⁵⁶ Such beautiful structures are found at Goa and in several Roman Catholic churches in Kerala even today.

¹⁵⁷ There is no new *Erathazhu* known as built after the mid-eighteenth century.

¹⁵⁸ Dr. Kerr's report gives some light into this adaptation process. "In some of their churches, divine service is performed in the Syrian and Latin ritual, alternately, by the priests of the Christians of St. Thomas, who have

to the lack of funds or craftsmanship, the *Rathol* were designed in the lime plaster of the eastern wall itself without any woodwork.¹⁵⁹ It is also found in several churches that the *Rathol* gives way to similarly designed painted panels on the Eastern wall.¹⁶⁰ Perhaps the churches returned to the Nazrani hands retained its additions of the Roman Catholic period which found fit for their present religious affiliation.¹⁶¹ Some others like the pulpit were removed from the churches since they had no role in the West Syrian liturgy. Some other Portuguese introductions like the windows were never executed.¹⁶²

The process of modification was gradual in order to match the introduction of West Syrian liturgy.¹⁶³ Several West Syrian prelates contributed to this process.¹⁶⁴ It may be possible that some of the changes were made as a compromise with the West Syrians.¹⁶⁵ By the end of the eighteenth century, the Nazrani churches derived a standard pattern in their structure that was with no change from the colonial period in its peripheral view.¹⁶⁶ The general overview of Nazrani churches of the early nineteenth century, available from Dr. Buchanan and Rev. Samuel Mateer who give the appearance of a Nazrani church in the early nineteenth century that was assimilated by the Syriac theology, Western additions and local craftsmanship.¹⁶⁷

adhered to their ancient rites, and those who have been united to the Church of Rome. When the latter have celebrated mass, they carry away the images from the Church, before the others enter." (Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 148)

¹⁵⁹ The Churches like Aartat carries the inferior replicas of *Rathol* in lime. Whereas the churches like Mulamthuruthy, Piravam, Kottayam Valiyapally etc. have beautiful *Rathols* in wood imbedded with paintings.

¹⁶⁰ The churches like Kottayam Cheriapally and Thiruvalla Paliyakkra have no *Rathol*. But the Eastern walls were painted with attractive pictures. For more details see: Sasibhushen, M. G., *Keralathile Chuvor Chitrangal*, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala Bhasha Institute, 1994, Pp 101 -5

¹⁶¹ Ferroli gives the following description about the Nazrani churches. "These churches were ugly buildings with no pretensions to architecture. The roofs were usually flat and the facades whitewashed. The chancel was higher than the nave, from which it is separated by a curtain during the Canon of the Mass. There are two rooms right and left of the chancel. Now there are three altars in the churches; formerly there used to be only one. Priests and men of influence used to be buried in the nave of the church. Unmarried priests sometimes live in a gallery at the west end of the church...Western influences have introduced images and statues, which were never found before in the Syrian churches." (Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 156)

¹⁶² Zacharia, *Udayamperor...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 223. For example, The Karthikappally Church has no windows even today. At Kottayam Cheriapally, the windows were cut only in the twentieth century.

¹⁶³ For more details see the title 'The Introduction of West Syrian Liturgy' in this chapter

¹⁶⁴ According to Paulinus, Mar Ivanios the iconoclast forcefully removed the sculptures of Mulamthuruthy, Piravam and Moozhikkulam churches (Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 118-9)

¹⁶⁵ Andrian Moens reports "The Jacobites honour the saints just as the Greek Church does, but not so the Nestorians, who reject idol-worship and only allow cross in their churches. In the churches of the Jacobites besides a cross one see images painted on paper or engraved on metal plates."

(Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 178)

¹⁶⁶ Both Nazrani and the Romo-Syrian churches had no difference in its peripheral view till the early twentieth century. Whereas it was totally different from the Latin Catholic churches of the same period.

¹⁶⁷ According to Dr. Buchanan "The form of the oldest buildings is not unlike that of some of the old Parish Churches in England; the style of building in both being of Saracenic origin. They have sloping roofs, pointed arched windows and buttresses supporting the walls. The beams of the roof being exposed to view are ornamented; and the ceiling of the choir and altar is circular and fretted. In the Cathedral Churches, the

Calendars and Almanacs

As in the past, Nazranis were using Malayalam era for all their temporalities and daily life during the eighteenth century. However, Christian era was also included to indicate the year along with Malayalam era, month and date.¹⁶⁸ Kollam era alone was sufficient to express the time-consciousness of Nazranis as any other contemporary Malayalee. There was no need for Christian era to interact with their newly found allies, the West Syrians, since the latter were using the Greek era with Syriac month and date.¹⁶⁹ Under this situation, the use of Christian era in the eighteenth century was more an expression of the Christian consciousness, which was a creation of the Portuguese period, than the time consciousness.

When it came to the ecclesial affairs, they were forced to deal with more than one era at a time. The Christian year was accepted along with Kollam era by then. The West Syrians reintroduced the Syriac calendar, which was used during the pre-colonial period for ecclesial affairs. Even though this did not affect their daily life, it was necessary to follow that for the liturgical cycle.

There are several examples for the complex nature of the use of different eras together. In his letter to the Patriarch of Antioch of AD 1720, Mar Thoma IV used Christian era, Syriac month and date.¹⁷⁰ One colophon of the prayer book copied by deacon Abraham of Mulamthuruthy in AD 1731 merely has the year in Christian era, where as another one in the same book states "in the year of the

shrines of the deceased bishops are placed on each side of the altar. Most of the Churches are built of a reddish stone squared and polished at the quarry; and are of durable construction, The bells of the churches are cast in the foundries of the country; some of them are of large dimensions, and have inscriptions in Syriac and Malay-alim." (Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, Op. Cit., Pp 113 -4) According to Rev. Mateer "The Syrian churches are solid, ancient-looking structures long and narrow, with gable ends surmounted by the cross... The high walls are often supported by plain, sloping buttresses; the windows are small and few, and the roofs tiled. One peculiarity is that the external roof of the chancel is higher than the nave, instead of being lower, as with us. The inner ceiling of the chancel, however, is decidedly lower. Porch, pillars, pilasters and other architectural ornaments in brick and plaster, adorn the fronts. Attached to or surrounding the central edifice are open sheds, cookhouses, and other buildings for the accommodation of the people on festive occasions, or sometimes a small chapel consecrated as a place of burial... The dark, ill-lighted interior is in general far from cleanly in appearance... At the Western end a wooden gallery, or loft contains a few simple articles of furniture for the accommodation of the bishop on his visit to the church, and is also used as a storeroom. The church bell hangs inside to do honour to the host. Crosses or crucifixes, and sometimes curious paintings of their patron St. George, adorn the walls and chancel. In every church three altars of stone or wood are found, one in the centre of the chancel and the others on either side." (Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, Op. Cit., Pp 241-2)

¹⁶⁸ Most of the entries of *Niranam Grandhavari* showing this style. Christian era is found omitted in some places. However, Kollam era is always there. This style of writing is *Missihakalm 1686 chenna Kollam 861-mandu Medamasam moonninu* [on *Medom* 3 of 861ME that is AD 1686]. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., Pp 82 -127)

¹⁶⁹ Both East and West Syrians were using the year of Alexander and Syriac months. All the Syriac documents of the eighteenth century with West Syrian origin or author are found in this manner.

¹⁷⁰ Assamanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis ...*, Vol. III-2, Op. Cit, Pp 444-6

nativity of our Lord 1734, 2045 year of Greeks, in the month of *Hzirar*.¹⁷¹ Here the attempt is made to familiarize the Syriac style to the more familiar Christian era. Eventually the year of Greeks went omitted and the Kollam era took its place in the eighteenth century.

The West Syrian prelates dated their documents mostly with their usual Syriac style, that of Greek era and Syriac months even if they wrote it in India.¹⁷² Perhaps the Nazrani usage may influence them to use Christian era in some documents.¹⁷³ But if the foreigners are not involved, the date remained purely in Kollam era.¹⁷⁴

During the transition of the liturgical tradition, the Nazranis faced the problem by the difference in the date of certain feasts in different traditions. In such cases, it is found that the Nazranis were compromising by adopting the new or old or both. The traces of such a compromise is found in the Piravam almanac.¹⁷⁵ This almanac is mostly West Syrian. But the feast of the veneration of the holy cross is marked as *Kanni* 13 and 14. The feast of saint George is also marked on two days as *Medom* 23 and 24. By this dual dating, it was able to satisfy the supporters of the East Syrian tradition while implementing the West Syrian one. The same pattern is observed in the almanac on the southern wall of the Kandanad church in Ernakulam district, Kerala, probably of the same period¹⁷⁶.

The most detailed church almanac of this period is one that is written in the southern wall of Chathanoor church in Kollam district, Kerala. The colophon of this beautifully calligraphed almanac in fifty-four columns states its date as *Meenom* 15, 972 ME.¹⁷⁷ This almanac is generally in West Syrian tradition. Probably brought in by Mar Ivanios Yoohanon.¹⁷⁸ Still the following entries, which

¹⁷¹ Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, Op. Cit., Pp 154 –5

¹⁷² For example, see the *Staticon* given to Mar Dionysius I in AD 1770. (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 55-6)

¹⁷³ The agreement made by Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah in AD 1754 carries the Christian era and date in Kollam era. (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, Pp 258-9)

¹⁷⁴ The *Kaycheetu* given by Porkattukulangarai Kurieasu Mathunni Tharakan to Mar Thoma V in AD 1766 has the date only in Kollam era. (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, P 259)

¹⁷⁵ There is an almanac written on the southern wall of the Piravam church in Ernakulam district, Kerala. Even though there was no date mentioned, it appears as of the second half of the eighteenth century.

¹⁷⁶ Placid, *Nammude Reethu*, Op. Cit., Pp 261 – 4

¹⁷⁷ On October 22, 1994, the present author along with Mr. Verghis John Thottappuzha copied the Chathanoor almanac fully for the first time.

¹⁷⁸ There were several local traditions in West Syrian rite. Even though the basic structure remaining the same, there are some changes in the feasts of saints. The West Syrian bishops came to India were practicing different traditions within the West Syrian rite and hence their almanacs were also slightly different. The founder vicar of the Chathanoor church was a student of Mar Ivanios Yoohanon.

are not according to the West Syrian tradition, are found in the Chathanoor almanac.

1. Feast of all saints and feast of all departed on *Vrischikam* 1 and 2 respectively. This is according to the Roman Catholic tradition
2. Feast of Veneration of holy cross on *Kanni* 13. This is according to the East Syrian tradition. However, *Kanni* 14 according to the West Syrian tradition also marked in the same column.
3. Feast of Saint George on *Medom* 24. This is according to the East Syrian tradition. However, *Medom* 23 according to the West Syrian tradition is also marked in the same column.
4. *Dhanu* 18 is stated as the feast of the bleeding cross of Mylapore and *Dhanu* 21 is as the feast of the burial of Saint Thomas. This is according to the local tradition.

Considering the date of establishment of Chathanoor church, it is clear that this almanac was written immediately after the establishment.¹⁷⁹ It indicates that the pure West Syrian tradition was intended to follow with least filtrations. This almanac shows the final stage of the process of the implementation of the West Syrian rite. It carries the minimum elements of other traditions but is very detailed in its West Syrian nature. It also gives the directions to follow the West Syrian tradition in the case of the feasts with the varying dates. Even though all the feasts are not obligatory except those marked as *Maranaya*,¹⁸⁰ a blind copying of a West Syrian original has taken place in the case of Chathanoor almanac¹⁸¹. The almanac written as poem in *Niranam Grandhavari*¹⁸² is almost similar to this and probably with the same origin.

The general nature of these almanacs is its negligence on other traditions except the West Syrian. All of the above mentioned were meant to introduce the West Syrian liturgical year without any modifications. They blackened all the other traditions including the feast of Mar Saboor and Mar Afroth, the most venerated saints of Nazranis. Perhaps the very few exceptions found in these almanacs from other traditions were included because of their popularity.

¹⁷⁹ Chathanoor church was established in last decade of the eighteenth century

¹⁸⁰ West Syrian feasts are classified in different grades. Those marked as *Maranaya* are the most important among them and obligatory to all. However, differences found in the number and feasts classified as *Maranaya*.

¹⁸¹ The presence of the feasts of several saints in this calendar who are unknown to Nazranis indicates this.

¹⁸² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 189 -92

The analysis of the process of the date change of the feast of the veneration of holy cross and the feast of Saint George in these almanacs show a clear pattern of the replacing of East Syrian tradition by West Syrian. The Almanac of 1734 stated them as *Kanni 13* and *Medom 24* respectively. This is pure East Syrian. At Piravam, Kandanad and Chathanoor they were added the corresponding West Syrian dates of 23 and 14 with equal importance. By early nineteenth century, the East Syrian dates vanished and only 14 and 23 remains.

These Almanacs also show the emergence of the new form of date known as *Suriyanikkanakku*. In this, they incorporated Malayalam (*Kollam*) and/or Christian era, Malayalam month and date according to Julian calendar.¹⁸³ This new style enables them to express the time consciousness in their own local usage without interrupting the importance of the date according to the West Syrian ecclesial calendar.¹⁸⁴ The use of *Suriyanikkanakku* was strictly limited to the ecclesial purpose.¹⁸⁵

Women's Share

The general rejection of the Synod of Udayamperor in AD 1653 was a good excuse for refusing the women's share prescribed by it. A lot of the Nazranis used this excuse to follow the old practice, which allowed the brothers or their sons to possess the belongings of the sonless deceased even if he had daughters. However, by the eighteenth century, daughters do inherit in the absence of sons. A bull to Puthencavu church by Mar Thoma Episcopa¹⁸⁶ clarifies the official stand of the Nazranis in the early nineteenth century on this issue.

In some families in the south, it is the practice that the sons of brothers are inheriting the properties of those who have no sons. Such a practice is generally resulting in the loss of money. According to the custom of our community, the offspring, irrespective of male or female, has the right to inherit the property and to do the last rights and post-burial rituals.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ For more details see Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 274-5 and Thottappuzha, Verghis John, *Krithabdathinoramugham* (Art.), Manorama Year Book (Malayalam) 2000, Kottayam, 2000, Malayala Manorama Co. Ltd., Pp 18-22

¹⁸⁴ Several dates in *Niranam Grandhavari* are in *Suriyanikkanakku*. For more details see Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 275 -80

¹⁸⁵ This style was in use till AD 1953

¹⁸⁶ There is no date in the bull. However, it was originated after the demise of Mar Dionysius I in AD 1808 and before the consecration of Mar Dionysius II in AD 1815. The name *Mar Thoma Metran* indicates so. An earlier date is not possible since the Puthencavu church was found in AD 1795 only.

¹⁸⁷ Original bull is on palm leave, partly damaged, is preserved in Kaniyanthra family, at Mepral, Thiruvalla. (Alexander, *Kaniyanthra ...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 127 -8)

There was much confusion in this regard, during the early nineteenth century. In the quarrel between Mar Thoma VIII and Ittoop Remban, the bishops' party accused their opponents as the advocates of the pre-Udayamperor practice denying women's share. In their compliant to the British resident of Travancore in AD 1811/12, the Bishops' party laid down their opinion about this issue as follows.

When the *Yogam* met at Puthiacavu by order, Ittoop Remban and about five *Mappilais* insisted to the bishop to issue a bull permitting the sons of the brothers to inherit if the deceased have only daughters. Ittoop Remban and his party were remaining as differed on this issue since the bishop did not obey it. The bishop did not issue such a bull because it is against the laws in the book and the custom of our community.¹⁸⁸

Though there were such dissidents like Ittoop Remban and few others,¹⁸⁹ the general consciousness was favouring the law enforced by the Synod of Udayamperor that allows the daughters to inherit. In the settlement deed of such a dispute on *Chingam* 24, 972 ME, the *Yogam* of Kalloorkkadu Angady, with the consent of some other *Yogams*, decreed in favour of the right of the daughter to inherit.¹⁹⁰ In the above mentioned Bull of Mar Thoma and in the complaint, it is said that the right of the daughters to inherit is as *Parusha Mariyada* that means "according to the custom of the community." The *Parusha Mariyada* of the pre-colonial period was the denial of such right. Hence, it may be concluded that the laws insisted by the Portuguese in this regard became the *Parusha Mariyada* of the eighteenth century.

Political Condition

Political Status of the Nazranis

Colonel Munro explains the state of Nazranis in the eighteenth century as follows:

On their separation from the Roman Church, they were exposed to powerful enemies and various dangers. The Romanists regarding their succession as an act both of apostasy and rebellion, persecuted them with unrelenting animosity; the princes or the country seeing their defenceless state considered them as fit subjects for plunder and insult...and the Dutch, formerly in possession of Cochin, whose

¹⁸⁸ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 170

¹⁸⁹ In Kunnamkulam, the native of Ittoop Remban, this practice was existed even in the early twentieth century

¹⁹⁰ Alexander, *Kanianthra ...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 128 - 9

policy was marked with perfidy and meanness, abandoned them to their fate. They were exposed to still greater calamities in the conquest of their country by the Raja of Travancore. The blighting influence of that despotic and merciless government was felt by them in the most aggravated degree and they were reduced to the lowest state of poverty and depression.¹⁹¹

It seems as the general attitude of the British towards Nazranis since a letter of Benjamin Bailey, Joseph Fenn and Henry Baker of March 13, AD 1822 echoed in the same tune as "the majority of these are poor, and support themselves by daily labour; others employ themselves in merchandise and agriculture. Though many among them are most highly respectable, especially those of the class termed *Tarragan*, yet there are none who can justly be styled men of property: there are very few, indeed, among them possessed a property to the amount of 5,000 Rupees."¹⁹² Nagam Ayya states that the Nazranis had no opening in the Travancore government service till the period of Col. Munro. They had to pay a tax for celebrating feasts at churches and they were forced to do certain jobs in the Hindu temples¹⁹³ Paret did not treat this statement as the general state of the Nazranis. According to him, forced jobs were the obligation of certain Nazranis who received some sort of remuneration to do so.¹⁹⁴ Velu Pillai is totally disagreeing with Col. Munro in his statement and he comments that "If Munro did write the letter...it was only to enlist the sympathy of the Christian powers and to draw out the best philanthropy of the West. There is, however, solid ground to warrant the conclusion that Munro had proselytising spirit more than the missionaries themselves."¹⁹⁵ The general attitude of the British regarding the state of Nazranis was as a decayed community. Dr. Buchanan narrates his conversation with the senior priest of Mavalikkara on the November 10, AD 1806.

"I perceived the symptoms of poverty and political depression. In the Churches, and in the people, there was the air of fallen greatness...there were two causes of their present decay. "About 300 years ago, an enemy came from the West, compelled us to seek the protection of the native princes. And the native Princes have kept us in a state of depression ever since. They indeed recognize our ancient personal privileges, for we rank in general next to the *Nairs*, the nobility of the country; but they have encroached by degrees on

¹⁹¹ Velu Pillai, *State Manuel Vol. I ... Op. Cit.*, P 726

¹⁹² Quoted by Cherian, *Malabar Syrians ... Op. Cit.*, P 380

¹⁹³ Nagam Ayya, *State Manuel Vol. II ... Op. Cit.*, Pp 463,472 -3

¹⁹⁴ Paret, Z. M., *Nazranikal ... Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, Pp 234 -5

¹⁹⁵ Velu Pillai, *State Manuel Vol. I ... Op. Cit.*, P 727

our property... The glory of our Church has passed away; but we hope your nation will revive it again...The Hindoo Princes never touched our liberty of conscience. We were formerly on a footing with them in political power; and they respect our religion."¹⁹⁶

This narration expresses the British view of the Nazranis as well as the Nazrani view of their own state. It is clear that the post-Coonen Cross division and the quarrels within reduced the Nazrani power of collective bargaining for their privileges and hence, the civil authorities suppressed them. However, in the level of political suppression, there is difference in opinion. Velu Pillai is strongly arguing that there was no political suppression of Nazranis. He wrote:

This is [Munro's letter mentioned above] high-flown language. It is a camouflage and not a record of actualities; for, all authorities are agreed in giving credit to the Government of Travancore for its tolerant policy inaugurated before the establishment of British supremacy in India and pursued without intermission ever since. Earlier than Munro, Bartholomew and Canter Visscher expressed their appreciation of that benevolent policy.¹⁹⁷

Puthazhathu Rama Menon states with evidences that the policy of Sakthen Thampuran, popularly accused as persecuted Christians, was in favour of the Nazranis, but against the neo converts since the latter were disobeying the civil law and nothing religious in it.¹⁹⁸ In a way, Mar Thoma VIII favours these arguments in the answer of the eleventh question of the Madras Government on *Medom* 20, AD 1813 as "the Siker servants do oppress the Syrians. There is not much obstruction in the case of religious matters."¹⁹⁹ Considering the general nature of anarchy of Travancore administration in the late eighteenth century,²⁰⁰ there is no wonder in such suppression of minor officials towards Nazranis. P. Cherian points out that the Nazranis were the easy prey for the bureaucratic corruption due to the reasons mentioned below.

The expansion of Travancore under Marthanda Varma Maha Rajah gave an additional impetus to this decline. The political influence of the Christian community rested entirely upon the privileges and immunities, which they enjoyed under the Perumals and under the petty chiefs who came into power upon the dissolution of the Empire of the Perumals. From being a compact body, forming either

¹⁹⁶ Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 117

¹⁹⁷ Velu Pillai, *State Manuel Vol. I ... Op. Cit.*, P 727

¹⁹⁸ Puthazhathu, *Sakthen Thampuran*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 281 -306

¹⁹⁹ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 181, Translation from *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, P 160

²⁰⁰ For the details of the anarchy in the Travancore till the time of Col. Munro, see the articles of Ulloor S. Paramaswara Aiyar and of I. Mathew in *Kerala Society Papers...*, *Op. Cit. Vol. II*, Pp 41-70, 123-33

separate principalities of themselves, or aristocracies, considerable as to numbers and influence among the petty states through which they were distributed, they now formed but a small integral part of a large community in which their consequence was left to depend solely on the reputation which their former influence had created.²⁰¹

Even if the British descriptions are exaggerations, the eighteenth century documents confirm the insecurity of Nazranis caused by the divisions, not only with the Romo-Syrians but the quarrels within also. Even after the expulsion of the Portuguese, the Roman Catholics were able to influence some local kings especially the King of Kochi. This resulted in the dependency of Nazranis to the Dutch East India Company. T. I. Poonen extracted several examples from the Dutch records exhibiting the pathetic state of Nazranis that led to their dependency to the Dutch.²⁰²

In the beginning, it seems that Mar Thoma IV was buying protection against the sale of pepper.²⁰³ Later, the negative attitude of the Dutch, who are Protestants, against Roman Catholics paved a favourable attitude of them towards the Nazranis.²⁰⁴ Perhaps the leniencies of the Roman Catholic hierarchs towards their political enemy in Europe, the Portuguese, also provide a positive factor in the Dutch attitude towards Nazranis. According to the Dutch records, they believed that the West Syrian teachers "would prove a good obstruction to the Roman Catholics."²⁰⁵ Nazranis were always thankful to the Dutch who expelled the Portuguese from Kochi. Adriaan Moens proudly claims the Dutch role in the survival of Nazranis.

Moreover, we have, after the conquest of Cochin, not only favoured the revolt of the Eastern Christians against the usurpation of Rome, but also assisted them in getting out new Bishops from Syria, who formerly could not come without endangering their lives, by placing at their disposal the ships of the Company.²⁰⁶

The Dutch always tried to keep peace among Nazranis in their internal conflicts. They had a remote dream of converting the latter into the Protestant

²⁰¹ Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...* Op. Cit., P 62

²⁰² Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, Op. Cit., Pp 208-11

²⁰³ "This was to his great satisfaction accorded and they promised to sell pepper to the Company at a reasonable price." (Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, Op. Cit., P 208)

²⁰⁴ A letter from Holland in AD 1738-41 to the Dutch authorities in India expressing the dissatisfaction in the success of the Roman Catholic missionaries confirms this. (Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, Op. Cit., P 211) For the Roman Catholic view of the Dutch ecclesial policy see: Perumthottam, *Period of decline...*, Op. Cit., Pp 193-5

²⁰⁵ Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, Op. Cit., P 213

²⁰⁶ Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, Op. Cit., P 180

faith. Jacob Canter Visscher, the Dutch chaplain of Kochi, had given a detailed plan. According to him, by such a conversion "the Company's interests might really be furthered by the course suggested; seeing that these people, besides being numerous, are generally speaking of a martial turn, not to mention that the principal pepper merchants who supply the Company, are to be found among them."²⁰⁷ The description of Canter Visscher not only exposed the religious interests of the Dutch towards Nazranis but also the political and commercial interests that justifies the offer of pepper by Mar Thoma IV against protection. Adriaan Moens openly admitted the Dutch attempts to convert the Nazranis into Protestantism.

The administrators of this coast and the preachers of the reformed community have not only kept up a correspondence with the St. Thomas' Christians about maintaining, and advised them to maintain steadfastly, the rights of the Eastern Church against the Bishops of the Roman Catholics, but have also displayed much zeal in attempting to unite them with the Protestant Church.²⁰⁸

Even though the Dutch favoured the Nazranis, they were not so pleased with the Mar Thoma Metrans since the latter resisted any kind of reforms in the existing practice known as *Edathile Maryada* that the Dutch thought as a mixture of Roman and heathen practices.²⁰⁹ In turn, they favoured the West Syrian bishops who seemed to them as more fit to prevent the Roman Catholic Church.²¹⁰ At one instance, they threatened Mar Thoma V to deport him to Battavia.²¹¹ However, the political influence of the Dutch over the Nazranis was limited or according to Moens, effectively nil.²¹²

The official Dutch statement confirms that the Nazranis were under the civil authority of the kings and the chieftains of Kerala who were in plenty prior to the establishment of Travancore in the second half of the eighteenth century. The loss of the power for the collective bargaining forced Nazranis to buy protection

²⁰⁷ Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 43

²⁰⁸ Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 180

²⁰⁹ The statement of Moens, accusing Mar Thoma V for the violation of the treaty initiated by the Dutch and the king of Travancore in AD 1753, express this view (Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 177)

²¹⁰ The comparison made by Jacob Canter Visscher between Mar Thoma IV and Mar Gabriel . (Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 42) and by Adriaan Moens between Mar Dionysius I and Mar Ivanios Yoohanon clearly show the Dutch mentality (Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 178)

²¹¹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 88 -9 However, "Thereupon the Commander was going to have him brought to Cochin by force, but he came to hear of it, and fled inland, and they could not lay hands on him." (Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 177)

²¹² Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 181

from the feudal chiefs. A typical example recorded in *Niranam Grandhavari* in connection with the escapade of Mar Thoma V from the Dutch deportation in AD 1751 shows how the Kerala chieftains squeezed money from Nazranis.

When the *Metran* [Mar Thoma V] staying at Rakkattu church, [he] was afraid while hearing that the people [the soldiers of the Dutch to capture him] were coming. When [Mar Thoma V] sent people and inform *Kuriykkayttu Thavazhi Karthavu*²¹³ about his voyage to Kothamangalam, he said that you must pay an amount to me like you paid to *Kunnathu Moonnam Koor*. Otherwise, *Metran* should not enter into my land. If anybody comes by *Pallquin* or by boat, he should be gun fired.²¹⁴

The internal conflicts as well as the quarrel with the Romo-Syrians provided an opportunity to the local chieftains and kings to collect money not only as bribe, but also as several new taxes and fines.²¹⁵ Perhaps those were the instances reported by Nagam Aiyya as taxes on feasts. In this context, the establishment of Travancore was helpful to Nazranis. It is reported that Marthanda Varma developed a cordial relation with Nazranis.²¹⁶ It is certain that Mar Thoma V cultivated a very long-standing relation between the kings of Travancore and the Mar Thoma Metrans.²¹⁷ Even during the persecution by Mathu Tharakan and the Travancore officials, Mar Dionysius I never discounted the justice of the King.²¹⁸ The Royal protection extended, even at the cost of *Adiyara*,²¹⁹ safeguarded the office of their bishops from challenges and hence, the influence of numerous political powers in the Church affairs reduced into the Royal houses of Travancore and Kochi.²²⁰

But the formation of Travancore affected Nazranis adversely in another way. They lost, as P. Cherian said, the privileges and influence in the compact bodies. They became an integral part of a vast society. This new Trivandrum based political order with corrupted officials, who are alien to the Nazrani

²¹³ *Kuriykkayttu Thavazhi Karthavu* was the ruler of Kothamangalam

²¹⁴ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 88

²¹⁵ The new tax imposed over Romo-Syrians for the ceremonial procession to receive the bishop due to their internal conflicts is a good example of these (Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam*. *Op. Cit.*, Pp 55, 62-5)

²¹⁶ Brown, *The Indian Christians*... *Op. Cit.*, Pp 120 -1

²¹⁷ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 89

²¹⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 99 -107

²¹⁹ =Fee for the purchase of privileges.

²²⁰ Mar Dionysius I completed the process of *Adiyara* in Travancore within one year of his office and thereafter in Kochi (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 90, 94-5, 115)

community might have disturbed them.²²¹ This suppression need not be religious, but as the part of their general behaviour.²²² However, the establishment of British control over Travancore and their eagerness to take the Nazranis into confidence prevented any scope of religious persecution of Nazranis by the government officials in the early nineteenth century.²²³

The involvement of British in local administration was more than that of the Portuguese and the Dutch.²²⁴ After the British conquest of Kochi, Col. Maculay was appointed as the first British resident of Travancore and Kochi. His relation with the Nazranis was very warm.²²⁵ *Niranam Grandhavarī* describes the meeting between Mar Dionysius I and Col. Maculay on *Makaram* 30, 981 ME as follows:

He was invited on *Makaram* 25 to meet Maculay at Kochi. [Mar Dionysius I] reached Kochi on thirtieth... While he visited Maculay at Ponjikkara, [Maculay] said that you may please leave now, I am your servant and I will come where you stay. [He also] request to send the history in writing. They happily parted the company.²²⁶

The second British resident to Travancore and Kochi, Col. Munro went farther beyond in the level of the relation between the Nazranis and the British than that of Col. Maculay.²²⁷ Munro's intentions on Nazrani cause had several dimensions beyond his zealous Protestant faith.²²⁸ E. M. Philip suggests that the religious motives of Col. Munro were backed by its political intentions.

²²¹ Except a few at Thiruvankodu, no Nazrani was the subject of Marthanda Varma till the establishment of Travancore. (Cherian, *Malabar Syrians... Op. Cit.*, P 62)

²²² For the role of Travancore officials in the persecution of Mar Dionysius I initiated by a Romo-Syrian see Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarī*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 99-107, and Sivasankaran Nair, *Marthanda Varma...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 116-7

²²³ In a letter dated *Karkkidakaom* 20, 989 ME to Col. Munro requested to Mar Dionysius II that if any government official persecuted the Nazranis, it should be reported to the resident through the bishop. He assured that the arrangements are made to take immediate action. (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 188-9)

²²⁴ "In 1795 Cochin was taken from the Dutch by the English and in 1800 a British Resident was appointed at the courts of Travancore and Cochin. He exercised a much closer control over the affairs of the States than had ever been attempted by Portugal or Holland, and the first two Residents, Maculay and Munro, were virtually rulers of the country. Munro was for a time both Resident and Diwan of Travancore and thus responsible for the whole administration of that State as well as for the oversight of Cochin. The first two Residents were also men of strong Christian and Protestant convictions who, while being just to the Roman Catholics, were anxious to encourage the Jacobites by every means in their power." (Brown, *Indian Christians... Op. Cit.*, P 125)

²²⁵ Cherian, *Malabar Syrians... Op. Cit.*, P 56-7

²²⁶ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarī*, *Op. Cit.*, P 111. Col. Maculay kept his word. He met Mar Dionysius I at Kandanadu on *Mithunam* 14, 981 ME. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarī*, *Op. Cit.*, P 111) He visited Mar Dionysius again on *Vrischikam* 30, 982 ME along with Dr. Buchanan at Kandanadu. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarī*, *Op. Cit.*, P 112)

²²⁷ "There is no wonder that Col. Maculay was a real believer of the Church since he was the son of a Christian priest. But he was not a religious fanatic. If he kept a strong relation with the Christians, it was not because of his religious fanaticism, but due to his urge for establishing the British rule in India." (Sivasankaran Nair, *Marthanda Varma...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 144)

²²⁸ Col. Munro was a deacon in the Church of Scotland (*Kerala Society Papers...*, *Op. Cit.* Vol. II, P 130)

Col. Munro had the noble motive of improving the condition of the Syrian community...the Syrian community is indebted to Col. Munro for much of the material and social freedom they now enjoy...To one who goes farther into the subject, the view is possible that Col. Munro had a political motive also in taking so much interest in the Syrian Church. In one of his reports to his Government, after stating certain proposals for the help to be rendered to the Syrians by the Madras Government, he writes: "The British Government would receive, in their grateful and devoted attachment on every emergency, the reward due to its benevolence and wisdom." In connection with this statement, we have to remember that the attempt made upon the life of Col. Maculay in 1808 and the general insurrection that followed it were fresh in Col. Munro's memory; and probably he was afraid of a repetition of similar acts of disloyalty, whether by the Native States or by their Hindu subjects. Under such circumstances, it is quite natural that he should regard the loyal devotion and attachment of the Syrian community...as essential, in that Dark Age, to the peaceful security of the British power in Travancore and Cochin...In lending a strong helping hand to the Syrians, Col. Munro was actuated by more of philanthropy and sympathy than of political considerations.²²⁹

The letter of Col. Munro of AD 1816 justifies the observations of E. M. Philip. He wrote in that letter that "An efficient and extended system of education, particularly in the English language, will contribute more effectively than any other plan to the early and substantial advancement of the Protestant religion in India...strong arguments may be adduced for the diffusion of the English language, as a means of supporting the British power, as well as of extending the Protestant religion."²³⁰ This statement clearly indicates that Col. Munro envisaged a long-standing political motive while extending helps to Nazranis. Perhaps he thought that an English speaking, loyal, Protestant Christianity would provide a strong base for British political power in India. He also considers the Nazranis as a good foot hold to supply preachers for the propagation of Protestant faith. Dr. Buchanan, whose *Christian researches in Asia* produce great interest about Nazranis among the British²³¹ who have such a vision. In his meeting with Mar Dionysius I at Kandanad on November 24, AD 1806, Dr. Buchanan put forward the following suggestion.²³²

²²⁹ Philip, *Indian Church...*, Op. Cit., Pp 179-80

²³⁰ Quoted by Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...*Op. Cit, P 340

²³¹ Mackenzie, *Christianity in Travancore*, Op. Cit., P 140

²³² According to *Niranam Grandhavari*, Dr. Buchanan met Mar Dionysius I at Kandanadu on *Vrischikam* 11, 982 ME and again on *Vrischikam* 30 along with Col. Maculay. It also stats that Buchanan produced a written agreement regarding the union of the Nazranis and the Church of England which Mar Dionysius I declined diplomatically to sign (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 112)

I observed, that English Clergymen or rather Missionaries ordained by the Church of England, might be permitted hereafter to preach in the numerous Churches of the Syrians in India, and aid them in the promulgation of pure religion, against the preponderating and increasing influence of the Romish Church; and again, That Ordination by the Syrian Bishop might qualify for preaching in the English Churches in India; for we had an immense Empire in Hindostan, but few preachers: and of these few scarcely any could preach in the native languages.²³³

This long-term plan might have led Col. Munro to extend assistance to the establishment of a seminary.

The British Colonialism and the Seminary

It was the decision of the *Malankara Pally Yogam* to have two seminaries.²³⁴ Kayamkulam Philipose Remban and Pulikkootil Ittoop Kathanar initiated this decision. Their intention was the unification of the liturgy of Nazranis as the West Syrian.²³⁵ During the long disputes, Ittoop Remban was in close contact with Col. Munro and shared his idea of the seminary.²³⁶ He presented his already drawn plan for a seminary²³⁷ to Col. Munro and got his assistance.²³⁸ Even though the intentions were different, the seminary was realized and it provided not only education²³⁹ but also a permanent seat for the Church in AD 1815.²⁴⁰ However, the different motives of Ittoop Remban, by then Mar Dionysius II, and of Col. Munro clashed in the beginning itself while Col. Munro tried to lodge an Anglican

²³³ Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 132

²³⁴ For more details see the title 'The *Kandanadu Padiyola*' in this chapter.

²³⁵ For more details, see the title 'Tools of Implementation' in this chapter.

²³⁶ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 187

²³⁷ "He was well versed in the Indian science of architecture, and had prepared a plan and estimate of the building for the proposed institution...At last, the Remban laid his plans before Col. Munro, who heartily welcomed them." (Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 176 -7)

²³⁸ Col. Munro gives the interest arrears of *Vattippanam*, even though it was illegal, to Ittoop Remban for the construction of the seminary. He also made the Rani of Travancore to donate tax-free land, slaves, wood and money for the construction and other properties for the maintenance. (Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 69)

²³⁹ Col. Munro reported in AD 1816 as "In the meantime, the College proceeds under the present superintendence of the new Bishop, Joseph; and it is my intention to adopt the best measures in my power for placing it in a state of efficiency, and combining its operations with a system of parish schools among the Syrians, which already exists in a certain degree and is susceptible of much improvement. The principal object of the establishment of a College in Travancore was to instruct the Kattanars and officiating priests among the Syrians in a competent knowledge of the Syriac language in which they are at present too generally deficient. The ministers of the Syrians, in order to inculcate with effect the motives of religion, ought evidently to understand its principles and believe its truths. For these purposes a knowledge of the Syriac language is more necessary to them than a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek to our clergymen; for the former want the excellent translations and explanations of the sacred books in the popular language of the country which we possess." (Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...* *Op. Cit.*, P 341) By AD 1816, the students at seminary were taught English, Malayalam, Syriac, Sanskrit and Hebrew (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 195)

²⁴⁰ Till then, the seat of the bishop was shifting from church to church.

missionary at the seminary. That was declined by Mar Dionysius II even though he was permitted as a visiting faculty.²⁴¹

The Nazranis and the British Advancements

The Nazranis did not accept the British assistance unconditionally. The following examples prove that the Nazranis were suspicious about the real intention of the British in extending help to them.

1. In his meeting with Dr. Buchanan, Mar Dionysius I states that "I would sacrifice much for such a union, only let me not be called to compromise anything of the dignity and purity of our church."²⁴² This has to consider along with his refusal to sign a contract for union.²⁴³
2. In 981 ME, Mar Thoma VII made a statement that "Due to the treachery and dishonesty of the people, there is only the name Jacobites remaining. But within a short while, they should join the English *Maargam*."²⁴⁴
3. Mar Dionysius II, who really accepted the help of the British, made a statement after his meeting with Col. Munro at the residency at Kollam where Rev. Norton was introduced as the missionary designated to stay at the seminary, which he denied, as follows "I repent having sought the *Sahib's* help in the construction of the Seminary; since the days of Dr. Buchanan, the eyes of Europeans are fixed upon our poor Church as those of a kite upon chickens; God knows the end; as long as I live, I will, under God's guidance guard this poor Church. May God preserve it forever."²⁴⁵

Even though the Nazranis accepted the British protection²⁴⁶ and assistance,²⁴⁷ it was not unconditional or non retrievable.²⁴⁸ They always had the

²⁴¹ Philip, *Indian Church...*, Op. Cit., Pp 180-2

²⁴² Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, Op. Cit., P 132

²⁴³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 112

²⁴⁴ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 119

²⁴⁵ Philip, *Indian Church...*, Op. Cit., P 182. He got this information from the *Edavzhical Chronicle*, written by his grand father, Philipose Kathanar, who was an eyewitness of the said incident.

²⁴⁶ In 1806, Dr. Kerr reported that "The direct protection of the British Government has been already extended to them; but as they do not reside within the British territories, I am doubtful how far it may be of use to them." (Quoted in Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, Op. Cit., P 148) Col. Munro entrusted the missionaries to report all compliments of the Nazranis about oppression directly to him (Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...* Op. Cit, P 86)

²⁴⁷ The Nazranis accepted British offers for Bible translation, priestly and modern education and financial assistance for the Seminary along with the political protection. The Nazranis accepted the jobs offered in the Travancore and Kochi civil and judicial services.

suspicious about the British intentions. However, the British advancement was fruitful in political grounds up to a certain extent. Nazranis were found as shifting their political dependency towards the British from the period of Col. Maculay.²⁴⁹ This was strengthened during the period of Col. Munro up to the extent that the kings and his officials were set aside from the disputes of Nazranis.²⁵⁰ Perhaps sympathy of Col. Munro towards Nazranis and the power vested with him by holding both the offices of resident and Diwan made the Nazranis realize that the British are far better than the Travancore and Kochi administration in their cause. Perhaps the role of Travancore officials in the persecution of Thachil Mathu Tharakan and the ill treatment of Velu Thampi and others later²⁵¹ also led Nazranis to lean over to the British. In that way, the British won where the Portuguese and the Dutch failed, to attain the political dependency of Nazranis.²⁵²

Occupation

Civil Administration

After the restructuring of the Travancore administration, Col. Munro started absorbing Nazranis as judges in to the newly established courts of justice. This was followed in Kochi also.²⁵³ Nazranis were also taken into the revenue service of Travancore.²⁵⁴ These appointments, even though benefited only a few among Nazranis, perhaps uplifted the Nazrani morale and created a desire for the British

²⁴⁸ The *Malankara Pally Yogams* held at Mavalikkara in 1818 and 1836 AD rejected all the British proposals for Church reformation. The Nazranis declined to submit their church accounts to the British for audit in AD 1836. And later they formally cut all the relations with the British missionaries.

²⁴⁹ There is no incident reported in *Niranam Grandhavari* as the Nazranis approaching the kings of Travancore and Kochi for any grievances after Col. Maculay's entry into their history. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 111 -22)

²⁵⁰ In the long disputes between Mar Thoma VIII and the *Rembans*, both the parties are found approaching Col. Munro (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 157-88)

²⁵¹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 101-9

²⁵² Adriaan Moens confirms that neither Dutch nor the Portuguese ever had political control over the Nazranis. (Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 180)

²⁵³ Col. Munro reported in AD 1816 as follows "An establishment consisting of one principal and eight subordinate courts has been founded in Travancore and I have succeeded in procuring the appointment of a Christian Judge to act with each of these tribunals. This arrangement is highly favourable to the protection respectability of the Christians in Travancore: and it is also agreeable to the Brahmins and Nairs who find in the integrity of the Christian Judges a check on the venality and corruption of the other Judges. I have, However, experienced difficulties in procuring respectable and honest men to fill the situation of Christian Judges to the several courts and that office in the principal court is still vacant in consequence of my having been unable to find a person qualified for the execution of its duties... by the credit which the wiser and impartial conduct of the Judge would reflect on the religion that he professed." (Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...* *Op. Cit.*, Pp 340-1)

²⁵⁴ Kuruville, *Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 88, Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 90. It is reported that the Nazrani employees were functioned properly and without making any complaints

model education to become a part of the administration.²⁵⁵ Even though the Nazranis lost their offices in the civil administration during the second half of the eighteenth century, it was restored again in Travancore and Kochi during AD 1815. The address of Rev. Joseph Fenn in the *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Mavalikkara in AD 1818 gives a clear picture of the Nazranis in the civil administration during the second decade of the nineteenth century.

The Governments of Travancore and Cochin have been lately calling on the Christians to fill up several important stations, as Judges, Collectors of the Revenue, etc. It has, therefore, become an imperious duty, on the part of the Christians to obey every such call, by every possible means, to render themselves qualified to discharge the arduous duties required of persons filling those stations; and to conduct themselves, when in the exercise of such employments with ability, uprightness, and activity. Whatever be the duties, which the Government calls on any of its subjects to discharge, Christianity requires that the subjects so called on should cheerfully obey the call.²⁵⁶

Perhaps the observation of Dr. Robin Jeffrey is true that the intake of Nazranis to the government service, increased up to 200, "systematically destroyed the brutality practiced by the Nairs and Brahmins till then."²⁵⁷

Military Service

During the post-Portuguese period, a lot of Nazranis were engaged in the military service of native kings and chieftains.²⁵⁸ Even though the formation of Travancore reduced their role as soldiers, at least some of them were absorbed into the Travancore army.²⁵⁹ They too had a prominent role in either side in the expansion campaign of Marthanda Varma since the newly captured kingdoms were the thick Nazrani settlements.²⁶⁰ Their service became necessary for Travancore during the attacks of Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan.²⁶¹

²⁵⁵ Col. Munro once complained that he was not getting enough educated Nazranis to fill the offices (Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, Pp 340-1)

²⁵⁶ Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, P 87

²⁵⁷ Jeffrey, Dr. Robin, *Nayar Medavithathinte Pathanam*, Kottayam, D. C. Books, 1979, P 31

²⁵⁸ According to La Croze, the Nairs consider Nazranis as their brethren (Ferrol, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 160) According to Francis Day, the strength of a native prince depends on the number of Nazranis in his dominions. (Day, *Land of Perumals, Op. Cit.*, P 219) Adriaan Moens reporting that the majority of them belong to the soldiers and carry a sword in the hand (Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar... Op. Cit.*, 178)

²⁵⁹ According to Susan Bayly "Raja Marthanda Varma of Travancore recruited several thousand Syrians during his conquest in North Travancore. By the middle of the century, his massive European-style army was said to contain at least one corps consisting wholly of St. Thomas Christians." (Bayly, *Saints... Op. Cit.*, Pp 273-4) Sankunny Menon admits that Marthanda Varma had a Christian division in his army (Menon, P. Sankunny, *Thiruvathamcore Charithram*, Trivandrum, Kerala Bhasha Institute, 1988, P 129)

²⁶⁰ According to P Cherian, "But it should be remembered that the vast majority of the Syrian Christians of those days lived either in what was then the Cochin State or in the dominions of the petty sovereigns who fought against Marthanda Varma. The probability is that most of the Syrian Christians with their proverbial

However, the entire Travancore army became a burden after the Mysore wars. Naturally, the role of Nazranis in the Trivandrum-centred, Nair-oriented military structure reached its vanishing point. After the Velu Thampi revolt, The British authorities abolished the entire Travancore military.²⁶² This process during the end of the eighteenth century made a score of the Nazranis unemployed and forced them to look for other means of livelihood. Perhaps this situation made them engaged in agriculture for which they enrolled for *Uzhiyam* and *Viruthy* of temples.²⁶³ By AD 1818, the Nazranis were far away from any sort of military training.²⁶⁴ This indicates that they accepted their fate and went for other occupations.

Agriculture

Even during the time of Portuguese, some churches were being built without any *Angady*.²⁶⁵ This indicates the increasing dependability of Nazranis on agriculture. It is certain that a large number of Nazranis were engaged in cultivation by the end of the eighteenth century.²⁶⁶ There was a great relocation of Nazranis in the late eighteenth century and in the early nineteenth century towards the inland of Kottayam and Pathanamthitta districts, which were predominantly established as agrarian communities.²⁶⁷ Perhaps the political disorder in the northern Travancore and Kochi due to the attacks of Tippu Sultan forced Nazranis to flee since it affected many Nazrani settlements in that area.

loyalty were fighting on the side of their respective chiefs and against the invader." (Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, P32)

²⁶¹ One of Hyder Ali's French mercenary commanders described a typical band of Syrian warriors as "The deputies [of the Syrian Christians] who came to Coimatour were stout men, with a ferocious air and manner. They had the figure of a small cross above their nose punctured in the skin, and a large scar on the right cheek caused by the recoil of their musquets." (Bayly, *Saints...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 273)

²⁶² Menon, *Thiruvathamcore... Op. Cit.*, P 313, Sivasankaran Nair, *Marthanda Varma ...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 191 -2

²⁶³ *Viruthy* was perhaps the easiest way to get land for cultivation then. "During the eighteenth century the Keralan Rajas had introduced a form of land tenure known as *viruticari*. This was a kind of *inam* or rent-free service grant which remunerated Hindu families who had been vested with responsibility for contributing goods and services to the region's temples and Brahman feeding houses." (Bayly, *Saints...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 291) These involvement may described by the British as the forced service of Nazranis for temples

²⁶⁴ In his address to the *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Mavalikkara on December 3, AD 1818, Rev. Joseph Fenn states that "We have been surprised at finding such an absence of all manly exercises among them; and such an ignorance of the use of every weapon" (quoted by Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, P 373)

²⁶⁵ For example, the churches of Manarcadu, Muttuchira etc., never supported by an *Angady* in the vicinity. The Chathanoor church, established in the last decade of the eighteenth century also has no *Angady*.

²⁶⁶ To raise funds for the construction of Puthencavu church, the members of Niranam church donated 2,000 *paras* of rice. For the *Pulakuli* of Mar Dionysius I, the members of Puthencavu church donated 500 *paras* of rice (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 98, 118)

²⁶⁷ Several family histories of the Nazranis share a common factor that their arrival at the present settlement were in the period mentioned above.

The agrarian population raised their status in the Nazrani community during this period.²⁶⁸ The unemployed ex-military men increased the number of farmers within the Nazrani community. They did not seem to prosper, at least in the eyes of the British. In his address to the *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Mavalikkara on December 3, AD 1818, Rev. Joseph Fenn states the British observation about the agrarian Nazranis as follows.

That Syrians, who have a little property to cultivate, uniformly prefer, as labourers, *Chowgans* and *Parriars*. Cultivation among you is also strangely confined to paddy, coconuts, and beetle-nuts, these, with a few yams and a little grain, comprehend almost the whole of your cultivation. How little qualified are you to benefit the country, compared with what would be the case if every useful article was cultivated by you: Pepper, Ginger, Turmeric, the Sugar Cane, all species of dry Grain, Coffee, together with many kinds of trees, would greatly enrich yourselves, and prove very beneficial to your country.²⁶⁹

It is possible, as Rev. Fenn stated, that the Nazranis with little land to cultivate became labourers since their land did not provide a life supporting system. However, the other statement, that the Nazranis abstained from commercial crops, is suspicious since it was their age-old occupation and there was no reason to abandon it. Even though the price offered after the introduction of state monopoly over pepper was low, there were greater chances for smuggling²⁷⁰ and the Nazranis knew this fact from the period of the Portuguese.

Trade and Commerce

Nazranis retained their dominance in trade and commerce during the early eighteenth century. Hence, Mar Thoma IV was able to bargain his protection with the Dutch against the sale of pepper in AD 1704.²⁷¹ Jacob Canter Visscher reports as "the principal pepper merchants, who supply the company, are to be found among them."²⁷² Through out the eighteenth century, the *Angadys* remained as the principal settlements of the Nazranis,²⁷³ it indicates their

²⁶⁸ One of the reason for the establishment of Puthencavu church is " ...beyond this, more than 100 families in the *Angady* and several *Mappilais* are in the *Kudikal*" (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 97)

²⁶⁹ Quoted by Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, Pp 373-4

²⁷⁰ Until Col. Munro increased the price of pepper as Rupees 30 per 500 pound, the state monopoly was gave only Rupees 15 per 500 pound. At the same time, Rs. 150 per 500 lbs. was available at the Eastern coast while it reaches there by smuggling. Due to this price difference, most of the pepper from Travancore went as smuggled till Col. Munro's period. (Sivasankaran Nair, *Marthanda Varma...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 205)

²⁷¹ Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 208-9

²⁷² Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II*, *Op. Cit.*, P 43

²⁷³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 87, 96-7,99,114

dependency on trade and commerce. Even during the end of the eighteenth century, they were found as the masters of commerce.²⁷⁴

The foundation of Travancore affected Nazrani trade in many ways. The abolishment of local power centres disturbed their traditional trading networks. The establishment of state monopoly over commodities like pepper, arecanut, tobacco, salt etc. by Marthanda Varma²⁷⁵ destroyed the traditional marketing system of Nazranis. However, the new system required the service of Nazranis to run it effectively. This in turn cultivated a new breed of merchant lords who in turn maintained close relations with the civil administration.²⁷⁶ Susan Bayly summarizing the role of Nazranis in the commercial activities of post-Marthanda Varma Period.

At the same time, the state trading monopolies depended very largely on the skills of experienced Syrian commercial men. Syrians based in key market towns such as Kanjirappalli, Mavelikkara and Shertallai played a major role in assembling pepper and other forest commodities and moving them through the various stages of the monopoly export system. While many Jacobite Syrians were drawn into the new commercial system...Tachil Matthu Tharakan took control of Travancore's salt and tobacco monopolies during the reign of Raja Marthanda Varma. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Tharakons' web of commercial interests had spread throughout the state and Matthu was recognized as the richest and most powerful man in Travancore.²⁷⁷

Even though the power structure was changed, the Nazranis retained their prosperity under the new Travancore administration. A keen observation on the growth of Parayil Tharakan and Thachil Mathu Tharakan reveals that they had better opportunities under the new regime in trade and commerce.²⁷⁸ Even then, the Nazranis were not found prosperous in trade and commerce during the beginning of the nineteenth century. In AD 1818, Rev. Joseph Fenn identifies

²⁷⁴ Sakthan Thampuran of Kochi invited and provided land for settlement to the Nazranis at several places like Trichur, Trippunithura, Irinjalkkuda, Chalakkudy and Kunnamkulam to establish *Angadys* for the promotion of trade. (Rama Menon, Puthazhathu, *Sakthen Thampuran*, Kozhikkodu, Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Company Ltd. 1989, P 281)

²⁷⁵ Menon, *Thiruvathamcore...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 141

²⁷⁶ *Niranam Grandhvari* mentioned about several Nazranis with the title *Tharakan* who had influence in the top government officials and even in the King. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 88, 89, 92, 94, 103, 107, 119)

²⁷⁷ Bayly, *Saints...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 274

²⁷⁸ *Niranam Grandhvari* describes Mathu Tharakan as follows; "the power and range of wealth of Tharakan is beyond description. Officials staying at his residence to say their grievances. [He has] monopoly all over Malayalam and have maritime trade with foreign countries." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 103)

Nazranis mainly as an agrarian community.²⁷⁹ It indicates that a great occupational change had happened to the Nazranis in the late eighteenth century. Perhaps the following reasons led to such a change.

1. The long wars and its related economic impacts in connection with the formation of Travancore.²⁸⁰
2. The oppression follows the formation of Travancore in the newly captured kingdoms that housed most of the Nazrani *Angadys*.²⁸¹
3. The attack of Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan.²⁸²
4. The war tax imposed in connection with the Mysore invasions.²⁸³
5. Unbearable taxes like *purushantharam* that reduced their wealth in every generation.²⁸⁴
6. The new entries like Tamil Brahmins into the trading activities.²⁸⁵
7. The successive changes in the trading structure disintegrated the Nazrani trade system.²⁸⁶

Rev. G. Curian summarises the decay of the Nazrani trade as follows:

In olden days, there were not much people except the *Nazrani Mappilais* for trade and commerce, like today. So, the kings, chieftains, Brahmins and Nairs invited them to the places where they were none, granted land and houses, and got the trade done by

²⁷⁹ Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, Pp 373-4

²⁸⁰ The long wars of Marthanda Varma for the formation of Travancore with the princely states of Kerala affected Nazranis since most of such princely states had considerable number of Nazranis and their *Angadys*

²⁸¹ P.Cherian admits that even though there is nothing religious in it, there was oppression that usually follows a foreign invasion (Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, P 39)

²⁸² The Mysore attacks directly affected the Nazranis of the north. *Niranam Grandhavari* gives the following information "during this time, on eighteenth *Dhanu*, 965 ME, Tippu Sultan enter *Vettiyakotta* and retreat soon. He entered *Melukotta* on sixth *Medom* and destroyed the fort and fortress. His people spread up to Aluva. The *Illems*, temples, churches and *Angadys* within were burned down and looted...During this war, several were forcefully converted into Islam." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 95)

²⁸³ "Beyond the borrowings from wherever possible, the war taxes like *Nilavari* (tax on paddy field), *Kadamavari* (tax on dry land), *Thalavari* (labour tax) were collected...It was decided as one rupee per one *Para* of land as *Nilavary* and one rupee per head as *Thalavari* for non agrarian people as war tax. Even though the account shows that it was collected Rupees 30,00,000 in this account, the officials may collected much beyond that." (Sivasankaran Nair, *Marthanda Varma...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 97,202) The merchants were also responsible to for providing food and supplies at the war front as demanded by the authority (Alexander, *Kanjanthra ...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 109 –11)

²⁸⁴ Until Col. Munro withdrew it, on every person's death, his successor should have to pay 20% of the wealth as death tax named *purushantharam*. This reduced the capital backup substantially in every generation (Sivasankaran Nair, *Marthanda Varma...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 202)

²⁸⁵ The Trivandrum-centred Travncore itself was a Tamilian concept according to some historians. The conquest of Marthanda Varma was a conquest of Tamilians over Malayalees. (Jeffrey, *Nayar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 28). The establishment of Travancore opens up the market for several ethnic communities that were alien in this territory till then. (Bayly, *Saints...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 273) perhaps the Tamil Brahmins took the maximum benefit in this new field. *Kunjan Nambiar*, the eighteenth century Malayalam humorist, gives the grass-root level trading activities of this new breed of traders in his *Thullal* stories.

²⁸⁶ In the eighteenth century, several changes occurred in the trade network. First, the individual networks in the numerous small kingdoms integrated into newly formed Travancore network. Then the state monopolies were imposed. After the Velu Thampi revolt, the monopolies were partially withdrawn.

them.²⁸⁷ They [Nazranis] were essential to purify by touching while some material that became impure. But now, several people are engaged in trade. So, all oppressions and objections emerged. Furthermore, they were forced to do *Uzhiyam* [forced labour] too. The brutality of authority and officials also increased.²⁸⁸

During the end of the eighteenth century, an occupational shift is found among the merchant-Nazranis as landowners.²⁸⁹ This may indicate that the Nazranis were rapidly withdrawing or were forced to withdraw from the trading activities since trading was not capable to be the life supporting system anymore. Hence, the beginning of the nineteenth century was the period of conversion of Nazranis into an agrarian community from a predominantly trading community.

The Ecclesial Administration

As in the pre-colonial period, the Nazranis had two levels in their administration, of the local parish and of the whole church, in the eighteenth century. The clergy with *Pally Yogam* governed the local churches where as the bishop and the *Malankara Pally Yogam* looked after the general affairs of the Church.²⁹⁰

The Administration of Local Churches

The Portuguese introduction of vicar was continued even in the eighteenth century. The "Vicar and trustees" executed the fourth Palayoor copper plate of 918 ME (AD 1743).²⁹¹ This title existed among the Orthodox Nazranis also.²⁹² The agreement between Mar Thoma V and Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah of AD 1754 confirms that the Mar Thoma Metrans had the right to appoint the vicars.²⁹³ However, it is difficult to establish that those vicars were able to enjoy any power envisaged by the Synod of Udayamperor. They were always obliged to associate with the *Yogam*. However, it is certain that the administration of the local churches was not in a homogenous nature in the eighteenth century. It was in between the extremes of the autocracy provided to the priests by the Synod of

²⁸⁷ A letter from the *Kaikkarens* of Koratty church dated *Medom* 13, 969 ME to the Sakthen Thampuran of Kochi confirms this statement (Puthazhathu, *Sakthen Thampuran, Op. Cit.*, P 281)

²⁸⁸ Curian, *Oru Prakaranam, Op. Cit.*, P 78

²⁸⁹ *Parayi Tharakans* are the best example for the land ownership. Kaniyanthra Naina Chandy Tahrakan (AD 1735-1800) was a merchant and a farmer simultaneously. His son Chandy Kunju Thommy Tharakan (AD 1765-1822) was a farmer only. (Alexander, *Kaniyanthra ... Op. Cit.*, Pp 108 -29)

²⁹⁰ For Details see Chapter IV

²⁹¹ Antony, *Bhasha Padanangal...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 34 -5

²⁹² The *Aarthattu Padiyola* of AD 1806 was signed by Vicar Thekkakara Kuriyathu Kathanar and others (Thomas, M. Kurian, *Aarthattu Padiyola (Art.)*, *Sabha Jyothis Souvenir*, Kottayam, Malankara Sabha Magazine (Pub.), 1991)

²⁹³ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 258 -9

Udayamperor²⁹⁴ and the democracy enjoyed by the pre-colonial Nazranis²⁹⁵ at different degrees. The administrative changes occurred at Kadamattom church described by *Niranam Grandhavari* proves this.

The fourth Mar Thoma Metran brought one from Palamttom family and ordained him as a *Kathanar*. [He] ordered to govern the church by two headmen each among Karakkunnathu Panikker, Karakkunnathu Kurup, Kandamangalathu Panikker and Nayar Panikker of that *Edavaka*. The seventh Mar Thoma Metran brought Thomman Kathanar from Palamattom and appointed him to govern the church. He died in 956 ME. Then onwards all church affairs were administered by the *Yogam*.²⁹⁶

This passage gives three different styles of the administration of local church in the following ways:

1. The vicar along with the lay noblemen from selected families
2. The Vicar alone
3. The Vicar with the *Yogam*

These three stages can be taken as three different styles of the local parish administration of the eighteenth century. However, the Nazranis desired to develop a uniform administrative pattern for the local churches. This led to the tenth decree of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809.

In every church, sixteen respected persons should be selected. A lot should be drawn at the [Church] step to select four among them. Those four should govern the church one by one for one year each in turn. [They should] make the ordinary expenditure, write the accounts and the balance and get the approval for the same from the *Yogam*. [They should] relieve themselves from the trusteeship [at the end of their term] after the approval of the accounts [by the *Yogam*] and after the hand over of balance income [to the *Yogam*]. New trustees should be selected as stated above and [the *Yogam*] should hand over the assets, accounts, properties, boxes, documents etc. These must be kept in a locker that has three keys. One of the priests of the *Edavaka* must be selected as the representative of the bishop and he should be [one of the three] a custodian of this locker. Whenever it is necessary to spend something from this locker, it should be reported to the vicar, bishop and *Yogam* and spend with the consent of the bishop. If any church has not sixteen respected men, lot must be

²⁹⁴ In the first decree of the eighth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version in specific and several other decrees indirectly declaring that the vicars appointed by the bishops had the authority over the local church. (Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 180-1 ff)

²⁹⁵ For more details, see the title 'The *Yogam*' in this chapter.

²⁹⁶ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 125

drawn out of at least four or five. The trustees must write *Kuries*²⁹⁷ only after conferencing with the priests and vicars.²⁹⁸

This canon acknowledged the following.

1. The supremacy of the *Yogam* over the church affairs
2. The equal right (at least as limited to the respected persons) of the members to become the trustees.²⁹⁹
3. The responsibility of the trustees to maintain the accounts and its periodical presenting to the *Yogam*.
4. The presence of the Vicar appointed by the Bishop
5. The presence of a selected priest as one of the trustees
6. The role of the *Yogam*, vicar and the bishop in the utilization of the church assets.
7. The collective responsibility in issuing the authorizations

A close examination of this canon reveals the following.

1. It abolished the automatic succession of the senior priest as the *Mooppan Kathanar* to chair the *Yogam* and admits the right of the bishop to appoint the vicar. This was a result of the influence of the Greco-Roman Christianity on the Nazranis.
2. The expenditure of the church is treated as two categories such as routine and investments. In the case of routine expenses, the trustees had the right to spend according to the custom. But in the case of investment, which requires the deposit in the locker, the consent of the *Yogam*, vicars and the bishop is needed. Even though the self-government of the local churches was acknowledged, this canon is a symbol of the centralization of the local Church affairs to the whole church that is represented by the bishop.
3. The consideration of the vicar as the representative of the bishop was clearly a Greco-Roman influence. The first decree of the eighth session of the Synod of Udayamperor according to the Portuguese version defines the vicar so.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁷ Here the mention is about the *Deshakuri* by which the *Yogam* gives its consent to marriage, ordination and for representing the *Yogam* in the *Malankara Pally Yogam*.

²⁹⁸ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 157

²⁹⁹ The word *Kaisthani* in Malayalam is used in the *Padiyoia* for trustees.

³⁰⁰ Zacharia, *The Acts...Op. Cit.*, Pp 180-1

4. The collective responsibility of the *Yogam*, including the vicars and the priests in issuing the authorizations (*Deshakuri*) is reconfirmed.³⁰¹
5. The selection procedure specified for small churches indicates that the Nazranis desired to abolish the hereditary succession of trustees.

This canon accepts the congregational nature of the local churches of Nazranis by reassuring its right over all the temporalities of the church. However, it admits the Episcopal nature by agreeing the right of the bishop to appoint the vicar and the need of his consent for investments. Even though the *Kandanadu Padiyola* was an acceptance of the West Syrian tradition in general, this canon confirms that it was accepted only with modifications to suit the ancient nature of the Nazrani administration since the Nomo Canon provides all authority over local churches to the bishops and prohibiting the laymen from entering in the administration.³⁰² If the West Syrian law was implemented as it is, there would be no more role for the *Yogam* in the church affairs. It was not acceptable by the Nazranis since even in the eighteenth century, the *Yogam* holds the judicial right also over Nazranis. Towards the close of the eighteenth century, Paulinus gives the following description of the *Yogam* and its punitive power:

All the Malabarians formed a kind of Christian Republic. All their Churches used to join together to defend any community [Church] that was in any way offended. The vicar [pastor] and the elders [muppanmar] judged all cases and compromised all differences...before being absolved, they had to make satisfaction for the theft or scandal or offence or sin committed...then the priests, trustees [Kaikars] and the *Muppanmar* would examine the case.³⁰³

The *Pally Yogam*, not only managed the temporalities of the church, but involved in the selection of the clergy also. Porkattukulangurai Kuriesu Mathunni Tharaken of Adavur was fined on first *Medom* 941 ME for "having his son ordained by foreign *Metrans*, without the consent and sanction of the congregation of Kadampanad and...for refusing to present his son to the

³⁰¹ Even in the twentieth century, the "Vicar, local priests, trustees and the rest of the people of NN church", addressed the *Deshakuri*, both for marriage and ordination. In case of marriage, it is addressed to the "Vicar, local priests, trustees and the rest of the people of NN church." and in case of ordination, it was addressed to the Bishop.

³⁰² The second part of the first chapter of Nomo Canon confirms that the bishops have the authority of all affairs of the Church. The forth part of the first chapter define that every church have a priest of that church as the trustee and he should governed the church according to the order of the bishop. Laymen are prohibited from being the trustees except in the churches without priests or deacon. (Abraham Kathanar, *Hoodaya Canon, Op. Cit., Pp 2,7*)

³⁰³ Thazhath, *Juridical..., Op. Cit., P 185 -6*

Kadampanad congregation at their request.³⁰⁴ Even the ordination to a minor order without the consent of the concerned *Pally Yogam* created violent reaction, which led to the change of side to the Roman Catholic faction.³⁰⁵ Ferroli described the administration of local churches as follows "Four *Kaikkaras* or church wardens are elected by the parishioners. They constitute the priest a kind of administrative and disciplinary body, which used to exercise considerable authority in religious and social matters."³⁰⁶

It seems as the *Yogam* defines a local church since both the factions, the Nazranis and the Romo-Syrians, shared several of them in the eighteenth century and hence, the name alone of the church was not sufficient to represent any faction of Nazranis. Even though both of them used their local church name as their own,³⁰⁷ it was not applicable in cases of dealings between both the factions of the same church.³⁰⁸ However, each *Yogam* of the same church seems as powerful and structured within themselves in such cases.

The Administration of the Malankara Church

The administration of the whole Church that is the Nazrani community had two levels such as the bishop and the *Malankara Pally Yogam*. Throughout the eighteenth century, the *Malankara Pally Yogam* took the decisions regarding theological, administrative and social aspects of the Nazranis. The following few examples give a clear picture of the involvement and authority of the *Malankara Pally Yogam* in the Nazrani life.

1. The Puthiyacavu treaty of AD 1754 between Mar Thoma V and Mafrian Baselius Sakrallah regarding the administration and traditions.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁴ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit., P 259*

³⁰⁵ Perumthottam, *Period of Decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 245 – 6

³⁰⁶ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 155

³⁰⁷ For example, several churches shared by both the factions signed the *Angamaly Padiyola* executed by the Romo-Syrians on February 1, AD 1787 (Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam, Op. Cit.*, P 381). Even though the signatories were simply mentioned as Angamaly, Kandanadu, Kottayam, Kothamangalam etc., the Orthodox Syrians had no participation in the said *Padiyola*.

³⁰⁸ Several partition deeds between the Romo-Syrians and the Orthodox Syrians confirms the identity of each church by its *Yogam*. The partition deed of Aarthattu church was addressed as "The *Kaikkars* of the *Puthenkor* section of Aarthattu Pally *Edavagai*, *Vadakkakkuttu Ipeu*, *Kakkassery Ipeu*...writeth to the *Pallikkar* of *Pazhayakoor* section *Kizhakkauttu Chimmar* etc." (Kunjathu, *Aarthattu Pally...Op. Cit.*, Pp 58 –9) The partition deed of Thrippunithura Nadamel church identified both parties as "Vicar Vilangattil Avira Kathanar, *Kaikkars* Vaippalil Varghese Varky...and all *Yogakkar* of those affiliated to the Nadamal Church of Trippunithura under the command of Prethsas Sntarayya, the Vicar Apostolic of Malankara and Kochi *Edavagais*...and...Vicar Punnachalil Varghese Kathanar, *Kaikkars* Perumpazhai Mathu Paulose...and all *Yogakkar* of those affiliated to the same church under the command of Mar Dionysius of Malankarai *Edavagai*." (Jameson, Fr. Varghese, *Thrippunithura Nadamal Vi Marthzmaniya Palliyude Charithra Samgraham*, Thrippunithura, 1960, Pp 153-4)

³⁰⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 89, *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 258-9

2. The *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Niranam on *Thulam* 21, 956 ME decides the proportion of tithe on dowry.³¹⁰
3. The *Puthiacavu Padiyola* of 964 ME regarding the adaptation of West Syrian liturgy.³¹¹
4. The *Malankara Pally Yogam* Held at Niranam in 974 ME decides the penalty for Mar Dionysius I for celebrating the holy Eucharist with unleavened bread under Mathu Tharakan's persecution.³¹²
5. The *Malankara Pally Yogam* Held at Niranam in 983 ME refused the claims of Mar Dioscorus³¹³
6. The *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Kandandu on *Chingam* 1, AD 1809 resolved the constitution for Nazranis named *Kandanadu Padiyola* and appointed two chancellors for the bishop.³¹⁴
7. The *Malankara Pally Yogam* called by Kidangan Mar Philaxinos of Thozhiyoor in AD 1816 abolished the rule of Pakalomattom bishopric.³¹⁵

All the above examples clearly indicate the deep involvement and extreme authority of the *Malankara Pally Yogam* over the affairs of Nazranis.

The Priests

According to Ferroli, "The Priests are called Cathanars and the Deacons Chemazes. Their office is often hereditary, following according to the *Marumakattayam* system"³¹⁶ during the eighteenth century. The outside observation of the *Kathanars* during the eighteenth century was not given a bright picture. Jacob Canter Visscher reports in the beginning of the century as follows

They [the *Kathanars*] are uncultivated and ignorant of the manners of society, being in this respect, Topass priests who have become accustomed to Europeans know something of the acts of courtesy...The priests themselves are stolid ignorant, most of them unable to read more than certain formulas setting their times for prayer and other duties. Nor can any correct account be given at the present day of their confession of faith.³¹⁷

³¹⁰ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 95

³¹¹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 97

³¹² Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, Op. Cit., P 145, Mar Dionysius I accepted it and obliged (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 107)

³¹³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., Pp 116-7

³¹⁴ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 120, Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, Op. Cit., Pp 154 -7, *Naalagamam MSS*, P 166

³¹⁵ *Seminary Case Book*, Vol. III Op. Cit., Pp 271 -2

³¹⁶ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II*, Op. Cit., P 155

³¹⁷ Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II*, Op. Cit., Pp 41-2

It may be considered that the general standard of the *Kathanars* was low. Some of them were alcohol addicts.³¹⁸ This could be considered only as a part of the general decay of the moral of the community since the bishop himself was addicted to the practice of consuming opium.³¹⁹ Even the inferior character of the persons ordained was said as a reason for the low standards. While commenting on Mar Thoma V, Adriaan Moens charges him with "his ordination of unfit youths as priests and the conferring of ecclesiastical offices on unworthy persons."³²⁰ However, a Western prejudice may be seen in these words since the priests discussed with Dr. Buchanan at Mavalikkara, Ranni, Chengannur and Kandanadu were found as having enough knowledge about their doctrines.³²¹

Perhaps the process of selection³²² and training affected the standard of the priests in the eighteenth century. There was no centralized education system or common curriculum for the training of the clergy. It seems that the students accepted one of the learned *Kathanars*, known as *Malpan*³²³ as their teacher for priestly training. Indeed the existence of the different liturgical traditions during the eighteenth century reflected in the continuation of the same through the students by each *Malpan*.³²⁴ In his reply on *Medom* 20, 988 ME, Mar Thoma VIII gives the following information about the training and appointment of the priests as the answers of sixth and seventh questions.

Priests learned in the holy books and the *Andu-texa* relating to the usage of churches will be appointed as vicars of churches... There is no special arrangement for the education of Christians except the arrangement subsisting from ancient times, by which the priests are charged with the duty of teaching. For the education of the clergy, there is Konat Verghese Kathanar-Malpan in the north, and Philipose Kathanar of Pallippad and Geverghese Kathanar of Palakkunnom in the south, who instruct priests in the four holy books tolerably well.

³¹⁸ The seventh canon of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809 states that "the priests must abstain from drinking. They must stay at churches and pray together in the evening and in the morning" (*Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 158 -66)

³¹⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarī*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 102

³²⁰ Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 177

³²¹ Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 112-34

³²² For more details on selection, see the title 'The Administration' in this chapter

³²³ = Teacher. According to Ferroli, "The Malpans are teachers in Seminaries, where the Cattanars are being trained." (Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 155)

³²⁴ "Cheriyachen was consecrated as Mar Thoma Episcopa on *Mithunam* 29, 936 ME at Niranam church. Immediately the people of Chengannor come and took him. He stayed there [Chengannor] and teaches the children and deacons. In the meantime, Kattumangattu Kurian Kathanar stayed with *Vliya Bava* who is the Mafrian, and studied all needed and took the dignity of *Remban*. Since he was became an expert in reading and preaching, he too started teaching children and the deacons." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarī*, *Op. Cit.*, P 90)

Among them, there are both good and fair scholars. Beyond this, there is no special place for education.³²⁵

From all the above it is clear that there existed a *Malpan*-based priestly training system that begins in childhood itself. The requirement of the minimum level training was limited to what was commented by Jacob Canter Visscher.³²⁶ However, there were scholars like Philipose Remban, Kattumangattu Kurian Kathanar etc. It is also clear from the answer of Mar Thoma VIII that the *Malpans* needed a recognition by the bishop to teach. Under these circumstances, it is not true to say that the *Kathanars* were ignorant in general even though they were not reaching the European standards. The establishment of the Seminary in AD 1815 opened grater opportunity to learn the highest standard than anywhere else in India, then.³²⁷

The Dress and Tonsure

There was effectively no change in the ordinary dress of the *Kathanars* in the eighteenth century from the pre-colonial period. Jacob Canter Visscher gives the following description.

Their priests or teachers mostly wear white linen trousers hanging wide over, the knee, and over them an ample robe of white linen or some other material, descending to the knees. On their heads, they generally wear a black cap shaped like sugar loaf. The neck is adorned with a rosary of white coral, and in the hand, they carry a painted cane, much longer than our walking sticks. Like the heathen, they generally go barefoot, knowing nothing of shoes and stockings.³²⁸

The vanishing of *Kudummi* was proportionate to the increase of the influence of the West Syrian tradition. However, it is impossible to say that the *Kudummi* ceased to exist by AD 1815.

Marriage of the Priests

Even though the pre-colonial Nazrani practice and the newly affiliated West Syrian tradition permitted the marriage of the priests,³²⁹ most of them remained celibate in the eighteenth century. Adriaan Moens reports "They

³²⁵ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit., Pp 159-60*

³²⁶ Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II, Op. Cit., Pp 41-2*

³²⁷ For more details, see the title, 'The Seminary' in this chapter.

³²⁸ Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II, Op. Cit., P 41*. Andiaan Moens gives almost same description at the end of the century (Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit., P 178*)

³²⁹ "Before ordination, they may marry. Widower however, may not remarry, nor are they allowed to marry widows. They live on contributions from their churches, marriage or funeral fees and the like." (Ferrol, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit., P 155*)

associate just as little with the Roman Catholics as the Jacobites, and are called schismatics by the Romans. They allow their priests to marry but not a second time³³⁰ that was confirmed by Mar Thoma VIII.³³¹ But like a rule, perhaps as a part of *Edathile Maryada*, celibacy was practised among *Kathanars*,³³² for which different reasons are given. There is no doubt that the Roman Catholics imposed the priestly celibacy over Nazranis in the seventeenth century. However, it is stated that the Roman Catholics again played to prohibit the priestly marriage even after their rule was over.³³³ By the mid-eighteenth century, it is found that Mar Thoma V was a strong supporter of priestly celibacy.³³⁴ This may, perhaps be a sign of his resistance against the West Syrian advances into his jurisdiction.

According to the British, the reason for the priestly celibacy was economical. Col. Munro tried to get the priests married by monitory gifts. The following is the efforts of the British in this regard.

In my conversations with the Metropolitan, one topic...that of their clergy not marrying. The Bishop admitted the evil of the practice and wished to remedy it. One reason among others...was their poverty. They were too poor to maintain a wife and family. To obviate this difficulty the Resident immediately offered to give Rs. 400 to the first priest who married and promised so to arrange matters that the clergy in general might marry and support their families. The Metropolitan...issued a circular letter to all the churches in which he stated the prohibition of sacerdotal matrimony to be not of the Church of Antioch, but of the Church of Rome, and desired that the clergy would take the matter into consideration and comply with the ordinance of marriage... Two of the clergy were in consequence soon after married; and forty more have entered into bonds that they will marry as soon as some provision shall be made for the support of their families, should they have any. At present the subject of

³³⁰ Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 179

³³¹ As the answer to the fifteenth question, Mar Thoma VIII informed the Madras Government that "priests are not prohibited from marrying." (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 160)

³³² While describing the activities of Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah, it is stated in *Niranam Grandhavari* as "They too violated the *Eadthile Maryada*...[and] made four priests to marry." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 89)

³³³ The Dutch records give the following information "7th May 1719...He was met by the Syrian Archbishop Mar Gabriel who asked his intercession with the rulers of the country to allow the Kattanars [priests] to marry. Roman priests and Goanese were preventing them from doing so by giving money to the native rulers." (Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 210)

³³⁴ Dutch records provides the following information "1748: A long letter from the Syrian Bishop Mar Joannes [Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast] to explain the differences between him and Mar Thoma chiefly regarding the marriage of Kattanars which the former wishes to introduce...1746-1748: Accounts of the disagreement of the two Syrian Bishops Mar Thoma and Mar Joannes. The latter of whom favoured the marriage of Kattanars." (Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 212) According to *Niranam Grandhavari*, the introduction of marriage of priests by Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast was considered as a violation of *Edathile Maryade*. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 89)

Kattanars marrying is so novel that the people hesitate at giving their daughters to them in marriage.³³⁵

It is unrealistic to think that all priests were abstained from marriage just because of their inability to support a family since at every service they offered was tagged a fee.³³⁶ Beyond this, at least some of them had secular occupation also.³³⁷ It is reported that a heavy fees should have to be given for getting the ordination.³³⁸ Some of them were rich by other means.³³⁹ Hence, it is untrue to say all the *Kathanars* remained unmarried because of their inability to support a family. This description also confirms that the West Syrian attempts of popularising the priest's marriage had become fruitless even till the beginning of the nineteenth century. However, the British attempts partly succeeded perhaps due to the cash incentive behind that.

Priestly Duties

As the answer to the fifth question, "what are the Orders of the clergy, the number of priests, their offices, their emoluments and the number of Syrians therein?" Mar Thoma VIII gives the following answer to the Madras Government on *Medom* 20, 988 ME

The duties of priests are, saying Mass on Sundays and festival days, conducting baptism, marriage, confirmation, confession and other righteous rites for Christians, receiving the dues from them and holding prayers at both times in the churches. When Christians die, priests may be made to say Mass on their behalf...We thus conduct affairs having empowered the priests to perform all services for the people, and to teach them all righteous deeds.³⁴⁰

It is also noteworthy to mention that beyond these, the presence of the priests was considered essential in several local traditions practised by Nazranis

³³⁵ Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, P 98

³³⁶ For more details see the title 'Income of the Priests' in this chapter

³³⁷ "In the decrees of the Synod of Udayamperor, it is complained that the Syrian priests were neither educated nor remarkable for their moral character. Some of them were said to be following secular trades; some served as soldiers under Hindu Princes. One can easily imagine how much the character of these priests must have deteriorated after compulsory celibacy was imposed on them by Rome. Even after the revolt from Rome, marriage of the clergy continued to be unusual among the Puthencoor Syrians, According to the account given by Paoli, the Carmelite writer, many of the Romo-Syrian priests were leading scandalous lives, About the Jacobite priests he observes that they practiced simony on an extensive scale." (Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, P 65)

³³⁸ In his letter to Sakthan Thampuran of Kochi, Kattumangattu Mar Coorilos accused that Mar Dionysius I as collecting 500 *Chakrams* each for giving the ordination as deacon and priest. (Puthazhathu, *Sakthen Thampuran, Op. Cit.*, P 289)

³³⁹ For example, Porkattukulangurai Kuriesu Mathunni Tharaken of Adavur was rich enough to pay Rupees 1,200 as fine on *Medom* 1, 941ME for the disputes regarding the ordination of his son as a deacon by the foreign bishops (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 259)

³⁴⁰ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 159

as mentioned above. It is clear that there were no changes in the priestly functions except the increase in demand caused by the christianising process of Nazranis by the Roman Catholics in the seventeenth century and by the West Syrians in the eighteenth century.

The Bishops of the Nazranis

The bishops, consecrated from the Pakalomattom family under hereditary succession, had clear privileges and authority. He, the culmination of the powers of the Archdeacon of all India and the Metropolitan, enjoys the privileges of the Archdeacon of the pre-Portuguese period. Jacob Canter Visscher states that Mar Thoma IV was "attended by a number of soldiers bearing swords and shields, in imitation of the princes of Malabar."³⁴¹ Even though the post-Portuguese division of Nazranis and the faction fight there after reduced the dignity of that post, it is certain that the bishops enjoyed most of the privileges as in the old time. Mar Thoma VI received a royal proclamation around AD 1766 from Travancore which granted him the right to "follow every thing regarding the church and the *Jathy* according to the ongoing tradition,"³⁴² that made his authority unquestionable. Ferroli says that "The Jacobites considered their Bishop, or *Metran*, as their spiritual head, to whom they owed obedience in many civil matters as well. The *Metran* did not marry, and lived on contributions from their churches."³⁴³

The primary authorities of the bishops were the ordination,³⁴⁴ appointment of vicars,³⁴⁵ granting permission to construct new churches and its consecration.³⁴⁶ They also had the right to impose punishments over Nazranis.³⁴⁷ The eighth canon of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* confirms the authority of the bishop to give permission to priests to celebrate the sacraments.³⁴⁸ The tenth canon directed the local churches to get the permission of the bishop for their

³⁴¹ Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 42

³⁴² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 90

³⁴³ Ferroli, *Jesuits... Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 155

³⁴⁴ One of the reasons for fining Porkattukulangurai Kuriesu Mathunni Tharaken of Adavur on first *Medom* 941 ME was the ordination of his son as a deacon by 'foreign Metrans' (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 259)

³⁴⁵ The agreement between Mar Thoma V and Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah of AD 1754 confirms that the bishop had the right to appoint the vicars. (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 258-9)

³⁴⁶ According to the history of Puthuppally church, it was reconstructed in AD 1750 with the permission of Mar Thoma V. (mistakenly written as Mar Dionysius in the *Pallippattu* [church song]) (Thomas, Maunam (Ed.), *Koodasa Smrithi*, Puthupally, Puthupally Church, 2003, Pp 23-4)

³⁴⁷ For example, the fine imposed on Porkattukulangurai Kuriesu Mathunni Tharaken of Adavur on first *Medom* 941 ME (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 259). Pulikkottil Ittoop Kathanar was punished in *Meenom*, 966 ME for received the order of *Remban* from Kattumangattu Mar Coorilos (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 95)

³⁴⁸ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla... Op. Cit.*, P 156

investments.³⁴⁹ The bishop had the authority to settle the disputes according to the *Jathy Maryada*,³⁵⁰ especially in case of inheritance.³⁵¹ The answer to the sixth question of the Madras Government by Mar Thoma VIII on *Meenom* 8, 988 ME, gives enough light to the authority of the bishop, appointment and tenure of the vicars and the punishments.

Priests learned in the Holy books and the *Andutaksa* relating to the usage of churches will be appointed as vicars of churches, and, when he goes out of office, another priests will be appointed to that office. Christians who default to attend service or to observe fast or to attend the annual confession or who being averse to Baptism, joined the heathens and perform or get performed any devilish rites, will be made to attend church and excommunicated from there according to the nature of their offence, and punished according to the Canons, or steps will be taken to prevent the repetition of such deeds, and they will be admitted into the church. Priests who conduct themselves contrary to authority with respect to the usage of the church will be divested of their ecclesial functions, and excommunicated and dealt with according to the Canons.³⁵²

When compare these with the pre-colonial practices of the Nazranis and the colonial introduction of Greco-Roman Episcopacy, it is clear that the eighteenth century Nazranis derived a middle course that retains the authority of the *Yogam* in both local church and Malankara level and provides limited authority to the bishops. Any challenge to the authority of the bishop was discouraged strongly.

The Catholics

The attachment to the title 'Catholicos' existed with the Nazranis even in the eighteenth century. Apart from the memory of the pre-Portuguese period when the Catholicos of the East was their "Head of the Church", the pious memory of Mar Baselius Yeldo Mafrian and of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah in the recent past might have retained such an affinity. Even the presence of Mar Gabriel, who was sent by Mar Elia, Catholicos of the East,³⁵³ also strengthens this feeling.

³⁴⁹ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 156-7

³⁵⁰ = Law of the *Jathy*.

³⁵¹ For example, the bull of Mar Thoma Episcopa to the Puthencavu church (Alexander, *Kanianthra ...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 127 -8)

³⁵² Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 179-80 and *Seminary Case Book*, Vol. III *Op. Cit.*, P 159

³⁵³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 85-6

But the acceptance of the Patriarch of Antioch as the head of the Church in AD 1686³⁵⁴ changed the order of the Catholicos and Patriarch in the hierarchy. The Catholicos in West Syrian concept was a subordinate of the Patriarch of Antioch whereas it was in the reverse order in the East Syrian tradition. The office similar to the Catholicos in the West Syrian tradition was the *Mafrian*.³⁵⁵ This title seems to be exploited both by Nazranis and the Patriarch of Antioch in the eighteenth century with different intentions.

After the establishment of an Indian bishopric in AD 1653, it became difficult to place the Syrian prelates in the hierarchy of Nazranis. The Nazranis were not willing to share their newly possessed authority to the foreign prelates any more but they still needed their presence for doctrinal and teaching purposes. On the other hand, the visiting Syrian prelates always demanded the authority over Nazranis that they refused to surrender.³⁵⁶ Hence, it became essential for Nazranis to find suitable title to the foreign bishops that would not provide any authority on the temporalities of Nazranis but satisfy the egoistic demands of the visiting Syrian bishops.

The first option for this was the title Patriarch as used by the East Syrian prelates to India during the pre-colonial period. In case of Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed, the first West Syrian bishop in India, this title was used since he was eligible for the title as the Patriarch of Jerusalem.³⁵⁷ Mar Anthrayos, probably an East Syrian, who arrived in AD 1678, also was known as Patriarch.³⁵⁸

But it became impossible to refer to all bishops as Patriarch after the formal acceptance of the Patriarch of Antioch as the head of the Church in AD 1686. The West Syrians reserved this title exclusively for their supreme head.³⁵⁹ But at the same time, it was necessary for Nazranis to retain the title Catholicos somewhere to establish their continuity of the pre-Portuguese tradition.

³⁵⁴ See the title 'The impact on ecclesial structure' in chapter V.

³⁵⁵ For more details about the origin and history of Mafriyanate, see Chediath, *Bar Ebraya ...Op. cit.*

³⁵⁶ For Example, Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah and Mar Ivanios Yoohanon were claimed as the 'Episcopa of India'. (Paulose, Chevalier K. V., *Stuthi Chovakkapetta Visudha Sabhayude Charithram*, Puthencruz, St. Gregorius Publications, 2002, Pp 448 –53 and *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 55)

³⁵⁷ In the Pentarchy system developed in the Roman Empire acknowledge the bishop of Jerusalem as a titular Patriarch subject to the Patriarch of Antioch. After the divisions, many Churches have their own Patriarch of Jerusalem. The bishop of Jerusalem under the Patriarch of Antioch had the title Patriarch and had the titular name as Mar Gregorius.

³⁵⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, , P 85

³⁵⁹ After the medieval period, the West Syrian bishop of Jerusalem lost the title Patriarch.

The arrival of Mafrian Mar Baselius Yeldo in AD 1685 gives an exposure to a new title *Mafrian* that he bears. Then onwards this West Syrian counterpart of the Catholicos of the East, was being used for all foreign prelates arriving in India even though they were not appointed to that office. They were often called 'Catholicos' also.³⁶⁰ In reality, there existed no office in that name in the West Syrian Church.

The Nazranis need to have a hierarchy to fit the Patriarch, the foreign bishops in India and their ruling Mar Thoma Metran. But there was much confusion about the titles and its positions in the scalar chain. The colophon of a Syriac book copied at Edappally in AD 1720 is a good example of this confusion.

In the days of the Father of the Fathers and the Head of the Pastors, who anoints the High Priests and who distributes...the talents and who hands over the staffs and who ties the belts, Mar Ignatios Patriarch of the East, constituted in all strength and shining in, all splendour for the exaltation of the Catholic and Apostolic [Church] and the glory of the Apostolic one. Amen. In the days of our venerable Father and head of the Venerables, Pastors, Watchers and alert ones and Governor, who rules the Church of Christ, Basillios, *qatoliqa* of Jerusalem and in the days of Mar Thoma, Bishop of India.³⁶¹

This colophon expresses the lack of knowledge of Nazranis about the hierarchy of the West Syrian church. The mistakes found here are

1. Baselius is the title of Mafrian
2. There is no title named Catholicos in West Syrian Church
3. The seat of *Mafrian* is not Jerusalem but Mosul in Iraq

It is very evident that this derivation of Catholicos was made out of the known title of Catholicos, the title 'Baselius' of Mar Baselius Yeldo Mafrian and the seat from that of Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed. By AD 1734, this terminology had a little more developed. A large Syriac volume of different offices copied by deacon Abraham of Mulamthuruthy gives a lot of information about the fixing of Episcopal hierarchy of Nazranis in the eighteenth century. Its colophon mentions only as follows "in the days of Mar Thoma, Bishop and Metropolitan of India."³⁶² This indicates that he alone was accepted as the governor of the Church. But in one prayer, the hierarchy was mentioned as "our Holy Father Ignatius, Patriarch

³⁶⁰ Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 153

³⁶¹ Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 152

³⁶² Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 153

and head of the Church of Christ and Mar Basilius *qatoliqa* and Mar, NN. Bishop Metropolitan and, all their clergy."³⁶³ This is a usual form according to the West Syrian tradition among those under the Mafrianate. In another prayer of the same book, which was evidently copied later, modified this formula to fit in the Nazrani concept as "Mar Ignatius NN, Mar *qatoliqa* and Mar Thomas Bishop Metropolitan."³⁶⁴ According to the last, the existence of the Ignatius Patriarch was certain but his name was unknown.³⁶⁵ There is no knowledge about the Catholicos³⁶⁶ and the Mar Thoma bishop was certain and known to the copyist.

According to Paulinus, Mar Ivanios Hadiyatallah, who was only an Episcopa, was known as *Mafrian*.³⁶⁷ Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast, who was also an Episcopa, and who arrived in India in AD 1748, was also known with this title. A Pontifical in Syriac copied by him bears the following colophon. "I, Mar Ivanios Episcopa called *Mafrian* came from Besrrah in the year 1748 of our Lord. I came with deacon Antonios, the merchant in the ship of the great merchant Ezhakkiyal, the Jew."³⁶⁸ This colophon testifies that the title *Mafrian* was not taken by Mar Ivanios himself but was given by Nazranis. This indicates that Nazranis wanted to give that title to the incoming bishops. They might have thought that giving such a title would check the possibility of taking titles like 'Metropolitan of India' by the West Syrians, which indicates some sort of authority over Nazranis.

It is confirmed by the forged *Staticon* of Mar Diascoros, who was in India from 1806 to AD 1808, how the West Syrian bishops tried to manipulate the affinity of Nazranis towards the title Catholicos.³⁶⁹ It seems that Mar Diascoros

³⁶³ Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 153

³⁶⁴ Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 153

³⁶⁵ After the analysis of the letters of Mar Thoma IV to Patriarch of Antioch in between AD 1709 and 1720, Van Der Ploeg come to a conclusion that the Nazranis had no genuine relations to the Patriarch of Antioch then to know his real name except the titular name *Ignatius*, which is common for all of them. (Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 263)

³⁶⁶ After the demise of Mar Ivanios Hadiyatallah in AD 1694, there was no West Syrian bishop in India for 54 years till the arrival of Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast.

³⁶⁷ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 113

³⁶⁸ Konat MSS, No. 34, *Pontifical of Mar Ivanios* (In Syriac), AD 1749, Translated by Fr. Dr. Johns Abraham Konat.

³⁶⁹ After repeated demands by the Church and even by the British authorities of Travancore, he refused to show his *Staticon*. It is doubtful that he had any. *Niranam Grandhavar* confirms that his deacon copied one, probably that of Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah, during the last days of his presence in India and shown as brought along with him (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavar*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 110 -1, 113 - 16, 119 -20 and Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 150.) A Malayalam translation of this *Staticon* was produced in the seminary case as an exhibit.

used the concept of Nazranis about Catholicos to establish his authority over Nazranis and over their bishops while creating his *Staticon*.³⁷⁰

Tool of Subjugation

The West Syrians who were trying to reduce the Nazranis as a diocese under the Patriarch of Antioch found the affinity of Nazranis towards the term 'Catholicos' as a golden opportunity. The historiography they gradually plotted made the Nazranis believe that the Catholicos to whom they were subjects is none other than the *Mafrian* under the Patriarch of Antioch.³⁷¹ When a request was made to send some one who is able to settle the disasters caused by Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast during the mid seventeenth century,³⁷² the Patriarch sent a team of clerics led by Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah who reached India in AD 1751. Probably the Patriarch thought that Mar Thoma V refused to surrender to Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast because the latter was only an Episcopa.³⁷³ This may have led the Patriarch to send a team led by a *Mafrian*.³⁷⁴ The Patriarch might have also taught that this was an opportunity to expand the jurisdiction of the *Mafrian*, by then limited in a small pocket of Babylon, which in turn increased his jurisdiction as the superior of the *Mafrian*. The Patriarch believed that Mar Thoma V would become subject to the *Mafrian* by a re-consecration. Perhaps he even thought the rank of his representative, as *Mafrian*, which is superior to the Metropolitan, will make this process easy. But this effort became fruitless since Mar Thoma V refused to accept any authority of the *Mafrian* nor get re-consecrated by him till his death in AD 1764, after thirteen years of the arrival of the latter.³⁷⁵ Before his demise, Mar Sakrallah realized that the Nazranis were not

³⁷⁰ In the said *Staticon*, Mar Dioscoros was appointed by the Patriarch of Antioch as "the governor of Malayalam in India." His title is "Catholica who is Dioscoros Metropolitan." His was given authority as "the head of priests, episcopas and metropolitans of that country." (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 181-3)

³⁷¹ For more details, see the title 'The Catholicos' in this chapter.

³⁷² *Niranam Grandhavari* states that the Patriarch was happy in receiving such a letter (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 86)

³⁷³ The Dutch documents states that Mar Ivanios too had correspondence with the Patriarch. (Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 212-3)

³⁷⁴ After the fall of the Catholicate of the East into Nestorianism, there was a few Christians remained faithful to the Alexandrian theology. After the collapse of the Persian Empire, the Patriarch of Antioch appointed Mar Marutha as the Chief Metropolitan. In AD 629, the Patriarch of Antioch consented to give the title as the *Mafrian* of Tigris. The *Mafrian* was considered as the true successors of the Catholicos of the East even though they were the suffragan of the Patriarch. (Chedyath, *Pourasthya Catholicos, Op. Cit.*, Pp 79-86)

³⁷⁵ The unknown author of the biography of Karot Ipeora Tharakan of Kandanadu, who was a contemporary to Mar Dionysius I, states a different story. According to him, a *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Kandanadu in *Chingam* AD 1749, decided to rise Mar Thoma V as *Mafrian* and hence requested the Patriarch to send bishop(s) for this purpose. He also stated that the Patriarch of Antioch took this letter as a license to consecrate one of the Syrians as *Mafrian* for India and send Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah. Even though this argument seems logical, there is no other evidence existed for cross-examination. (This unpublished

ready to give any authority to the *Mafrian* even if their admiration towards the title 'Catholicos' remained intact.³⁷⁶

The Patriarch

The official recognition of the Patriarch of Antioch in AD 1686 as the head of the Church had not any direct impact on the Nazranis. But the theological turmoil initiated by Mar Gabriel forced Nazranis to depend on the West Syrians for scholars and books to defend the neo-Chaldian teachings of Mar Gabriel. On this ground, Mar Thoma IV tried to contact the Patriarch of Antioch from AD 1709 onwards.³⁷⁷ Van Der Ploeg made a detailed study on the letters of Mar Thoma IV comments about the relation of Nazranis with the Patriarch of Antioch as follows:

Mar Thoma did not know where his Antiochian Patriarch was living, nor did he know his full name. From this it appears that he had no genuine relations with him. The Jacobite prelates who had come to Malabar since the secession may have told the Christians of St. Thomas that they were subjects of the same Patriarchs who used to send Bishops to S. India in earlier times, the Patriarchs of the "Church of the East". Mar Thoma invoked the help of the Patriarch against the "Franks" not knowing how this could be implemented, probably relying on the collaboration of the Dutch.³⁷⁸

Some historians of nineteenth and twentieth centuries tried to establish that the Nazranis were subject to the Patriarch of Antioch in very close nature. In fact the letter of Mar Thoma V to the Dutch Governor confirms as follows "We acknowledge the Church of Antioch as our head."³⁷⁹ The authors like E. M. Philip³⁸⁰ and numerous pro-Antiochians tried to establish that this was a total subordination. The answer of Mar Thoma VIII to the second question of British resident on *Meenom* 8, 988 ME regarding which superior has the Syrians been obeying and what laws and rules they were following is as follows:

In Malayalam, it is as subject to the authority of Mar Ignatius Patriarch of Antioch that the ordinances are recognized. *Metrans*

biography is found in between *Naalagamam* MSS in different handwriting). See *Naalagamam* MSS, Pp 275-92

³⁷⁶ The compromise document signed by him to Mar Thoma V dated *Dhanu* 18, AD 1754 did not grant any authority to the *Mafrian*, even though it acknowledged the Patriarch of Antioch. (*Seminary Case Book*, Vol. III *Op. Cit.*, Pp 258-9)

³⁷⁷ Three of the letters of Mar Thoma IV never reached the destination. Two of them dated AD 1709 and AD 1721, probably sent through the Dutch authorities, reached Amsterdam and one dated AD 1720 was intercepted by the Roman Catholics and redirected to Rome. For details see Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 255 – 264 and Assamanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis ...*, Vol. III-2, *Op. Cit.* Pp 464 – 8

³⁷⁸ Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 263

³⁷⁹ Brown, *Indian Christians...* *Op. Cit.*, P 118

³⁸⁰ Philip, *Marthomasleehayude...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 157 -61

come from Antioch and consecrate members of the family which has derived Ordination from Apostle Mar Thoma, and these conduct all routine affairs, and important affairs are conducted informing the Patriarch of Antioch thereof.³⁸¹

This answer should not be taken at face value since some of its contents are not true which were well known to the writer.³⁸² Z. M. Paret argues that there was no genuine and structured relation the Nazranis had with the Patriarch in the eighteenth century. According to him, the tug of war for the authority with the Patriarch of Antioch began only during the period of Mar Thoma V (AD 1728-1765). He further argues that the Nazranis did not accept any authority of the Patriarch of Antioch till then.³⁸³ He pointed out the letter of Ignatius Geevarghese, Patriarch of Antioch, to Mar Thoma V dated *Chingam* 25, 2064 Greek era³⁸⁴ as an evidence for this. In that lengthy letter the Patriarch demands as "We command unto you that you should acknowledge the supremacy of the Apostolic Throne of Antioch, that you should obey all commands...Behold! You must obey the brothers, the venerable Mar Baselius and Mar Gregorius [who are in your midst] and all that they may command and counsel you...That you may be confirmed as Episcopa by the laying of their hands on you."³⁸⁵ This request was refused by Mar Thoma V. Paret further argues that the authority of the Patriarch was defined in the reconciliation attempts of both the parties as spiritual and hence, only ornamental.³⁸⁶ He points out the treaty between Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah and Mar Thoma V dated *Dhanu* 18, AD 1754 as the evidence for this. The treaty is as follows:

I, Baselius Catholica, give this command, which is an agreement, unto my son, Mar Thoma. My son I give you this agreement that, so long as you follow the Living Holy Ghost and Aboon Mar Ignatius Patriarch of Antioch, I shall not, without your consent, ordain any priest or deacon in Malayalam: and further ... Henceforth, the faith and rituals, made extant by Mar Thoma Metran who died at Kandanad, under orders of Mar Ivanios Metran, shall be maintained; that none shall be ordained without the paper of Mar Thoma

³⁸¹ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 158

³⁸² For example, the part regarding the ordination, Mar Thoma VIII and his immediate predecessor Mar Thoma VII were not consecrated by the West Syrian bishops.

³⁸³ Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, Pp 18 -21

³⁸⁴ AD 1753

³⁸⁵ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 53- 4

³⁸⁶ Paret, *Nazranikal Vol. III... Op. Cit.*, Pp 19 - 20

Episcopa and that vicars' approved of by both parties alone shall be appointed to churches³⁸⁷

Even though this agreement acknowledges some sort of supremacy to the Patriarch of Antioch,³⁸⁸ Mar Thoma V retains his Episcopal authority intact by this agreement. The Patriarch gets nothing as he desired. Further, he made the West Syrians accept him and his predecessor, Mar Thoma IV, as valid bishops. Hence, it is true that the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch was only ornamental over Nazranis then.

The West Syrian Bishops

After the demise of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah in AD 1693, no West Syrian bishops arrived in India for a long period till AD 1748. After the formation of Indian hierarchy in Pakalomattom family and the reestablishment of Syriac tradition, there was no need for any foreign bishops. However, it became necessary to have the presence of West Syrian teachers to form defence against the Gabriel factor. Mar Thoma IV and the Nazranis were not able to defend against the attempts of Mar Gabriel to re-establish the East Syrian tradition with the little knowledge they have about the newly acquainted West Syrian theology and tradition.

In this context, Mar Thoma IV tried to contact the Patriarch of Antioch in between AD 1709 and AD 1721 for availing 'learned scholars'.³⁸⁹ In his letters, which never reached the addressee, it is confirmed that the necessity of the West Syrian clergy arose because of the Gabriel Factor.³⁹⁰ He expected some West Syrian bishops who would extend doctrinal assistance like Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah to sustain their post-Coonen Cross system.

After a long interval, Mar Ivanios, a Syrian bishop, arrived in AD 1748 along with deacon Antonios, a Syrian merchant. According to E. M. Philip, he came according to the request of Mar Thoma V.³⁹¹ Leslie Brown, based on

³⁸⁷ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 258 –9. For the full text see the title 'The West Syrian Bishops' in this chapter

³⁸⁸ It may even argue that Mar Thoma V did not accept any authority of the Patriarch of Antioch, since he was not signed in that document.

³⁸⁹ For details of three letters, send through the Dutch authorities, see Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 255 – 264

³⁹⁰ Assamanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis ...*, *Vol. III-2, Op. Cit.*, Pp 464 –8, even though Mar Thoma IV claims that only one excommunicated priest from his side left with Mar Gabriel, the mention about the theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria, the arch-rival of Nestorianism, indicates that he was facing a lack of knowledge in the theological warfare.

³⁹¹ Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 154 –5

Anquetil du Peron, states that the request was made by the Nazranis who were "grown tired of obeying Mar Thoma."³⁹² Paulinus states that several Nazranis requested the Dutch authorities to bring them a bishop from Mussel of Persia.³⁹³ Hence, the Dutch brought Mar Ivanios through their chief merchant Ezekiel Rabi, the Jew.³⁹⁴ It is likely to have such a request made by the ex-Gabrielists or the Nazranis in quarrel with Mar Thoma V. *Niranam Grandhavari* describes the events followed by Mar Ivanios as follows "Upon his arrival, he demolished the idols, shaved the head of the *Kathanars* and caped them. He shaved the head of laymen, ordained without the consent of the *Metran* and the *Yogam*. He also introduced the customs that were alien to Malayalam."³⁹⁵

Most of the authors state that his reformation was over-zealous and hence, he was known as Ivanios the Iconoclast.³⁹⁶ Paulinus further states that "He burned the crucifixes, images of saints and even that of Jesus Christ."³⁹⁷ In a letter of Mar Ivanios to the Dutch authorities in AD 1748, he states that his difference of opinion with Mar Thoma was "chiefly regarding the marriage of *Kathanars*" which he wished to introduce.³⁹⁸ All acts of Mar Ivanios, which were noted in the *Niranam Grandhavari*, had indeed disturbed Mar Thoma and his faction. Even though both East and West Syrian traditions did not admit, the idols introduced by the Roman Catholics during the Portuguese period, it strongly influenced the Nazranis.³⁹⁹ For Mar Thoma and his faction, who were still looking for a reunification of all the Nazranis under his authority, the Iconoclastic activities of Mar Ivanios meant the widening of the gaps between the two groups.⁴⁰⁰

The rest of his activities were more serious to Mar Thoma V. The removal of *Kudummi* from the head of *Kathanars* and *Mappilais* was indeed an attack on the traditions of the Nazranis that in turn an unrecognising of the identity of Nazranis themselves. Loss of *Kudummi*, the sign of one's own *Jathy*, was disastrous for the Nazranis in their environment. Such an act would be considered as the same sort of efforts taken by the Roman Catholics to make the

³⁹² Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 119

³⁹³ Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah was came from Mussel and all East Syrians were from Persia

³⁹⁴ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 118-9

³⁹⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 86

³⁹⁶ Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 155

³⁹⁷ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 119

³⁹⁸ Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 212

³⁹⁹ See the title 'Art and Architecture' in this chapter.

⁴⁰⁰ See the title 'Unification attempts' in this chapter.

Nazranis casteless during the Portuguese period. The ordination without the consent of *Metran* and *Yogam* was a serious threat to the administrative system of the Nazranis. However polluted it may be, the *Deshakuri* was a sufficient check on the appointment of the clergy. And the bishops had their control over the parishes as well as the clergy mainly because of his right of ordination. The presence of another bishop without such restrictions led to total disobedience that the Mar Thoma cannot accept.

The dissident faction within the Nazranis gave their leadership to the West Syrian bishop. This was a serious threat to the existence of the Indian hierarchy. Mar Thoma V could not use right to ordination as a tool to retain all the Nazranis under the rule any more. This condition was favourable for the West Syrians to implement their superiority and to propagate the West Syrian tradition. The last accusation, the introduction of the new customs, indicates that Mar Ivanios tried to propagate the West Syrian practices among Nazranis. The attitude of the Dutch towards Nazranis as well as the Mar Thoma Metrans also play a vital role in this faction fight. Even though the Dutch favoured the Nazranis in their struggle for survival against Roman Catholics, their concept about Mar Thoma Metrans were not bright since, they thought, he was protecting the old Romanised customs.⁴⁰¹ The following part of the memorandum of Adriaan Moens, the Dutch Governor of Kochi, describing the reasons of the disputes between the Mar Thoma and the West Syrians gives a clear picture of the Dutch understanding of Nazranis.

But when he [Mar Thoma] saw that the Bishops zealously busied themselves with cleansing the church from many Roman ceremonies and heathen superstitions, and also from many unworthy teachers and members, who for want of proper instruction in the faith, and through a laxity of discipline, had slipped into the church from time to time; and more especially when he saw that they withstood his ordination of unfit youths as priests, and the conferring or ecclesiastical offices on unworthy persons.⁴⁰²

Such a favourable attitude of Dutch provides a lot of benefits to Mar Ivanios. He received the protection of seven armed bodyguards from the

⁴⁰¹ Jacob Canter Visscher, the Dutch Chaplin of Kochi who gives a bright image of Mar Gabriel, gives a dull picture about Mar Thoma IV (Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 42.) Leslie Brown assumes that Mar Gabriel, as a white man, was able to convince the Dutch better.(Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 117)

⁴⁰² Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar... Op. Cit.*, P 177

Dutch.⁴⁰³ He used the negative attitude of the Protestant Dutch against the Roman Catholic Church by convincing them that "all the trouble had been caused by Papists and Jesuits."⁴⁰⁴ Even though he was welcomed with enthusiasm and got signed a letter of obedience by the dissidents, he became obscured because of his character.⁴⁰⁵ Even at this stage, he was asked by the Dutch to stay in India "to prevent the Catholics from making inroads to his flock."⁴⁰⁶ Mar Ivanios, perhaps with the knowledge of the Dutch intention to reform the Nazranis from the Roman impurities, wrote to the Dutch authorities on January 16, AD 1748 "that he had found the Syrian Christians' ignorance gross, and their mode of living beastly, wishing therefore to obtain priests from Antioch." For this purpose, he asked money from the Dutch which was duly granted.⁴⁰⁷

During this time, Mar Thoma V tired of Mar Ivanios, requested deacon Antonios to bring one good West Syrian bishop. It was the latter's suggestion to invite Mar Sakrallah who was residing at Beruva. Mar Thoma V gave a letter to the Patriarch of Antioch as deacon Antonios instructed.⁴⁰⁸ In the mean time, Mar Ivanios also wrote to Mar Sakrallah.⁴⁰⁹ The Patriarch of Antioch found this as a golden opportunity to expand his dominion. He promoted Mar Sakrallah as *Mafrian* and sent a full array of clergy including a metropolitan, an Episcopa, one Remban, one Cor-Episcopa, priests and deacons along with the newly appointed Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah. They reached Kochi on *Medom* 24, AD 1751 with "enough *Saith*, *Mooron*, books along with staff, cross, mitre and *Staticon* to consecrate the ruling Mar Thoma Metran as Mar Dionysius Metropolitan."⁴¹⁰ Their assignment by the Patriarch of Antioch to consecrate Mar Thoma Episcopa as Mar Dionysius Metropolitan was a clear act of imposing supremacy of the former over the Nazranis. P. Cherian suspects that the title 'Mar Thoma' irritated the

⁴⁰³ Perumthottam, *Period of Decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 196 –7

⁴⁰⁴ Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 212

⁴⁰⁵ Perumthottam, *Period of Decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 195 –6, 200

⁴⁰⁶ Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 212

⁴⁰⁷ Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 212 –3. In his travelogue in Syriac, Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah, confirms that Mar Ivanios borrowed money (Rupees 2,000) from the Dutch East India Company. (Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 157 –9) Leslie Brown is sceptical about the authenticity of this MSS since E. M. Philip did not disclosed the source. (Brown, *The Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P. 120.) Patriarch Aphram I published the Syriac manuscript of Mafrian Baselius Shukkur Allah titled 'Journey to Malabar.' (Barsoum, *History of Syriac...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 169-70.)

⁴⁰⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 86

⁴⁰⁹ It is stated in the travelogue mentioned above that deacon Antonios brought letters of both Mar Thoma V and Mar Ivanios to him. (Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 159) Perhaps Mar Ivanios planed to use him as a teacher for which he borrowed money from the Dutch.

⁴¹⁰ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 86-7

Patriarch since it symbolizes the independent nature of the Nazranis. He doubts "Was this an indication that the Antiochene prelates thought it inadvisable to continue for the Malankara Metrans a title which was reminiscent of the independence which the Malabar Syrian Church enjoyed till then at least in internal matters?"⁴¹¹ The doubt seems true since Mar Thoma V refused to accept the re-consecration till his death.⁴¹²

The new bishops, invited to cure the problems made by Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast, repeat the same immediately upon their arrival.⁴¹³ Hence, Mar Thoma V refused to pay their ship fare to the Dutch East India Company as he agreed.⁴¹⁴ *Niranam Grandhvari* describes the events that led to the refusal of making payments by Mar Thoma V as "[Even before the representatives of Mar Thoma V reached Kochi] Nllemmootil Kathanar of Kothamangalam reached there. Upon seeing him, they [the newly arrived bishops] shaved his head, re-ordained him and caped him."⁴¹⁵ This was an indication for Mar Thoma V that the newly arrived bishops did not recognize his authority, ordination and the on going tradition of Nazranis. It was also clear that they were not better than Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast who was deported, by the advice of the newly arrived West Syrians, by the Dutch authorities.⁴¹⁶ The further act of Mar Baselius and his companions are described by *Niranam Grandhvari* as "[Just like Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast] they too ignore the *Edathile Maryada* [law of the land], shaved the head of the *Kathanars*, re-ordained them. Four *Kathanars*, Kompan of Kandandu, Konaden of Mamalacherry, Chndanathy of Mulamthuruthy⁴¹⁷ and in the south [a *Kathanar* of] Chathanoor, were married.⁴¹⁸ In this way, they neglected the authority."⁴¹⁹

According to some authors, the dispute arose in between Mar Thoma V and Mafrian Mar Baselius because the former refused to submit for

⁴¹¹ Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, P 54

⁴¹² For more details, see the title 'Validity of consecration' in this chapter.

⁴¹³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 87

⁴¹⁴ There are different opinions about this amount. It is generally said as rupees twelve thousand. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 88 -9, 208) Paulinus states as Rupees 4,000. (Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 121) According to Mar Sakrallah, it was Rupees 12,000 including the their passage fare, accommodation, the money borrowed by them and by Mar Ivanios. (Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 157-9)

⁴¹⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 87

⁴¹⁶ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 87 -9. The government of Kochi arrested him for robbing the silver- were of three churches. (Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 119)

⁴¹⁷ Here, the *Kathanars* are referred with their family names in the traditional way.

⁴¹⁸ According to the West Syrian tradition, the priests should not marry. If they wish to marry, it should be done before their ordination as a priest. Hence, this act is against the West Syrian practice, which they wish to introduce.

⁴¹⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 89.

re-consecration.⁴²⁰ Even though this demand of Patriarch of Antioch existed, the points of dispute arose because of other reasons, which is recorded in *Niranam Grandhavari* as "[The newly arrived bishops] insisted that the 'law of the land'⁴²¹ permitted to follow by Mar Ivanios, who demised at Mulamthuruthy,⁴²² is insufficient. They also insisted that the practices and the law, purified after the reformation [of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah] of the spiritually important elements, which are still following are not satisfactory."⁴²³ It is very clear that Mar Baselius and his companions wished to reform the traditions of the Nazranis in the West Syrian way which was just a continuation of what Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast began. They received followers, partly convinced and partly just due to the opposition to Mar Thoma V, to support them.⁴²⁴ The West Syrian bishops openly entered into the administration of the Church neglecting the real prelate Mar Thoma by exploiting local disputes.⁴²⁵ The letter of the Patriarch Geevarghese II to Mar Thoma V dated *Chingam* 25, 2064 Greek era confirms that the dispute was about the tradition and customs apart from re-consecration and supremacy of the Patriarch.

We sent them unto your midst that the weeds viz; the practices sown amidst you, from among the Nestorians and others, may be rooted out. And you: you have accepted their practices and do not follow [*lit: use*] the practices of the Syrians. On account of your [*destroyed*] this hath befallen you. I say that the practices you have adopted are contrary to those of the forefathers of us, Syrians...I now command unto you ...that you should root out from you all alien and foreign customs and practices. To avoid lengthening the writing; it is not necessary that you should be reminded of the practices of us, or of the practices of others.⁴²⁶

The Dutch, partially to recover their money and partially because of their fear that the conflicts within the Nazrani community will help the Roman Catholics, took initiative in reconciliation attempts most of which failed.⁴²⁷ According to Leslie Brown, the Dutch succeeded in making an agreement

⁴²⁰ For more details, see the title 'Validity of Consecration' in this chapter. E. M. Philip states that the re-consecration was not took place because just because of the inability to pay the passage money demanded by the Dutch, even though Mar Thoma V desperately looking for that opportunity. (Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 156 -7) This argument is not matching with other contemporary documents.

⁴²¹ Used in Malayalam as *Edathile Maryada*

⁴²² Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah

⁴²³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 89

⁴²⁴ For more details see the title ' The change of Tradition' in this chapter

⁴²⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 89-90. See also the title 'Personal Conflicts' in this chapter.

⁴²⁶ *Seminary Case Book*, Vol. III *Op. Cit.*, Pp 53 -4

⁴²⁷ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 89

between Mar Thoma V and the West Syrians in AD 1754.⁴²⁸ The Dutch made it executed through Marthanda Varma, the King of Travancore, after their meeting with him at Mavelikkara in AD 1753.⁴²⁹ By this treaty signed on *Dhanu* 18, AD 1754 with the knowledge of the *Malankara Pally Yogam*, the West Syrians were forced to accept most claims of Mar Thoma V. It was a letter of acceptance by Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah rather than an agreement, which reads as follows.

I, Basilius Catholica, give this command, which is an agreement, unto my son, Mar Thoma. My son I give you this agreement that, so long as you follow the Living Holy Ghost and *Aboon Mar Ignatius* Patriarch of Antioch, I shall not, without your consent, ordain any priest or deacon in Malayalam: and further: as to the usages, that priests who have shaved their beards and have adopted the wearing of caps shall continue to do so; that, Henceforth, the faith and rituals, made extant by Mar Thoma Metran who died at Kantanad, under orders of Mar Ivanios Metran shall be maintained; that none shall be ordained without the paper of Mar Thoma Episcopa and that vicars approved of by both parties alone shall be appointed to churches. And Mar Gregorius Metropolitan, and Mar Ivanios Episcopa have consented; accordingly...He who deviates from these terms is put out of the Edavagay. Executed with the knowledge of the 19 churches of the south and the 4 churches beginning with Cottayam.⁴³⁰

This treaty clearly states that the disputes arose because of the attempts of the West Syrians to interfere in the Church administration and to reform the traditions of the Nazranis that were restricted by this treaty. Though this treaty was a clear victory for Mar Thoma V and his faction supporting his stand, the West Syrians, according to Z. M. Paret, were able to make the Nazranis feel "some authority to the Patriarch of Antioch over Nazranis" in that treaty since they were well versed in bargaining.⁴³¹ However, the West Syrians did not honour their agreement. According to Adriaan Moens, they went on with their parallel administration and reforms as in the past.⁴³² Mar Thoma V abides with this agreement in the beginning. He later was in good terms with Dharma Raja, the

⁴²⁸ Brown, *Indian Christians...Op. Cit.*, P 120. *Niranam Grandhavari* acknowledges a treaty signed at Puthiacavu, Mavalikkara, but not giving any details. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 89)

⁴²⁹ Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 177

⁴³⁰ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 258 -9

⁴³¹ Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, P 19 See also, the title 'The Patriarch' in this chapter.

⁴³² Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 177

successor of Marthanda Varma, and started violating the agreement,⁴³³ which probably means the expulsion of Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah from Travancore.⁴³⁴

After the demise of Mar Thoma V in AD 1765, his successor, Mar Thoma VI, took the office of the church. He too faced the threat of the remaining two West Syrian bishops⁴³⁵ in the form of a double regime.⁴³⁶ The activities of the West Syrians after the treaty of 1754 AD are available from the *plain Cadjen*⁴³⁷ bond executed by Porakkattukulangari Matthunni Tharakan of Adavor to Mar Thoma VI on the first *Medom* 941 (AD 1766).

By this *Kycheef* agree, that neither I nor anyone connected with my family, will, hereafter follow the rites and ceremonies of foreigners, or cause any such rites to be performed in the churches; and I do herewith pay a fine of Rupees 1,200 for having my son ordained by foreign *Metrans*, without the consent and sanction of the congregation of Kadampanad and In direct violation of the existing customs of these churches; for refusing to present my son [the newly ordained deacon] to the Kadampanad congregation at their request; and for having the rites and ceremonies of foreigners performed by the said deacon in the church.⁴³⁸

This document confirms that the West Syrian bishops went on with their activities without any respect to the agreement they executed in AD 1754. Mar Thoma VI, who shows a zeal for unity of Nazranis throughout his office, went for reconciliation with the West Syrians. According to *Niranam Grandhavari*, his way of thinking towards reconciliation is as follows.

Since the people of our own fought as enemies in the disputes with the foreigners, it is difficult to retain this office since both the sides have money and men with them and there is no chance for peace so

⁴³³ Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 177. *Niranam Grandhavari* confirms a friendly meeting in between Dharma Raja and Mar Thoma V at Mavelikara in between AD 1764 and AD 1765. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 89, 206)

⁴³⁴ Adriaan Moens, always favouring the West Syrians, reported that "he not only caused dissension and discord between the Bishops and their communities, but also obtained in the year 1760, for his cousin, an inexperienced young man, the dignity of Bishop, in order that he might become his heir and successor after his death. The Archbishop Mar Baselius and his two suffragan bishops were much chagrined and displeased by this, and the former took up his abode in a house at Mattanchery, just a little outside this town, where after a lapse of three years he died in the year 1763." (Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 177) Rev. Kuruvilla adds with this that he bought the land at Mattancherry with the help of the Dutch Company (Kuruvilla, *Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 73) Ittoop also states about the recommendation of the Dutch Company in this matter. (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 129) Perhaps Mafrian escaped to the immunity of the Dutch Kochi to escape from the displeasure of Mar Thoma V and the King of Travancore for violating the above stated agreement.

⁴³⁵ Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah demised in AD 1764.

⁴³⁶ *Niranam Grandhavari* confirms that Mar Thoma VI was well aware about this double regime. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 90)

⁴³⁷ = Unregistered Palm leaf

⁴³⁸ *Seminary Case Book*, Vol. III *Op. Cit.*, P 259

far as two authorities exist. The *Maargam* itself will demolish due to the division of *Puthencoor* people as two against the way of the God... that also creates different rites and ceremonies in the churches and invites the teasing of the people of the other [*Pazhaya*] *coor*.⁴³⁹

As the part of these efforts,⁴⁴⁰ Mar Thoma VI consented to get promoted as Mar Dionysius Metropolitan by the remaining two West Syrian bishops in AD 1770.⁴⁴¹ The peace attained by this existed only for a very short period. Mar Ivanios, the younger between the remaining two West Syrian bishops, remained obedient to Mar Dionysius I till his death without causing any more trouble. Whereas Mar Gregorius went on with his rebellion and consecrated another Indian priest, Kattumangattu Kurian Remban, as Mar Coorilos to form a parallel authority against Mar Dionysius in AD 1772.⁴⁴²

Mar Dionysius, with the strong political support, expelled Mar Coorilos with the help of Mar Ivanios. Mar Ivanios became the advisor and the teacher of Mar Dionysius.⁴⁴³ It was virtually the end of any relevance for the presence of West Syrian bishops. Mar Gregorius passed away in AD 1773 and Mar Ivanios in AD 1794. Another West Syrian bishop Mar Diascoros arrived in AD 1805. He claimed authority over Nazranis as the Catholicos but nothing to do against the powerful regime of Mar Dionysius.⁴⁴⁴ Mar Dionysius accepted him as a guest. However, the *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Niranam on *Vrischikam* 30, AD 1807 refused him⁴⁴⁵ who behaved like a mad man.⁴⁴⁶ The British deported him in AD 1808.

Mar Diascoros too, gained supporters. As seen thorough out the eighteenth century, it was neither doctrinal nor based on principles but for challenging the authority of the governing Indian bishop.⁴⁴⁷ Throughout the eighteenth century, the rebellions of the Indian prelates concentrated around the visiting Syrian bishops. However, the strong political protection extended to the legitimate head of Nazranis from the time of Dharma Raja of Travancore onwards prevented the later arrivals from making troubles to the administration of the

⁴³⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 90

⁴⁴⁰ Adriaan Moens claims that the reconciliation was took place due to his "intercession and constant exhortations." (Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 178)

⁴⁴¹ For details see the title 'Validity of Consecration' in this chapter

⁴⁴² For more details, see the title 'The change of Tradition' in this chapter.

⁴⁴³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 90

⁴⁴⁴ For more details see the title 'The Catholicos' in this chapter

⁴⁴⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 116-7

⁴⁴⁶ *Niranam Grandhavari* states, after describing several misbehaviours of Mar Diascoros, that still much more remaining to say about his character. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 114-5)

⁴⁴⁷ See the title 'Personal conflicts' in this chapter.

Church. This eliminated all scopes of the West Syrian bishops among Nazranis by the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The Syrian bishops also did not act upon principles. Their sole interest was in getting the administration of Nazranis. The dwindling nature of Mar Gabriel in between the East Syrian and Roman Catholic theology, the dropping of the demand for re-consecration by Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah, their breach of contract and the consecration of Mar Coorilos are the evidences for this vested interest. It is also worthy to note that none of the Syrian bishops in India during the eighteenth century returned willingly⁴⁴⁸ even at the extreme adverse situations and still had the chances to do so.⁴⁴⁹ Perhaps the observation of George Milne Rae as "most of the foreign prelates that came to Malabar were mere adventurers, and not a few of them unscrupulous men, altogether unworthy of the position to which they aspired"⁴⁵⁰ is true since Anquetil du Peron observed Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah as "He spoke sparingly. He appeared to be an ignorant monk, whom poverty had compelled to travel abroad. He often fasted and lived a life of solitude and silence."⁴⁵¹ Perhaps the Patriarch of Antioch and his wandering, poverty-stricken monks considered Nazranis as a gold mine. Those who were sent over here never returned since they had no other better pastoral ground to go.

Parallel Administration

The enthronement of Mar Thoma VI as Mar Dionysius I was a setback to the anti-Pakalomattom faction in respect of administration. This eliminated the possibility to challenge the Pakalomattom Metrans with the question of the invalidity of consecration.⁴⁵² Another person disappointed by that enthronement was Mar Gregorius Yoochanon. After long years of struggle,⁴⁵³ he was forced to retire to Kayamkulam church assigned for his residence by Mar Dionysius I and

⁴⁴⁸ Two of them were deported and the rest were died in India

⁴⁴⁹ For example, the Corepiscopa and the priest arrived along with Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah, returned with all donations received till then. (Ittoop, *Malayalathulia...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 129)

⁴⁵⁰ Quoted by Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 149

⁴⁵¹ Quoted by Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 151

⁴⁵² For more details, see the title 'Validity of consecration' in this chapter.

⁴⁵³ He arrived in Kerala in AD 1751. After the demise of Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah in AD 1764, he took the leadership of the West Syrians. After the enthronement of Mar Dionysius I in AD 1770, he was forced to retreat.

lost what little authority he had enjoyed.⁴⁵⁴ *Niranam Grandhavari* gives the following description about the events afterwards.

When Mar Ivanios Episcopa was residing at Puthiacavu and Mar Dionysius Metropolitan was residing at Omalloor, Kattumangattu Remban⁴⁵⁵ decides to be consecrated as a bishop and went to Kayamkulam. [He] get the permission through writing by some one else to Omalloor⁴⁵⁶ to treat for the eye disease of Mar Gregorius. [He] immediately called a boat and took Mar Gregorius to Kochi and stayed at Mattancherry. Celebrated the Holy Eucharist by Kattadi Kuruvilla Kathanar and consecrated [Kattumangattu Remban] as Mar Coorilos Metropolitan on Friday the *Meenom* 12, 947 ME that is AD 1772. There after received the *Theetturam*⁴⁵⁷ of the *Parumpadappil Thampuram*⁴⁵⁸ *Neettu*⁴⁵⁹ from *Palityathachen*⁴⁶⁰ and a paper from the fort⁴⁶¹ and lived with great respect. In between, [he] brought the Metropolitan [Mar Gregorius] from Kochi to Mulamthuruthy and stayed there.⁴⁶²

According to Rev. K. Kuruvilla, Kattumangattu Kathanar was raised as *Remban*⁴⁶³ by Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah with the intention to consecrate him as a bishop against Mar Thoma V. Mar Gregorius just fulfilled their earlier plan by consecrating him as Mar Coorilos.⁴⁶⁴ E. M. Philip gives a slightly different picture.

And [after the enthronement of Mar Dionysius I] Mar Gregorius retired to the church at Mattancheri built by Mar Baselius, and was maintained at the expense of Mar Dionysius. Gradually he became blind and in his old age he was ministered by a monk, Kattoomangat Geevarghese Remban...He made approaches to Mar Gregorius to consecrate him bishop. The latter who had entertained ill-feeling towards Mar Dionysius, probably because of irregularities in forwarding the sums necessary for his expenses, readily fell in with the proposal and consecrated the Remban under the title Kurilos on the 17th of November 1772, without the knowledge or approval of Mar Ivanios and Mar Dionysius.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁵⁴ Till then the West Syrian bishops were giving ordinations unlawfully, and at least were consulted in the appointment of the vicars. (This is dealt elsewhere in this chapter)

⁴⁵⁵ Kattumangattu Kurian Remban was a student of Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah and a scholar in West Syrian tradition. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 90)

⁴⁵⁶ From Mar Dionysius I

⁴⁵⁷ =Royal Order

⁴⁵⁸ King of Kochi

⁴⁵⁹ =Letter from chieftain

⁴⁶⁰ The traditional ministers of Kochi

⁴⁶¹ The Dutch authorities of Kochi fort

⁴⁶² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 91

⁴⁶³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 90

⁴⁶⁴ Kuruvilla, *Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 73 -5

⁴⁶⁵ Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 161 -2

Ittoop, after giving a similar but detailed description of the event narrates the post-consecration events as follows:

On being consecrated, this Mar Coorilos obtained *Theettoram* from Cochin, *Theetu* from *Paliyom* and writ [*lit: paper*] from the commander of the Dutch Company, and issued *Sadhanoms* to the churches in Cochin and together with the people who had come from the Mulanthuruthu, Karingasra and other churches began to move about grandly in the capacity of *Metran*. Meanwhile, as Mar Gregorius Metropolitan had become advanced in years, and weak and sickly, he resolved that before his death Mar Coorilos should be given the right to succeed his assets and accordingly executed a will and constituted Mar Korilos his successor. This will was executed by Mar Gregorius at the Muttomchery church on the 23rd Magarom 1772 AD.⁴⁶⁶

The above quoted passages give the following information.

1. The consecration of Mar Coorilos was without the consent of Mar Dionysius I or *Malankara Pally Yogam*
2. The said consecration was not an individual act of Mar Coorilos since there were people to write for him and accept him after the consecration.
3. Mar Gregorius willingly consecrated Mar Coorilos.
4. Mar Coorilos received the Royal proclamation from Kochi.⁴⁶⁷

After his enthronement in AD 1770, Mar Dionysius I made the West Syrian bishops retire at a pension and did not allow them to enter into the administration of the Church.⁴⁶⁸ Mar Ivanios acknowledged his fate and accepted the role of adviser till his death.⁴⁶⁹ However, it seems that Mar Gregorius was not satisfied with the situation because of the loss of power and of the income derived through his parallel administration.⁴⁷⁰ The lack of proper maintenance was not found as a genuine reason to sabotage the peace and harmony since he was a rich man then⁴⁷¹ and his colleague Mar Ivanios was in good terms with Mar Dionysius. Perhaps the ambitious Kattumangattu Remban gathered the opponents of Mar Dionysius I and tapped the disappointment of Mar Gregorius. It

⁴⁶⁶ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 130 –132. This translation is from the *Seminary Case Book Vol. III*.

⁴⁶⁷ For the full text of the royal proclamation, see Curian, *Oru Prakaranam, Op. Cit.*, Pp 59 –60 and *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 142- 3)

⁴⁶⁸ Brown, *Indian Christians...* *Op. Cit.*, P 121, Kuruvilla, *Prakaranam, Op. Cit.*, P 74

⁴⁶⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 91 –8

⁴⁷⁰ See the title 'Income of Bishops' in this chapter

⁴⁷¹ According to his will AD 1772; his worldly assets worth were more than 2,000 *Pathaks* [Gold Ducats]. (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 132)

is very clear that Mar Coorilos established a parallel administration at Kochi with the support of the several local churches and with the royal credentials. To obtain the royal credentials, Mar Coorilos not only spent money, but tactfully used the politics in between Kochi and Travancore also. With this, he was able to obtain a proclamation from Kochi to govern all *Puthencoor* Nazranis as Mar Dionysius I obtained from Travancore in AD 1766.⁴⁷²

Mar Dionysius I used the same politics to get rid of this new threat. He, with the support of Mar Ivanios and of *Malankara Pally Yogam*, complained to the Travancore government⁴⁷³ and the case was heard by the Dutch authority at Kochi that decreed against Mar Coorilos and he was de-robed at Kandanadu.⁴⁷⁴ Mar Dionysius I received a royal proclamation from Kochi in this respect.⁴⁷⁵ Eventually Mar Coorilos was forced to withdraw from Kochi and settled in the territory of *Zamorin*.⁴⁷⁶

Even though Mar Coorilos was expelled from Travancore and Kochi, the troubles were not over. He tried to intervene in the administration of Nazranis. The opportunists like Pulikkottil Ittoop Kathanar approached him and obtained ecclesial dignities.⁴⁷⁷ Mar Dionysius I imposed rigours punishments over them to maintain law and order.⁴⁷⁸ According to *Naalagamam*, Mar Coorilos used even the innocent children to upset the legitimate administration by ordaining them without the consent of their parents.⁴⁷⁹ As the crown of all such acts, he consecrated a person who absconded from Travancore and Kochi for multiple immoralities as a bishop to show the 'play of bishop' that is to mimic Mar Dionysius I.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷² He admitted both facts in his letters to Sakthen Tampuran of Kochi (*Puthazhathu, Sakthen Thampuran, Op. Cit.*, Pp 285 -9)

⁴⁷³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarī, Op. Cit.*, P 92

⁴⁷⁴ *Naalagamam MSS*, P 145, Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 132 -133

⁴⁷⁵ For the full text of the *Theettooram*, (writ) issued in the matter by the Cochin State, to Mar Thoma Metran alias Mar Dionysius see Curian, *Oru Prakaranam, Op. Cit.*, Pp 59 -60 and *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 143)

⁴⁷⁶ "Mar Kurilos raised a faction, but the dispute was decided against him by the Rajas of Travancore and of Cochin. Thereupon, he escaped to British Malabar, where he founded a church at Thoziyur [also called Anjoor] and spent his remaining life in seclusion" (Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 162)

⁴⁷⁷ According to *Naalagamam*, Four *Kathanars* including Pulikkottil Ittoop Kathanar received the dignity of *Remban* from Mar Coorilos (*Naalagamam MSS*, P 148)

⁴⁷⁸ The Kochi administration confiscated the properties of Ittoop Remban and imposed a fine of 7,000 *Puthen* (a coin of Kochi) to the brother of Mar Coorilos. Further, in *Meenom* 966 ME, Ittoop Kathanar went to Chengannor and admitted his guilt to Mar Dionysius I in writing. Several ordinations of Mar Coorilos were nullified in this manner. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarī, Op. Cit.*, P 95) Perhaps they were fined also in the usual manner.

⁴⁷⁹ *Naalagamam* report a specific case in that manner (*Naalagamam MSS*, P 149)

⁴⁸⁰ 'Play of bishop' is a phrase used by Ittoop (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 153) The details of him is available from *Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 150 -1

Even though Mar Dionysius I succeeded in expelling Mar Coorilos from his territory, the former even attempted for a compromise but failed due to negligence of Mar Coorilos towards his requests.⁴⁸¹ However, Mar Coorilos established a bishopric at Anjur with amenities for its continuation.⁴⁸² After the demise of Mar Dionysius I, those who were supporting Mar Coorilos tried to insert his successor to the mainstream of Nazranis but failed.⁴⁸³ However, the Anjur bishopric became helpful to the Nazranis to provide valid consecration to Mar Dionysius II, III, and IV and avoid further West Syrian domination in the nineteenth century.⁴⁸⁴

The Pakalomattom Lineage

After the up gradation of Archdeaconate into Episcopate in AD 1653,⁴⁸⁵ the Pakalomattom lineage became the symbol of unity and self-government of Nazranis. They were never ready to surrender or even share their authority with anyone.⁴⁸⁶ However, the Syrian bishops arrived during the eighteenth century, from Mar Gabriel to Mar Dioscoros, tried to attain the control over Nazranis by expelling the Pakalomattom lineage, in which they always failed. The Nazranis, at least the majority, refused to overthrow their traditional prelates, *Jathikkukarthavyan* from power.

After the division between the Orthodox and Romo-Syrians, that was effected in the first half of the eighteenth century, the Pakalomattom family of Kuravalingadu fell under the Roman Catholic faction. Even then, the Mar Thoma bishops were selected from there under hereditary succession. Fr. Bernard states as "All Mar Thoma bishops were selected from the Pakalomattom family of Kuravalingadu. Since that church was in *Pazhayacoor*, the *Puthecoor* bishops took one among them in their childhood as his successor. He [Mar Dionysius I] too was selected like this by his predecessor and raised along with him."⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸¹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 95-6

⁴⁸² Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 134

⁴⁸³ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 188

⁴⁸⁴ Rev. Ittyerah Eapen evaluate the establishment of Anjur bishopric in such a manner (Eapan, Rev. Ittyerah, *Oru Viruthu Prakaranam*, Kottayam, 1871, P 67) Paret went further and considering the establishment of Anjur bishopric as the turning of "rejected stone as the corner stone." (Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. III*, *Op. Cit.*, 127-34) Even Kidangan Mar Philaxinos perform as acting Malankara Metran twice after the sudden demise of Mar Dionysius II and III.

⁴⁸⁵ For more details see the title 'Mar Thoma Bishops' in chapter V

⁴⁸⁶ During his last years, Mar Gabriel tried to compromise with Mar Thoma IV but failed. (Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 117)

⁴⁸⁷ Alanchery, *Marthoma Christianikal*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 640-1

This led to the later claims of Roman Catholics that the Mar Thoma Metrans were always eager to surrender to the Roman Catholic Church, which in fact is found untrue. Mar Thoma Metrans always resisted the colonial suppression of the Roman Catholic Church till the end of that lineage.⁴⁸⁸ Even the Roman Catholic faction of Nazranis considered the rule of Pakalomattom as their hope for a self-government and unification of Nazrani *Jathy*. Parammekkal Thomman Kathanar wrote as follows "If Mar Thoma unified with the Holy [Roman] Church, you [the European bishops] and your people have no further chance to stay here"⁴⁸⁹ The foreign prelates, both Roman Catholic and West Syrian, were well aware that their attempts for total suppression would not come into effect so far as the Pakalomattom lineage remained in power. Hence, both the Europeans and the West Syrians took their own measures for the expulsion or at least to dilute the power of Pakalomattom bishops.

The Romo-Syrians were unable to raise any one among them as a bishop after the death of Parmabil Chandy. The European prelates of them placed obstacles to the unification of the Nazrani *Jathy* under Mar Dionysius I even though it may lead to the submission of all Nazranis to the Roman Catholic Church.⁴⁹⁰ In the meantime, Mar Dionysius I insisted on the consecration of his successor Mar Thoma VII that ensured an indigenous Episcopal succession.⁴⁹¹

The West Syrians first attempted to suppress the Pakalomattom lineage by taking the office of the Church.⁴⁹² Upon the failure of this, their attempts were concentrated on making the Mar Thoma bishops accept the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch.⁴⁹³ Even though that was got accepted, it was not enough to impose their effective control over Nazranis. Then they tried to introduce a

⁴⁸⁸ For more details, see the title 'Unification Attempts' in this chapter.

⁴⁸⁹ Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, P 334

⁴⁹⁰ The *Varthamanappusthakam* of Parammekkal Thomman Kathanar provides detailed account of those obstacles.

⁴⁹¹ During his meeting with Paulinus, who visited Mar Dionysius I with the intention to convert him into Roman Catholic Church on December 22, AD 1785, reported that "He [Mar Dionysius I] postponed the main subject of discussion to another time and expressed his intention to consecrate his nephew as his successor." (Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 118) He consecrated his nephew as Mar Thoma VII on Medom 24, AD 1796 while the attempts of Mathu Tharakan was proceeding to absorb Mar Dionysius I into Roman Church (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 98)

⁴⁹² George Varghese argues that the attempts to deport Mar Thoma V to Battavia, for his failure of making the ship fare of Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah and his party to Dutch East India Company, was a part of planned conspiracy to eliminate Mar Thoma to took over his office by Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah. (Varghese, *Malankara...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, P 143) This may be true since Mar Thoma V ordained his nephew (later Mar Dionysius I) as a priest during his waiting for deportation (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 88 -9)

⁴⁹³ For more details see the title ' West Syrian Bishops' in this chapter

parallel administration by consecrating a dissident Indian priest as a bishop.⁴⁹⁴ But none of these attempts could reduce the power of Pakalomattom. Even though some of them are said as weak,⁴⁹⁵ Mar Dionysius I was great in all respect.⁴⁹⁶ After his demise, the Pakalomattom lineage begins declining⁴⁹⁷ and hence, its opponents gained power to challenge them.

Even at this stage, it was impossible to topple the dignity of Pakalomattom. After the demise of Mar Thoma VII, the dissidents demanded the change of the hierarchs because they were not from the proper Pakalomattom family.⁴⁹⁸ Their attempts to expel Mar Thoma VIII with the help of Col. Munro failed since the latter declined to pronounce any verdict on their petition till the demise of Mar Thoma VIII.⁴⁹⁹ However, after the demise of Mar Thoma VIII, the circumstances became favourable to the anti-Pakalomattom faction due to several reasons.⁵⁰⁰ The chief among them was the inefficiency of the Pakalomattom family to produce a powerful successor. Even the trend was favourable for a change and the civil authorities strongly demanded the consecration of Pulikkottil Ittoop Remban as the bishop of Nazranis,⁵⁰¹ Kidangan Mar Philaxinos of Anjur, who was asked to consecrate Ittoop Remban as a bishop, was afraid to abolish the

⁴⁹⁴ For more details see the title 'Parallel Administration' in this chapter

⁴⁹⁵ Jacob Canter Visscher observes Mar Thoma IV as such (Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 42)

⁴⁹⁶ "Even though Mar Thoma Metran is a heretic, he is the most respected in our *Jathy*... Because Mar Thoma have nothing weak in temporalities." (Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, Pp 61, 334)

⁴⁹⁷ Mar Thoma VIII was not capable enough to suppress the opposition raised by the *Rembans*. Ittoop states about Mar Thoma IX alias Ipe Metran as "The Ipe *Metran* mentioned above, was old, inefficient and slow." (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 191)

⁴⁹⁸ Mar Thoma VII onwards were from the Kadamattom branch of Pakalomattom family. Mar Thoma IV sent them to reside at Kadamattom to succeed the legendary *Kadamattathu Kathanar*. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 125) However, Ittoop Remban and his faction accused that Mar Thoma VIII was not from Pakalomattom family but became a successor through female line and hence not eligible for became the prelate of Nazranis. (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 154) However, *Niranam Grandhavari* gives a detailed genealogy that proves that Mar Thoma VIII to IX were from the male line of Pakalomattom family. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 125 – 7)

⁴⁹⁹ Both the *Metrans* and *Rembans* party complained to Col. Munro against each other. The case was heard at different sittings from Nilakkamukku to Kuttalam for a long time (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 154 –190) But No verdict was made till the demise of Mar Thoma VIII (Varghese, *Malankara...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 223 –4)

⁵⁰⁰ According to Ittoop, Ittoop Remban wishes to reside Kidangan Mar Philaxinos at Kottayam seminary upon its establishment. However, it was not realized due to the opposition of Mar Thoma VIII. (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 188) It indicates that Mar Thoma VIII was powerful even during his last days.

⁵⁰¹ Col. Munro gave the interest of *Vattippanam* of four years to Ittoop Remban for the construction of the seminary. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 121) The Madras government raised audit objection against this act of Col. Munro since only the bishop of Nazranis is entitled to receive the interest of *Vattippaqqnam*. Col. Munro asked Ittoop Remban to become a bishop or to refund the amount to escape from this situation. And hence, Kidangan Mar Philaxinos consecrated him. (Varghese, *Malankara...Vol. I, Op. Cit.*, Pp 223 –4 and Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, Pp 126 –7, Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 177)

Pakalomattom lineage. His bull to Chengannur provides a clear picture of the final stages of Pakalomattom dynasty.

The honourable Col. Munro *Sahib Avergal* has been recommending to Us that Ausep [Joseph] Remban who was ordained as Remban by the Pakalomattom family should be consecrated by Us as Metropolitan: The holy Apostle Mar Thomas, the founder of the *Edavagay* in Malankarai conferred the prelatical office for the *Edavagay*, on the Pakalomattom family; and the successive Mar Thoma *Metrans* of that family have been tending and governing the *Edavagay*. We learn that the Mar Thoma *Metran* who now holds the office is not one born in that family and thereby entitled to the office, but one who was a Roman Catholic Kathanar and a member of a Roman Catholic distant branch of the late Mar Thoma Metropolitan's family and got down by him and consecrated, and that some of the *Pallikkar* dislike this Metropolitan's rule as he is not a fit and competent person for the office. We think and fear whether the transfer of the Metropolitanship from this family in which Holy Mar Thoma conferred the prelatical office which has remained, therein for years past, from the beginning, and the consecration of Yousep [Joseph] Remban who is no way related to the said family would be just. And whether it might not lead to more serious ruptures. Therefore, We think it proper to do it after ascertaining the view of the entire *Edavagay* in Malankarai. The *Sahib Avergal* [Resident] insists that Avusep [Joseph] Remban should be appointed...As it is found necessary to know your views and desire as to abolishing the prelatical office of the Pakalomattom family. As the family has become extinct, and to choosing one from another family and consecrating him to tend and govern the *Edavagay*, you should hold a Synod, consider this matter, come to a conclusion and forthwith send to Us from that parish not less than two Kathanars. And the required member of laymen to give *Deshakuri* [Local consent] to the person that may be chosen as *Metran* and bear testimony before Us that the person chosen is a good and trustworthy person. As it is not contrary to our canon another fit person to tend and govern the *Edavagay* since Pakalomattom family has become extinct, We think that it is our duty and responsibility to consecrate one according to the *Sahib Avargal's* [Resident's] recommendation and your request.⁵⁰²

This bull gives the following information.

1. There was an argument that Mar Thoma VIII does not belong to Pakalomattom family and hence, no right to hold the office.
2. Some people dislike the administration of Mar Thoma VIII
3. Col. Munro demanded the consecration of Ittoop Remban
4. Mar Philaxinos was afraid to liquidate the Pakalomattom lineage.

⁵⁰² *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit., Pp 271 -2*

5. He demanded the consent of *Malankara Pally Yogam* to consecrate some one not from Pakalomattom family.

Col. Munro, in his reply to the Madras corresponding committee in AD 1815, states as "the internal dissensions among the Syrians have increased since Remban Joseph has been elected to the office of Bishop"⁵⁰³ This letter confirms that some sort of election, perhaps as demanded by Mar Philaxinos, took place regarding the consecration of Ittoop Remban. It also confirms that the said consecration was also challenged. Perhaps this dispute led to the Royal proclamation of Travancore on *Makaram* 21, AD 1816 followed by that of Kochi regarding the appointment of Mar Dionysius II as the legitimate bishop of Nazranis.⁵⁰⁴

The consecration of Ittoop Remban as Mar Dionysius II was not only the end of the Pakalomattom lineage⁵⁰⁵ and opening of the Episcopate to all the Nazranis, but also the end of the Episcopal title as Mar Thoma. It also symbolizes the end of *Edathile Maryada* and the beginning of West Syrian tradition in the bishopric of Nazranis.⁵⁰⁶ However, the right of selection of bishops had gone to the hands of *Malankara Pally Yogam* henceforth,⁵⁰⁷ the end of hereditary succession and the deep political involvement in it led to other consequences. It ignited endless disputes regarding the consecration. G. B. Howard states about the consecration of Mar Philaxinos as the Metropolitan of Thozhiyoor as "The elevation of Philaxinos gave rise to a fresh disturbance. No sooner had he exchanged the privacy of Angur for the residence of the Metropolitan than he found himself opposed by a strong faction, the leaders of which had originally endeavoured to prevent his consecration to the episcopate, and now strove to

⁵⁰³ Cherian, *Malabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, P 341

⁵⁰⁴ Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, P 136

⁵⁰⁵ According to Paret "As per the tradition of Nazranis, Saint Thomas himself baptized the Pakalomattom family... Even if it is treated as the supremacy of Pakalomattom family was vanished with Mar Thoma VIII, that family had hold the office for more than seventeen centuries. There is no parallel in the world history that even empire or kingdom had such a strong stand for about eighteen centuries. Even though Pakalomattom was not an empire or kingdom, they set a world record in leadership." (Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, Pp 121-2)

⁵⁰⁶ The hereditary succession of Pakalomattom lineage was a part of the *Edathile Maryada*, the law of the Nazranis. However, the Nomo Canon of Bar Hebraus, the official code of canons of the West Syrian Church, prohibits all bishops from appointing his successor even during the last days of his life. It also demands that the Synod of bishops should select the successor after his death. (Abraham Kathanar, *Hoodaya Canon, Op. Cit.*, P 91)

⁵⁰⁷ This is against the West Syrian law. In the third chapter of the Nomo Canon it is stated as "It is not permitted to include laymen in the selection of clergy." (Abraham Kathanar, *Hoodaya Canon, Op. Cit.*, P 94) However, the Nazrani laymen were deeply involved in the selection of their clergy.

throw.”⁵⁰⁸ Just like this, it became a practice among Nazranis to dispute on the newly elected bishops from the end of Pakalomattom lineage.⁵⁰⁹

The Title of the Bishops

The successive Mar Thoma Metrants were Episcopas in their clerical order till Mar Thoma IX, the last among the Pakalomattom line. The only exception for this was Mar Thoma VI, who was promoted as a Metropolitan with the title Mar Dionysius, on *Mithunam* 29, AD 1770.⁵¹⁰ ‘Mar Thoma’ was the customary title of bishops from Pakalomattom family. Even though the name and title of the first among the line, Mar Thoma I, formerly Archdeacon Thomas, were the same, records show that at least three in the line had different names but used the title ‘Mar Thoma’ after their consecration.⁵¹¹ This was perhaps due to the existence of their deep Saint Thomas consciousness.

As the prelates of Nazranis, they had to use some title for their office apart from their titular name as Mar Thoma. In the letter to Patriarch of Antioch of AD 1728 shows the sender’s title as ‘The fifth Mar Thoma Episcopa of India’ and signed as ‘The Gate of India’,⁵¹² which is the traditional title of the East Syrian bishops of Nazranis during the pre-Portuguese period. In the alleged letter of Mar Dionysius I to the Pope of Rome dated March 12, AD 1778 was signed as ‘Mar Dionysius, Metropolitan of India.’⁵¹³ Dr. Claudius Buchanan states that Mar Dionysius I signed a letter for him in November AD 1806 with the title ‘Mar Dionysius, Metropolitan of Malabar.’⁵¹⁴ Due to the suspicious nature of the letter to the Pope and the lack of interest in its content in the latter by the signatory, these titles could not be treated as official of the bishop of Nazranis. It is found that the Mar Thoma Metrants used the title simply as *Mar Thoma Metran*.⁵¹⁵ Several manuscripts of the eighteenth century specifically mentioned as ‘Mar Thoma Episcopa’ or ‘Mar Thoma Metropolitan’ instead of the usual Mar NN

⁵⁰⁸ Howard, *Liturgies...Op. Cit.*, P 64

⁵⁰⁹ For more details see Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 121 –4, Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, Pp 127 -393

⁵¹⁰ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 91

⁵¹¹ Mar Thoma VI was Ipe, Mar Thoma VII was Mathen and Mar Thoma IX was Ipe. See Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 97 –8, 121, Vettuvazhiyil, Fr. Emmanuel, *Saint Thomasum Pakalomattom Kudumbavum* (Kurichithanam), Pala, Pp 74–5 and Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, Pp 56 –7

⁵¹² For original Syriac text, see Assamanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis...*, Vol. III-2, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 464 – 6. Present translation by Dn. Dr. K. A. George.

⁵¹³ Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, P 117

⁵¹⁴ Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 183

⁵¹⁵ Alexander, *Kanianthra Kudumbam, Op. Cit.*, Pp 127 –8

Episcopa or Metropolitan in the prayers in which the names of the governing bishops should be remembered.⁵¹⁶ It was also used as 'Mar Thoma Episcopa Metropolitan of India' in certain cases.⁵¹⁷

While Mar Thoma VI was raised to the dignity of a Metropolitan, he was given the title as 'Mar Dionysius, Metropolitan of the Jacobite Syrians of Malayalam' by the *Staticon* given by the West Syrian bishops Mar Gregorius and Mar Ivanios who consecrated him in AD 1770.⁵¹⁸ It was very doubtful whether he used this title seriously since that consecration itself was an act of convenience.⁵¹⁹ His indifference is evident from the consecration of his nephew as his successor on *Medom* 26, AD 1796 with the title 'Mar Thoma Episcopa'.⁵²⁰

There are reasons to believe that the Indian bishops of Nazranis used their title as the "Metropolitan on the Apostolic Throne of Saint Thomas" in ceremonial occasions like writing of a *Staticon*. Kidangan Mar Geevarghese Philixinos, the fourth bishop of Thozhiur had used his title as "In the sacred name of the self-created Being the unbeginning the endless: Mar Philixinos Metropolitan, having the name Geverghese, of the throne of Malankarai and the whole of India, which is the throne of Apostle Thomas"⁵²¹ in the *Staticon* given to Punnathura Mar Geevarghese Dionysius III on *Vrischikam* 2, AD 1817. Mar Philixinos used this title because he was appointed the interim prelate of the Nazranis after the demise of Mar Dionysius II by the Royal proclamation of Travancore on *Dhanu* 26, 992 ME.⁵²² This is confirmed by one of his earlier bulls to the Nazranis dated *Dhanu* 28, 991 ME, calling a *Malankara Pally Yogam*, in which he used his title simply as "Mar Philixinos Metropolitan of Tholyur Edavagai writeth."⁵²³ By the above-mentioned *Staticon*, Mar Philixinos appointed Mar Dionysius III to occupy the "Apostolic throne of Malankari aforesaid."⁵²⁴ His Successor Mar Dionysius IV also used the same title while giving the *Staticon* to Mar Coorilos of Thozhiyoor

⁵¹⁶ A Syriac prayer book written in AD 1734 states as Mar Thoma Metropolitan. (Placid, *Nammude Reethu*, *Op. Cit.*, P 252.) An Anaphora copied at the end of the eighteenth century carries the name as Mar Thoma Episcopa in the first *Thubden*. (Howard, *Liturgies...Op. Cit.*, 237)

⁵¹⁷ The colophon of the above mentioned book referred by Placid carries this title (Placid, *Nammude Reethu*, *Op. Cit.*, P 253)

⁵¹⁸ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 55 –6

⁵¹⁹ The Royal *Neetu* of *Mithunam* 21, 949 ME of Raja of Kochi, far after this consecration, addressing him as 'Mar Thoma Metran.' (Curian, *Oru Prakaranam, Op. Cit.*, P 143)

⁵²⁰ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 98

⁵²¹ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 259

⁵²² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 224

⁵²³ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 271

⁵²⁴ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 260

on *Meenom* 15, AD. 1829.⁵²⁵ Hence, it is clear that use of 'Throne of Saint Thomas' and 'Throne of India' were the usages carried down from the eighteenth century by the Indian prelates.

Z. M. Paret argues that the title 'Mar Thoma' was the sign of autonomy and apostolic succession of Saint Thomas. The West Syrians tried to replace it by Mar Dionysius in accordance with their tradition since they found the existence of the title Mar Thoma would weaken the supremacy claims of the Patriarch of Antioch over the Nazranis.⁵²⁶ Even though Paret refuses the authenticity of *Staticon* of Mar Dionysius I and the letter of Mar Geevarghese, Patriarch of Antioch to Mar Thoma V dated *Chingam* 25, 2064 Greek era demanding the subordination of the latter,⁵²⁷ he shows them as the examples of the West Syrian attempts to suppress the title 'Mar Thoma' and the Saint Thomas consciousness meant by it. This argument is justified by the title given to Kattumangattu Kurian Remban by Mar Gregorius Yoohanon on his consecration as the rebel bishop to Mar Dionysius I on *Vrischikam* 17, AD 1772 as Mar Coorilos in the West Syrian style.⁵²⁸

The appointment of Pulikkottil Ittoop Remban as Mar Dionysius II on *Meenom* 9, 990 ME, led to the dethronement of Mar Thoma IX which in turn marks the end of Pakalomattom lineage.⁵²⁹ This also marks the official replacement of the East Syrian tradition by the West Syrian one. It was the end of the title 'Mar Thoma' from the Indian hierarchy of Nazranis. Since then, the prelates bear the title 'Mar Dionysius' as the West Syrians wished at least for the past fifty years. However, the Nazranis retained their autonomy and Saint Thomas consciousness by retaining the title 'The Throne of Saint Thomas'.

Validity of Consecration

Throughout the eighteenth century, the validity of consecration of the governing bishop was the chief point of dispute in the internal conflict of Nazranis. The Roman Catholics, the West Syrians and the dissidents challenged the validity of the consecration of almost all the native bishops during this period. The Roman Catholics accused that all *Metrans* from Mar Thoma I onwards were

⁵²⁵ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 233

⁵²⁶ Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, Pp 26 –7

⁵²⁷ In this letter, Patriarch demands Mar Thoma V to get re-consecrated by the West Syrian bishops and to change his title as Mar Dionysius. (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 52 –5)

⁵²⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarai, Op. Cit.*, P 91

⁵²⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarai, Op. Cit.*, P 121

invalidly consecrated. According to Paulinus, Mar Thoma I was consecrated by no bishop but by twelve priests. His successor, a layman entered in the office invalidly, died within ten days. After his demise, Mar Thoma III became the pseudo-bishop. In AD 1686, an *anatharavan* of Mar Thoma IV, another layman became the next *Metran* illegally. He 'clothed' his successor with bishop's robe before his death, that was repeated by twelve *Kathanars* later.⁵³⁰ More or less, all other Roman Catholic historians repeating the same story till date. To examine the West Syrian attitude towards the validity of consecration, the lineage of Mar Thoma Metrans should be established first. E. M. Philip can summarize it as below.

The Episcopal dignity of Mar Thoma I was validated by apostolic imposition of hands by Mar Gregorius... Mar Thoma I, was succeeded by his nephew Mar Thoma II who was consecrated by Mar Gregorius and Mar Thoma I...Mar Ivanios consecrated Mar Thoma III as the successor of Mar Thoma II...The third Thoma did not live long. On his death on the 9th of Medom [April] 1688, Mar Ivanios consecrated his successor Mar Thoma IV...Mar Thoma IV died on the 13th of Meenom [March] 1728, after consecrating his successor Mar Thoma V...He consecrated his successor under the title Mar Thoma VI.⁵³¹

There are confusions about the consecration of Mar Thoma II, III and IV. Perhaps the lack of proper contemporary records and the anti-propaganda were the reasons behind this. *Niranam Grandhavari* does not specify the date and the consecrator of any of them but confirms the regularization of the consecration of Mar Thoma I by Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed.⁵³² *Naalagamam* adds a little more confusion to this but confirms the regularization of the consecration of Mar Thoma I and states that Mar Thoma IV was consecrated by Mar Ivanios Hadiataillah.⁵³³

To evaluate the period under study, it needs only to ascertain the validity of consecration from Mar Thoma IV who holds the office from AD 1688 to AD 1728. *Naalagamam* and E. M. Philip confirm that he was consecrated by Mar

⁵³⁰ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 106 -21, Mar Selinaus repeating the same story (Mar Selinaus, *Keralathile Satya Veda Charithram*, *Op. Cit.* Pp 17-8)

⁵³¹ Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 144 -56

⁵³² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 85 -6

⁵³³ According to *Naalagamam*, after the regularization of his consecration, (perhaps after the demise of Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed) Mar Thoma I consecrated two *Mar Thoma Metrans* along with Mar Anthrayose Patriarch. Later Mar Ivanios, (probably after the demise of the ruling Mar Thoma) consecrated one *Mar Thoma Metran* (*Naalagamam MSS*, P 131)

Ivanios Hadiatallah⁵³⁴ who in turn permitted to consecrate bishops even though he was only an Episcopa by his *Staticon* given by Mafrian Mar Baselius Yeldo.⁵³⁵ Mar Ivanios stated in his *Memra* that he consecrated a Mar Thoma of Pakalomattom at Kottakkyal as he was consecrated by his teacher, the Catholicos⁵³⁶ Some authors argued that Mar Thoma IV had doubts in the validity of his consecration and wrote to Patriarch of Antioch to send a Patriarch to regularize his consecration.⁵³⁷ However, in the letters in question, Mar Thoma IV makes any mention that justifies this statement. Contrary to it, signed with the customary title of 'The Gate of All India' of the pre-colonial bishop of India.⁵³⁸ Even the Patriarch of Antioch did not mention that Mar Thoma IV admitted the invalidity of his consecration in his letter to Mar Thoma V dated *Chingam* 25, 2064 Greek Era that demanding the re-consecration of the latter.⁵³⁹

It is reasonable to think that the Mar Thoma Metrans consider the *Staticon* of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah as the base for their authority to consecrate their successors from Mar Thoma IV to the last *Metran* of Pakalomattom. All of them were Episcopas and consecrated one's successor as an Episcopa.⁵⁴⁰ Even Mar Dionysius I, who was raised as a Metropolitan, consecrated his successor Mar Thoma VII as just an Episcopa.⁵⁴¹ Even though the *Staticons* of none of the Mar Thoma *Metrans* are found so far, by the consecration of Mar Thoma IV by Mar Ivanios "as like he was consecrated,"⁵⁴² empowered them to consecrate Episcopas. The *Staticon* given by the West Syrian prelates to Mar Dionysius I did

⁵³⁴ Paulinus states that it was announced without any proof that Mar Thoma V was consecrated by Mar Baselius after the demise of Mar Thoma IV in AD 1786. (Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 114 -5) Paulinus mistook Mar Ivanios Hadiyatallah as Mar Baselius Yeldo elsewhere. His numbering of *Mar Thoma Metrans* are one up always. Considering these and his Roman Catholic prejudice, it is clear that he too passively admitting the consecration of Mar Thoma IV by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah.

⁵³⁵ His *Staticon* in Syriac, now preserved at Thozhiyoor, granting permission for consecrating Episcopas. For the original text and Malayalam translation, see Paulose, *Stuthi Chovakkapetta...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 447-53.

⁵³⁶ No. 32 titled *Sabha Charithram*. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 188, For studies Pp 56-9, 270-3)

⁵³⁷ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 117

⁵³⁸ Velu Pillai, *State Manuel Vol. I ... Op. Cit.*, Pp 712-3

⁵³⁹ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 53-5

⁵⁴⁰ "In AD 1653, people consecrated the Archdeacon as Mar Thoma Metran. In that way five *Metrans* went. The sixth Mar Thoma Metran got the dignity of Metropolitan. His *Anandarvan* was consecrated as Episcopa. On his demise, again Mar Thoma *Metran* was consecrated. When he was dying, his paternal uncle was consecrated. In that way there were nine *Metrans* during the period of 165 years from 1653 to 1818." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 127) Throughout *Niranam Grandhavari*, the title 'Episcopa' is referred as *Metran*. Mar Thoma VIII confirmed on *Medom* 20, AD 1812 that "six *Metrans* and one Metropolitan were there in the Pakalomattom family since AD 1653." (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 184-5).

⁵⁴¹ "Afterwards, on feast of *Medom* 24, AD 1796, that is 971 ME, *Cheriyachen* was consecrated as Mar Thoma Episcopa." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 98)

⁵⁴² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 188, For studies Pp 56-9, 270-3

not permit him to consecrate any order of Bishops.⁵⁴³ In this situation, perhaps Mar Dionysius I depends on the *Staticon* of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah to consecrate his successor as an Episcopa.

Perhaps the Roman Catholics deliberately propagate that the consecration of successive Mar Thoma Metrans were invalid with the hope the surrender of Nazranis as they expected during the demise of Mar Thoma I.⁵⁴⁴ They were further afraid that the Romo-Syrians under them would drop out if they recognize the validity of consecration of the Mar Thoma Metrans.⁵⁴⁵ E. M. Philip narrates his view about the Invalidity argument as follows.

It was always the belief of the Syrian Church [at least since 1665] that consecration not received from the Patriarch of Antioch, or his authorised delegate, was not valid. Having been ordained by his predecessor without the mediation of an authorised delegate, Mar Thoma V was oppressed with a doubt about the validity of his dignity, and applied to the Patriarch for delegates to confirm him. Paoli, a Roman Catholic missionary, calls Mar Thoma V a lay intruder. This, no doubt, was a prejudiced view of bigoted Roman Catholic. We find similar expressions recorded by an earlier Roman Catholic bishop, with reference to all the Babylonian bishops who ruled the Church of Malabar previous to the Synod of Udayamperor.⁵⁴⁶

Even though his observation about the Roman Catholic argument of invalidity may be taken as feasible, his other argument, the essentiality of the Patriarch of Antioch or his representative for the consecration, has no base or support.⁵⁴⁷ Even then, he did not argue that the Mar Thoma Metrans till then were with improper consecration. There was no connection with West Syrian Church from the demise of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah in 1696 AD till the arrival of Mar Ivanios the iconoclast in AD 1748.⁵⁴⁸ Not even any correspondence existed in

⁵⁴³ For the full text of the *Staticon*, see *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 55-6

⁵⁴⁴ Tisserant, *Indiayile...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 162

⁵⁴⁵ When Rome forced to accept Mar Dionysius I as a validly consecrated bishop, the Romo-Syrians, long claiming for a bishop from their own caste, tried desperately to unite under him. (Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, Pp 56-8, 319-23)

⁵⁴⁶ Philip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 154-5

⁵⁴⁷ None of the articles of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah, the only one who give written contribution to establishment of West Syrian tradition among Nazranis till AD 1750, did speak about such a demand even though he, necessarily and un necessarily, projecting the Patriarch of Antioch in his articles. For his available articles, see (i) Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 128 - 59, 177-92. (ii) Thomas, *Mar Ivanios Hidatahullah...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 6-15 (iii) Johns Abraham Konat and M. Kurian Thomas, "*Mar Ivanios Hidaythullayude...**Op. Cit.*, Pp 4-7

⁵⁴⁸ Mar Ivanios The Iconoclast arrived at Kochi with deacon Antonios, a merchant, in AD 1748 (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 86). The Nazranis depended some merchants like him or Ezhakkiyel Rabi, a big Jewish Merchant of Kochi had connections with Babylon, for getting the West Syrian bishops, (Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 118-9) since Nazranis had no direct relations with the Patriarch of Antioch.

between.⁵⁴⁹ Hence, the question of validity that rose among Nazranis till AD 1748 was nothing but a product of the Roman Catholic propaganda that was used to settle the personal grudges.⁵⁵⁰

Perhaps the re-ordination of Nellimattathil Kathanar of Kothamngalam by Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah at the first contact of the latter with Nazranis in AD 1751⁵⁵¹ may represent the disagreement of the West Syrians about the validity of consecration of Mar Thoma Metrans. However, it is not found in neither of his correspondence with the Dutch⁵⁵² nor in his actions that Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah was disagreeing on the validity of consecration of Mar Thoma V. Instead, he reported to the Dutch that his disagreement with Mar Thoma V was on other issues.⁵⁵³ However, Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah and his party, reported as sent to re-consecrate "the ruling Mar Thoma Episcopa as Mar Dionysius Metropolitan", which the latter refused till his death.⁵⁵⁴ Perhaps Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast was briefed by those against Mar Thoma V that his consecration was invalid, who in turn reported it to the Patriarch. The Patriarch of Antioch, who finds this as an opportunity to extend his dominion, in turn sends Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah to re-consecrate Mar Thoma that ensures his supremacy. The reason for the invalidity according to the Patriarch is found from the letter of Patriarch Mar Ignatius Geevarghese of Antioch dated *Chingam* 25,2064 Greek era to Mar Thoma V.

We hear a rumour as regards you that you say that there is no necessity for making the dignity perfect. I do not understand where you took this authority from, whether from books or elsewhere. If you say that it is from books, I say unto you: Examine the books carefully and see if there has been any but yourself, or any other besides yourself, who became a Deacon, Kathanar or Episcopa without the imposition of the hands of the fathers...And from that day to this, [nobody] has heard of any one having become Deacon, Kathanar or Episcopa, among us or in any Christian Church, without the imposition of hands. Therefore, it is established that your act is against the law. For, you wilfully contend that the perfection of your dignity is not needed. Behold! I now grieve and sorrow for you. For,

⁵⁴⁹ According to Van Der Ploeg, who studied the letters of Mar Thoma IV to Patriarch of Antioch in between AD 1709-1721 that were reached Amsterdam and Rome instead of the addressee, that Mar Thoma IV "did not know where his Antiochen Patriarch was living, nor did he know his full name." (Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 263)

⁵⁵⁰ For more details, see the title 'Personal Conflicts' in this chapter.

⁵⁵¹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarai*, *Op. Cit.*, P 87

⁵⁵² Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 211-3

⁵⁵³ Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 211-3

⁵⁵⁴ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavarai*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 86 -90

you and all those ordained as priests or deacons, by you, have become stripped, and divested of the gifts of Holy Orders and Episcopal Office...I confirmed you except on the agreement that you should receive imposition of hands from the Bavas I sent unto you. And We have so written in the letter that We sent unto you. If you say that you received the dignity of Episcopa from your *Karanavar*, he himself was only a Kori⁵⁵⁵ and not an Episcopa. When a Kori cannot impose hands on any or ordain one as a Deacon or Kathanar, how much more powerless would he be to consecrate all Episcopa. During the illness of your *Karanavar*, at the time of his death, a priest took: the Mitre from his head and placed it on yours: this is the case.⁵⁵⁶ Nor is this act in conformity with the law...This Episcopal Office which wants the Imposition of Hands.⁵⁵⁷

In this letter, the Patriarch of Antioch put forward three points to prove that the consecration of Mar Thoma V was imperfect.

1. Mar Thoma IV was only a Cor-Episcopa. Hence the consecration of Mar Thoma V is invalid.
2. The Episcopal consecration of Mar Thoma V did not include the laying on of hands
3. The mode of consecration - placing the Mitre of the predecessor on the head of new bishop is not a sufficient consecration.

The arguments of the Patriarch did not sustain due to the following reasons.

1. The Patriarch admitted in the letter itself that his information about the contemporary issues only as rumour. Hence, his information about the past is unreliable.
2. The argument regarding the title of Mar Thoma IV is not justifiable since Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah confirms vice versa.
3. If the Patriarch was able to prove that Mar Thoma IV was only a *Cor-Episcopa*, there was no need to raise the other two points. Hence, this seems as the Patriarch tried to justify his demand for re-consecration in one way or other.
4. Mar Thoma V declined to be re-consecrated till his death.

⁵⁵⁵ = *Cor-Episcopa*, the highest dignity among priests in the West Syrian tradition

⁵⁵⁶ Paulinus also accused the same. (Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 116 –7)

⁵⁵⁷ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 53-5

Regarding the mode of consecration of Mar Thoma V, Paulinus gives the information as follows "Mar Thoma V,⁵⁵⁸ who took the title of bishop illegally, died at his old age. Before his death, He placed the Mitre on the head of his *Anandaravan*, placed the pastoral staff in his hands and put the ring on his finger."⁵⁵⁹ All the above stated rituals were the part of the consecration of an Episcopa according to the East Syrian tradition.⁵⁶⁰ Considering the fact that the Nazranis follows the East Syrian liturgical tradition then,⁵⁶¹ his consecration was proper according to the East Syrian tradition. It is unrealistic to think that Mar Thoma IV did not lay on his hands while doing all the other rituals for consecration. It all points out that the stand of West Syrians about the invalidity of the consecration of Mar Thoma V was a mere act of negligence and an attempt to extend their dominion over Nazranis. However, this dispute was over by the upgrading of Mar Thoma VI as Mar Dionysius I by the West Syrian prelates.

The consecration of Mar Thoma VIII in 984 ME⁵⁶² sparks a new controversy.⁵⁶³ According to Ittoop, that was an interim arrangement subject to future ratification by the proper consecration by the hands of the *Bavas* from Antioch.⁵⁶⁴ The *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Kandanadu on *Chingam* 1, AD 1809 accepted Mar Thoma VIII as their bishop by putting the ring on his finger.⁵⁶⁵ Even though this meeting passed the canons known as *Kandanadu Padiyola* and appointed two chancellors to the bishop, nothing is found as the said *Malankara Pally Yogam* suspecting the validity of his consecration.⁵⁶⁶ He started to perform the pontificals immediately.

In this way, the *Padiyola* was written, put the ring to *Metran* and stay in unity. The meeting was adjourned in unity with a decision to raise *Yosap Kassissa* of *Kunnamkulam* as *Remban* to stay with the *Metran* along with Philipose *Remban*. On Sunday *Chingam* 15, AD 1809,

⁵⁵⁸ The count of Paulinus is always one up. Hence, in reality, Mar Thoma IV

⁵⁵⁹ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 116-7

⁵⁶⁰ Raphael Vattakuzhi, *Taksa Prathanakal Part IV*, *Op. Cit.*, P 232-42

⁵⁶¹ "[For East Syrians] The extracts of the sacrament of ordination is imbedded in the saying of prayers while imposing the hands. All orders have imposition of hands and prayers. The holy vestments for all orders are given along with it." (Placid, *Nammude Reethu*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 224-5)

⁵⁶² It is accused that his consecration was done almost in the same way as stated by Paulinus about that of Mar Thoma V, but here it was further accused that the consecrator was unconscious and the things get done by other *Kathanars* (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 154)

⁵⁶³ Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, P 65

⁵⁶⁴ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 155. However, *Naalagamam* said as "When he was extremely ill, on Sunday *Mithunam* 20, AD 1809, his *Anandaravan* Thoma Kassissa was consecrated as Mar Thoma Episcopa. The sick one was demised on twenty second [of *Mithunam*]" (*Naalagamam MSS*, P 157)

⁵⁶⁵ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 157. According to *Naalagamam* "in unity..." (*Naalagamam MSS*, P 166)

⁵⁶⁶ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 120, Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 157

Pulikkottil Yosap Kassissa was given the title of *Remban*, His *anandaravan* was ordained as a deacon and deacon Anmuriyil Paulose of Kuruppumpady was ordained as a *Kathanar*.⁵⁶⁷

The same Ittoop Remban challenged the validity of consecration after one and a half years. This validity question was raised after he and Mar Thoma VIII fell in disharmony for some reasons.⁵⁶⁸ He gathered some supporters and complained to Col. Munro regarding this.⁵⁶⁹ According to Ittoop Remban and his faction, Mar Thoma VIII was not belonging to the male lineage of Pakalomattom family but adopted and hence, he was disqualified to hold the office of *Metran*.⁵⁷⁰ This was defended by the faction supported Mar Thoma VIII.⁵⁷¹ However, Col. Munro posted a lot of hearings but took no decision till the demise of Mar Thoma VIII in AD 1815.

All the controversy on the validity of consecration during the eighteenth century caused disastrous impact upon the Nazranis. However, it is evident from the above-mentioned incidents that the controversies were mostly initiated for personal reasons rather than on account of its theological or ideological issues. However, these controversies were ceased for a while by the consecration of Ittoop Remban as Mar Dionysius II by Kidangan Mar Philaxinos that was supported by the royal proclamation.⁵⁷²

The Income of the Hierarchy

The Income of the Local Churches

The fourth Palayoor copper plate of 918 ME (AD 1743) confirms that the churches were lending money even in the eighteenth century.⁵⁷³ It also confirms that the churches had landed property that provides revenue. Offerings were one of the sources of income of the church.⁵⁷⁴ According to Ferroli "Not only the

⁵⁶⁷ *Naalagamam MSS*, P 166

⁵⁶⁸ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 157

⁵⁶⁹ "[While he was summoned to Kuruppumpady by Mar Thoma VIII] Ittoop Remban gathered the *Pallikkar* of Kandanadu, Mulamthuruthy, Karigachira, Nadamel and Palal Kochitten of Kalamcherry church in his side and stayed declined to obey the order [of Mar Thoma VIII]. They went to Munro, who was then ruling, and inform that the *Metran* was consecrated improperly and other compliments [about him]... The people of both faction and [Ittoop] Remban frequented to Col. Munro from Nilakkamukku to Nalu Desham from the year eighty six to ninety [Kollam Era]..." (*Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 168)

⁵⁷⁰ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 162

⁵⁷¹ A detailed lineage in *Niranam Grandhavari* till Mar Thoma IX alias Ipe *Metran* proved their straight succession of the Pakalomattom family of Kuravalingadu (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 125 – 7)

⁵⁷² Paret, *Nazranikal...Vol. III*, *Op. Cit.*, P 131

⁵⁷³ Antony, *Bhasha Padanangal...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 34 –5

⁵⁷⁴ While describing the activities of Mar Diescoros, *Niranam Grandhavari* mentioned two type of income such as *Nadavaravu* (offerings put in the collection plate on feast days) and of *Bhandaram* (permanent

faithful, but sometime also pagan Rajahs used to contribute to the maintenance of the churches"⁵⁷⁵ The answer to the ninth question of the Madras Government by Mar Thoma VIII on *Meenom* 8, 988 ME, gives a clear picture about the income and properties of local churches.

The Syrian churches have no other properties except the vestments &c.⁵⁷⁶ Even these, all churches have not got. The income from the people are burial fees and 75 *Chkrams*⁵⁷⁷ for 100 *panamidas*⁵⁷⁸ of gold for every marriage⁵⁷⁹ of which one half goes to the priest and the other half is for the church. But nowadays most people are married gratis. There is no other income for churches. There are churches, which cannot be maintained with their income. There are also churches, which are in a dilapidated condition for want of funds. There are also churches whose trustees appropriate their income and do not account for it.⁵⁸⁰

This description may express the general nature of the local churches. According to *Niranam Grandhavari*, the confiscated movable properties of Chengannoor church were worth of 60,000 *panams* that is rupees twenty thousand.⁵⁸¹ This answer is also lacking any mention about the expenses of the churches. However, the possible expenses of the church are the following.

1. The daily expenses: The churches had some daily expenses for wheat, wine of grapes, candles, oil, incense etc. Some of them perhaps came as offerings. According to Ferroli, "An exact imitation of the Hindu Prasad is seen in the offerings made by the people to the church, and returned by the church to the people, of eatables, money, fowls, sweets etc."⁵⁸² Some others received as fines for minor offences. The rest has to be purchased.
2. Maintenance: The churches required annual maintenance like whitewashing, periodic replacement of palm/coconut leaves on the roof etc.

collection box). Among the properties confiscated from Chengannoor church on *Edavom* 8, 974 ME, there were gold and silver coins (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 114, 106)

⁵⁷⁵ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 156

⁵⁷⁶ It is used as *Mundumuri seela vengathikal* (= cloths, movables etc.) This was the common usage to mark all movable properties of a church.

⁵⁷⁷ A Travancore coin, valued 1/28 of a Rupee

⁵⁷⁸ =Weight of a gold *Panam* (a coin) that is 400 milligrams

⁵⁷⁹ The *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Niranam on *Thulam* 21, 956 ME decides the proportion of thith on dowry for " 100 *Panamida* as one *Rasi* each [in the proportion] as six and four." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 95)

⁵⁸⁰ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 181-2. and *Seminary Case Book*, *Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 160

⁵⁸¹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 106

⁵⁸² Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 156

3. Wages and salaries: There was no practice for Nazranis to pay any sort of remuneration to the clergy from the church funds.⁵⁸³ Hence, except the casual labourers employed occasionally, there would be no payment of salaries from the church funds.
4. Taxes: Even though the churches were generally tax free, some sort of taxes existed at least for some of the churches.⁵⁸⁴
5. Feasts: One of the major expenses of the church was in connection with its feasts. Just like the temples, the churches had several *avakashi's*⁵⁸⁵ of different *Jathys* who were eligible for fixed amount, either as rice or as money or both, at each feast.⁵⁸⁶
 Apart from these fixed payments, there were several other expenses incurred in connection with the feasts. As stated by Ferroli, the Hindu temple festivals had little difference from its Nazrani counterpart.⁵⁸⁷ While narrating the consecration of Puthencavu church on *Kumbham* 2, 970 ME, *Niranam Grndhavar*⁵⁸⁸ states "that day the *Paachor Nercha*⁵⁸⁹ was held and a lot of people gathered. A lot of expense was incurred for *Vidwans*."⁵⁹⁰ According to Ferroli, priests also shared the income from feasts and hence, it could be treated as an expense of the churches.⁵⁹¹
6. Banquets: There were several banquets in connection with feasts of the churches. Some of them, perhaps some ingredients, were received as offerings from the people.⁵⁹² But in several cases, the church had to bear the expenses fully or partly.

⁵⁸³ For more details, see the title "Income of the priests" in this chapter.

⁵⁸⁴ For example, a tax of 120 *Puthen* (a coin of Kochi) per annum was imposed over Aarthattu church in *Thulam* 981 ME (Kunjathu, *Aarthattu Pally...Op. Cit.*, P 60). A *thirumulkkazhcha* had to be paid for each marriage held at Kallooppa church to the *Edappally Thampuram* (Mathew, *Kallooppa Pally... Op. Cit.*, Pp 69, 73)

⁵⁸⁵ = The one with the right.

⁵⁸⁶ For more details see Thomas, M. Kurian, "Edavaka Charithraparamaya Paschathalathi!"(Art.), *Purohithen Tri-monthly*, 1994 April – August., Some of such payments exist even today.

⁵⁸⁷ "Umbrellas, musical (or unmusical) instruments, torches, popguns and so forth are used both in Christian and Hindu processions. Elephants are led in procession, to add solemnity to the display." (Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 156)

⁵⁸⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavar*, *Op. Cit.*, P 98

⁵⁸⁹ *Paachor* is a food preparation of rice, black sugar and coconut usually served like *prasad* at churches.

⁵⁹⁰ Here the *Vidwans* [scholars] are likely used for *Vadyakkar* [musicians].

⁵⁹¹ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 155

⁵⁹² In Kallooppa church, Adangappurathu family permanently sponsored the lunch at the feast of saint George on *Medom* 23. (Mathew, *Kallooppa Pally... Op. Cit.*, P 76) At Puthuppally, the members of two *Karas* (Puthuppally and Ericadu) offered the firewood for feast of saint George on *Medom* 23 as obligatory. The chicken was also received as offering. The rest is taking from the church treasury. (Thomas, Maunam (Ed.), *Koodasa Smrithi*, Puthupally, Puthupally Church (Pub.), 2003, Pp 303 -5, 96 -105)

7. Episcopal visitations: Since there was no official residence for the bishops after the Coonen Cross oath till the establishment of the seminary in AD 1815, the bishops were residing at different churches.⁵⁹³ They had several accompanies and deacons along with them.⁵⁹⁴ The host church has to bear their expense, including their guests, till they leave to the next church.⁵⁹⁵ On several occasions, these stays extend for years.⁵⁹⁶
8. Contributions to the common cause. Since there was no common fund or resources for the entire community. It was the usual practice to get the contributions from local churches for the common causes when it arrives. In most cases, they were made obligatory with the consent of the *Malankara Pally Yogam*. Some such donations put the local churches under heavy debts.⁵⁹⁷ Such donations were made to assist another local church also.⁵⁹⁸

On such occasions, it was the practice to collect the sum from the households in the same obligatory manner. This was practised even for the needs of the local churches. It was the general custom of Nazranis to collect the donations from households on an obligatory manner to fulfil the common cause. The following examples from *Niranam Grandhavari* testify to this practice of the eighteenth century.

1. The *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Niranam on *Thulam* 21, 956 ME collected contributions to make 40,000 *Kaliyan Panam*⁵⁹⁹ for *Adiyara*⁶⁰⁰ purpose of Mar Dionysius I.⁶⁰¹
2. Obligatory contribution was fixed from families for the construction of the sanctuary of Puthencavu church on *Vrischkam* 18, 970 ME.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹³ From *Niranam Grandhavari*, it is clear that the bishops were stayed at different churches throughout the eighteenth century. Other contemporary documents also support this.

⁵⁹⁴ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 103, Ferrol, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, 150-4

⁵⁹⁵ Mathew, *Kalloppara Pally...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 142

⁵⁹⁶ For example, Mar Dionysius I and Mar Ivanios Yoohanon reached at Kandanadu on *Meenom* 12, AD 1772. They were there in 1773 and stayed there till AD 1774. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 92-3)

⁵⁹⁷ For example, the contribution made to clear the debts regarding the ship fare of Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah and others made Kalloppara church indebted to Pokku Moosa Marakkar and face the threat of confiscation and auction (Mathew, *Kalloppara Pally...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 83, 143)

⁵⁹⁸ For Example the members of the Niranam Church contributed 2,000 *Paras* (a measure) of rice for the construction of Puthencavu Church. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 98)

⁵⁹⁹ A coin with ¼ Rupee value. (Gurdert, *Dictionary...Op. Cit.* P 219)

⁶⁰⁰ *Adiyara* is a "fee on purchase of privileges." (Gurdert, *Dictionary...Op. Cit.*, P 15)

⁶⁰¹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 95.

⁶⁰² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 98.

3. Obligatory contribution was fixed as Rupees 20,000 to pay the fine after the persecution of Mathu Tharakan.⁶⁰³
4. The *Pulakuli* of Mar Dionysius I was held with 500 *paras* of rice from Puthencavu church and the rest of the items as obligatory contributions by the churches from Kottayam to Chathannoor.⁶⁰⁴
5. The eighth canon of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* decides to collect contributions from churches for the daily expenses of the proposed seminaries.⁶⁰⁵

All the above lead to a conclusion that even though the churches did not have much assets or cash balance, its requirements were fulfilled by the contributions from its members and hence, the wealth and liquidity of the Nazranis derived the wealth of local churches and the Nazrani community in general.

Income of the Priests

The income of the *Kathanars* was derived from the Nazrani community. No salary or fixed remuneration was given to them from the churches. According to Ferrolì, "The patron saint of each church is honoured with a special solemnity, and the priests' income largely depends on the offerings of that feast."⁶⁰⁶ The major income of the *Kathanars* was the half portion of the tithe given for each marriage.⁶⁰⁷ They were also paid fee for their services like baptism, confession, celebration of holy Eucharist, commemoration, and all services that need their presence. The Answer to the fifth question of the Madras Government by Mar Thoma VIII on Meenom 8, 988 ME, gives a clear picture of the income of the priests.

The duties of priests are, saying Mass on Sundays and festival days, conducting baptism, marriage, confirmation, confession and other righteous rites for Christians, receiving the dues from them and holding prayers at both times in the churches. When Christians die, priest may be made to say Mass on their behalf, and the priest will get a *Calian* for every such rite. For baptising, they get one to four *Calians*. For marriages, a due called *pasarom* is given in

⁶⁰³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 107.

⁶⁰⁴ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 118.

⁶⁰⁵ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, Op. Cit., Op. Cit., P 156

⁶⁰⁶ Ferrolì, *Jesuits...Vol. II*, Op. Cit., P 155

⁶⁰⁷ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, Op. Cit., Pp 181-2. The seventh canon of *Kandanadu Padiyola* confirms the right of priests over the tithe.

proportion to the means of the donor, and one half of this goes to the priest and the other half is credited to the church.⁶⁰⁸

This style of payment made the income of the priests heavily depending upon the wealth and strength of the people under him and the number of priests in the same church. Perhaps this uncertainty of income might have led to a written assurance of the churches that select their priests promising the maintenance of them.⁶⁰⁹

Income of the Bishops

There is no record of any kind of specific income like salary or maintenance allowance for the ruling bishops of Nazranis in the eighteenth century. There is also no trace of any form of tithe or first fruits offered regularly to the bishops according to the Syriac traditions. However, the bishops are found as rich in the eighteenth century.⁶¹⁰ But their means of income was never mentioned. According to the Kochi Panchayath decree regarding the partition of properties between the Nazranis and the Church Mission Society dated April 4, AD 1840, The Mar Thoma *Metrans* had landed property in Kadamattom.⁶¹¹ In the letter to Sakthan Thampuran of Kochi, Kattumangattu Mar Coorilos accused Mar Dionysius as follows "When he makes a deacon, he collects 500 *Chakrams*. When He makes a priest, he collects 500 *Chakrams*. If some one violates *Jathy Maryada*,⁶¹² he collects from him according to his capability. Such a way he drained the asset of the kingdom of great King [Sakthan Thampuran]."⁶¹³ This letter points out that the major source of income of the bishop was the gift received at ordinations and the fine imposed for various reasons. The fine of Rupees 1,200 imposed to Porkattukulangurai Kuriesu Mathunni Tharaken of Adavur; on first *Medom* 941⁶¹⁴ gives the dimension of fines.⁶¹⁵ Receiving money

⁶⁰⁸ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 178 and *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 158

⁶⁰⁹ "Among the Jacobites (and even among the Syrian Catholics) the parishioners choose the candidates to the priesthood, and send letters patent to the *Metran*, implicitly promising that, if they are ordained, they will maintain them." (Ferrol, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 157)

⁶¹⁰ For Example, the nave of the Puthencavu church, was constructed mostly at the expense of Mar Dionysius I (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 98)

⁶¹¹ "This estate having been the property of a former *Metran*, we award that it and its Title deeds shall be made over to the present *Metran* to be held by him, and his successors for the Syrian community in conformity of the custom which prevails in the Syrian Church regarding the property of deceased *Metrans*." (*Seminary Case Book Vol. III, P 225*)

⁶¹² = Law of the *Jathy*

⁶¹³ Puthazhathu, *Sakthen Thampuran, Op. Cit.*, P 289

⁶¹⁴ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 259

⁶¹⁵ *Niranam Grandhavari* records that Pulikkottil Ittoop Kathanar was executed a *Kaycheetu* at Chengannor in *Meenom*, 966 ME for being made as a *Remban* by the expelled Kattumangattu Mar Coorilos (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 95) Considering the similarity of the offence for which Porkattukulangurai

for ordination was confirmed by the following justification of the same by Parammekkal Thomman Kathanar in *Varthaanppusthakamm*.

You [the European Roman Catholic missionaries] said that he [Mar Dionysius I] is continuing what he was done in the past, that is, practicing Simony in everything related to the Church... You too know that nobody in Malankara pays tithe to the church as in Europe. Our Mar Thoma Metran receives no monthly salary from Rome or elsewhere. He cannot engage himself in buying and selling. He cannot beg from house to house as you people are doing in Europe and elsewhere. As a human being, he too is under hunger, thirst and bodily requirements... It was the custom in the olden times that the bishops were receiving the offerings from the people and live with them. Just like that, our Mar Thoma Metran is only accepting the offering made willingly and lives on that. He is not taking anything forcefully for the matters related to the Holy Ghost [the sacraments].⁶¹⁶

Both, the accusations of Mar Coorilos and the justification of Thomman Kathanar, confirm that the income received at the time of ordination was the major source of income of the bishops and the Nazranis did not consider it a sin. The permanent deposit of 3,000 Star Pagodas with the British Government known as *Vattippanam* ensured Rupees 840 as annual interest to the bishop from the period of Mar Thoma VII.⁶¹⁷ Even though it was meant for charity purpose, it became an income of the bishop in reality.

Formation of the Canonical Framework

As in the past, the Nazranis were bound by the code of canons that was a combination of ecclesial and civil laws along with their own practices. Even though the Synod of Udayamperor and all Roman Catholic laws imposed over them in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were officially rejected, some elements of them were remaining in the eighteenth century also. This entire system was known as *Edathile Maryada*.⁶¹⁸ This was the replacement of the *Marthomayde Maargam* of the pre-Portuguese period.

Canons Regarding Theology

The process of change in religious affiliation from East Syrian to West Syrian, the ecclesial elements of *Edathile Maryada* also went under rapid change.

Kuriesu Mathunni Tharaken of Adavur was fined, it is not unrealistic to think that Itoop Kathanar was also fined.

⁶¹⁶ Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, Pp 333

⁶¹⁷ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 119. For more details about *Vattippanam* see Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, Pp 96 -103

⁶¹⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 89

Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah introduced Nomo Canon of Bar Hebraus, the official code of canons of the West Syrian Church in the late seventeenth century.⁶¹⁹ But it is quite uncertain that the Nomo Canon was ever used for practical purposes in the eighteenth century. The basic theology remained intact as introduced by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah in AD 1686.⁶²⁰ During the dispute with Mar Gabriel, the Alexandrian theology introduced by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah was considered the theology of the Nazranis.⁶²¹ In his letters to Patriarch of Antioch in between 1709 and 1721 AD,⁶²² Mar Thoma IV declared that the Nazranis were following the creed of Saint Cyril of Alexandria.⁶²³ No deviation ever found from that theology in the eighteenth century.

Canons Regarding Sacraments

In his alleged letter of AD 1753 to Mar Thoma V demanding re-consecration, Mar Geevarghese II, Patriarch of Antioch, had demanded to "examine the books carefully and see if there has been any but yourself, or any other besides yourself."⁶²⁴ This statement indicates nothing but the uncertainty of the Patriarch regarding the code of canons followed by Nazranis. The allegations against Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast and Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah that they destroyed *Edathile Maryada*⁶²⁵ prove that the code of canons of the Nazranis, written or unwritten, was different from that of the West Syrians since the acts of the latter were according to the West Syrian code of canons. In the *Staticon* given to Mar Dionysius I in AD 1770, the West Syrian prelates instructed the code of canons to be followed in future as "We have...given him power to bind and loosen, to judge according to the law and precepts...to accomplish everything lawful by the people who follow his tenets, according to the Canons of the Jacobite Syrians."⁶²⁶

⁶¹⁹ His edict of AD 1686 from Chengannor has full of quotations from Nomo Canon. Mar Ignatius Aprham, Patriarch of Antioch, states that a copy of the code of canons prepared by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah for Malabar Church is preserved at Patriarchal library at Hims. (Barsoum, *History of Syriac...*, Op. Cit., P 168). A copy of a Syriac bull of Mar Ivanios traced out by the present author at Konat library. (Konat MSS No. 154) This was translated into Malayalam by Fr. Dr. Johns Abraham Konat and published in 2002 with the notes of the present author (Johns Abraham Konat, "*Mar Ivanios Hidaythullayuder...*", Op. Cit., Pp 4 – 7). This edict contains lengthy quotations from Nomo Canon.

⁶²⁰ See the title 'The Theology' in chapter V.

⁶²¹ "He [Mar Gabriel] believes that there are two person and two *Knuma* in Messiah." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 86) This is treated by the author of *Niranam Grandhavari* as a violation of Orthodox faith that is, according to him, the Alexandrian theology.

⁶²² Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, Op. Cit., Pp 255 – 264

⁶²³ Assamanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis...*, Vol. III-2, Op. Cit., Pp 464 –8

⁶²⁴ *Seminary Case Book*, Vol. III Op. Cit., P 54

⁶²⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 89

⁶²⁶ *Seminary Case Book*, Vol. III Op. Cit., Pp 55-6

Since the enthronement of Mar Dionysius I of AD 1770 was an acknowledgement of West Syrian tradition, the *Staticon* is a clear evidence for its implementation. The *Puthiakavu Padiyola* of AD 1789⁶²⁷ that partially acknowledged the West Syrian liturgical tradition, was also the acceptance of the West Syrian canons related to those subjects. The *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809 accepted the entire West Syrian liturgical tradition, hence, it accepted the West Syrian canons regarding sacraments entirely.⁶²⁸ *Niranam Grandhavari* summarized the acts of the *Malanakra Pally Yogam* that passed the *Kandanadu Padiyola* as "[decided to follow] everything according to the law of Jacobite Syrians."⁶²⁹ It proves the acceptance of West Syrian code of canons regarding the sacraments.

As the answer to the fifteenth question of the questionnaire sent by Madras Government on *Meenom* 18, 988 ME, Mar Thoma VIII states that "The Jacobite Syrians observe the practices mentioned in the books sent by Mar Ignatius Patriarch of Antioch."⁶³⁰ The establishment of the seminary in AD 1815 established the West Syrian code of canons permanently among Nazranis in sacramental aspects.

Canons Regarding Secular Life

As in the pre-Portuguese period, the life of Nazranis was controlled by their own set of rules. The *Marthomayude Maargam* was tampered during the Portuguese regime. The restoration attempts of the *Marthomayude Maargam* in the late seventeenth century were not fully succeeded. The infiltration of Roman Catholic elements, Portuguese customs and the West Syrian theology and sacramental practices made the *Marthomayude Maargam* a complex one.⁶³¹ Even though the status quo nature of the *Marthomayude Maargam* with those infiltrations⁶³² was referred to as *Edathile Maryada*,⁶³³ It did not have a uniform nature.⁶³⁴ The general anarchy and the faction fight between the West Syrian

⁶²⁷ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 97

⁶²⁸ *Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 158 - 65

⁶²⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 97

⁶³⁰ ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 182

⁶³¹ The best example is the different practices in the law of inheritance. See the title 'Inheritance' in this chapter

⁶³² In a dispute regarding the law of inheritance in the late eighteenth century, the one introduced by the Synod of Udayamperor was stated as the law of the Nazranis by Mar Thoma Metran, not the pre-Portuguese one. See the title 'Inheritance' in this chapter.

⁶³³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 89

⁶³⁴ According to *Niranam Grandhavari* "different practices in churches in the *Puthenloor* faction itself." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 90)

bishops and the Mar Thoma Metrans increased the complexity of *Edathile Maryada*. The lack of written law and common training of clergy also helped the unorganised practices.

However, attempts were made during the eighteenth century to introduce a uniform code of canons to Nazranis. The different stages in the introduction of uniform liturgical practice witnesses the process of formation of uniform code of canons.⁶³⁵ Traces are there that the attempts were also made to create uniform practices in aspects other than liturgy also.⁶³⁶ The *Aarthatu Padiyola* of AD 1807 is a clear indication of the Nazrani concept of own law in the early nineteenth century. *Aarthatu Padiyola* not only explains the cause of the problems of the Nazranis, it also gives the solution to them.⁶³⁷ It reads as follows:

This *Padiyola* executed by all *Puthenchoor* Syrians of Aarthatu church⁶³⁸ in front of our father Mar Dionysius, in the month of *Makaram* of year 981 Kollam era. Some of our members turned into Roman faith by listening to the heretic teaching of some foreigners. It leads to disputes that went to draw a lot that divided the church and its land.⁶³⁹ Since this is very sorrowful, avoid such things in future, we are deciding that, henceforth, we shall not listen the teachings or follow the traditions of any bishops from Rome or Babel or Antioch or any other foreign county and agree that we will never follow them in the future but only follow the ancient faith and law of our Saint Thomas, the Apostle. Signed as agreed in the step of the Aarthatu church of Mother of God. -Vicar Thekkakara Kuriyathu Kathanar [Signed], Panakkal Tharu [Signed]...⁶⁴⁰

They executed this *Padiyola*, probably a product of the conflict between Ittoop Remban and Kidangan Geevarghese Kathanar, to declare solidarity to Mar Dionysius I on the verge of the calamities experienced.⁶⁴¹ This *Padiyola* provides

⁶³⁵ See the title 'Change of the liturgical tradition' in this chapter

⁶³⁶ The *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Niranam on *Thulam* 21, 956 ME decided to collect the tithe to the church for marriage at the rate of ten *Raasi* which is divided as four and six [in between bride and groom] for the Dowry of 100 *Panamida* (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 95)

⁶³⁷ The content of this copper plate document was published in the Catholicate Souvenir of Aarthattu Kunnankulam Church in AD 1976. For the first time, the present author made a study on this document, based on the transcript in the above stated souvenir. It was published in 1991 (Malankara Sabha Magazine (Pub.), *Sabha Jyothis Souvenir*, 1991). All the attempts to find the original, which is known as preserved at the oriental Manuscript library at Thiruvananthapuram, was failed. However, Adv. P. C. Mathew, Pulikkottil, Kunnankulam kindly provided a facsimile of the same, which is actually in a private procession. Only one slight difference that is not effecting the study made in 1991, has found in the original from the transcript published in 1976

⁶³⁸ Aarthattu is the main church at Kunnankulam, Trichur District, Kerala

⁶³⁹ Sakthen Thampuran of Kochi effected a division in between Romo-Syrians and Nazranis who were sharing the church since the division of the seventeenth century, by which Nazranis received the exclusive right over the Aarthattu church in 980 ME (Kunjathu, *Aarthattu Pally...Op. Cit.*, Pp 56 -8)

⁶⁴⁰ This translation is made from the facsimile provided by Adv. P. C. Mathew.

⁶⁴¹ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 170, Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 120

the following information about the concept of the signatories regarding the church.

1. The works of foreigners were disasters and led to division(s)
2. The head of the Church is Mar Dionysius
3. The foreigners, Roman, East and West Syrian, are equally dangerous.
4. The faith and law of Saint Thomas is the law of the Church.

The *Aarthatu Padiyola* may only a product of the faction against Ittoop Remban, and has no status to represent the entire Nazranis. Since the situations of all churches are the same at different levels, this declaration is applicable for any local church of the Nazranis. This *Padiyola* is the declaration of independence since it accepts an autonomous head, own code of canon and declare against all alien infiltrations. Hence, *Aarthatu Padiyola* should be taken as the ecclesiology in which the Nazranis believed in the early nineteenth century.

The faction fight, not only at the top level but at local *Pally* level also, made the Nazranis to realize that the foreign interventions were the reason behind those different practices.⁶⁴² The need for a uniform code of canons became inevitable for the Nazranis. However, it was impossible to make one while the Pakalomattom lineage was powerful. The Nazranis got an opportunity to formulate one after the death of Mar Thoma VII since the Pakalomattom became weak by then. This leads to the *Kandanadu Padiyola* by the *Malankara Pally Yogam* on *Chingam 1*, AD 1809.

The Kandanadu Padiyola

Kandanadu Padiyola is found as the first attempt to write down a code of canons to regulate the ecclesial and temporal life of Nazranis in the post-Portuguese period. This *Padiyola*, signed by fifty four churches, has eleven clauses with numerous sub clauses.⁶⁴³ The topic of each clause is as follows.

1. Regarding the day of Baptism
2. Regarding the religious instruction of the children.
3. Regarding the daily prayers
4. Regarding the observance of Sundays and feasts
5. Regarding the lent and fast

⁶⁴² The bond executed by Porkattukulangurai Kuriesu Mathunni Tharaken of Adavur, on *Medom 1*, 941 ME to Mar Thoma VI confirms the role of foreign infiltration in the introduction new practices that means new law. (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 259)

⁶⁴³ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 157

6. Regarding the marriage
7. Regarding the manners of the priests
8. Regarding the establishment of seminaries
9. Regarding the spreading of *Aandu Taksa*, the book of feasts
10. Regarding the administration of local churches
11. Regarding the sacraments.⁶⁴⁴

The pattern of these canons indicates that the *Malankara Pally Yogam* considered all aspects of Nazranis in framing these canons. The canon regarding marriage admits that there were slight difference in its social ceremonies in the south and north and hence, fixed different standards for both the places.⁶⁴⁵ *Kandanadu Padiyola* was executed as bound to all the Nazranis. In the last canon it is read as "[It is decided that] all of the above mentioned canons will be observed without any alterations and if any of them would be violated, those will be punished with excommunication and [they] will be readmitted only after the completion of the punishment pronounced over them."⁶⁴⁶ Mar Thoma VIII confirms that these canons were the law of the Church as the answer to the fifth question of the Madras Government on *Meenom* 8, 988 ME as "A *Padiyola* was executed before Us in '85 by all the *Pallikkar* so as to regulate the conduct of the church properly, and affairs and conducted and caused to be conducted accordingly."⁶⁴⁷ The *Malankara Pally Yogam* held at Kandanadu, not only passed these canons, but introduced an effective system also to execute them by appointing Kayamkulam Philipose Remban and Pulikkottil Ittoop Kathanar [after making him as a *Remban*] as the chancellors of Mar Thoma VIII.⁶⁴⁸ According to *Niranam Grandhavari*, these canons were obeyed properly for one year only⁶⁴⁹ after which this system collapsed. However, the *Kandanadu Padiyola* must be taken as the initiative of Nazranis to establish an identity with their own code of canons.

⁶⁴⁴ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 155 –7, *Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 158 - 65

⁶⁴⁵ *Naalagamam MSS*, P 160 -1, However, Ittoop omitted this details in his book.

⁶⁴⁶ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 157

⁶⁴⁷ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 179

⁶⁴⁸ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 157

⁶⁴⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 120

The Religious Life

The Christian Consciousness

The 'Christianisation' process of the Nazranis by the Roman Catholics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had its long-sustained impacts that resulted in the eighteenth century also. The Christian consciousness of the Nazranis was much higher than that in the sixteenth century. The sacraments and the attachments to the church attained a higher role in their daily life. Even at this stage, the social customs of the Nazranis continued to exist as in the past. It seems that social customs like *Samskaras* and those related to marriage and death were considered as equal to the sacraments,⁶⁵⁰ which were not explainable under the Greco-Roman Christianity. It was impossible for the West Syrians, who were the products of the Greco-Roman Christianity as well as that of the West Syrian monastic tradition, to acknowledge the coexistence of the social customs in the religious life. The letter of Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast to the Dutch authorities at Kochi dated January 16, AD 1748 indicates the feeling of the West Syrians towards the social customs of the Nazranis. In this letter, he accused that "On coming on this coast he had found the Syrian Christians' ignorance gross, and their mode of living beastly."⁶⁵¹ Even though his and his successors intolerance had no immediate effects,⁶⁵² Nazranis started considering such social customs as not so unavoidable by the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁶⁵³ This change in attitude was not a product of the British since they were not in effective contact with Nazranis till AD 1809. Perhaps the century-long teachings of the West Syrians against them might have resulted.

⁶⁵⁰ For example, the blessing of *Poonool* (the sacred tread) during baptism, the customs related to marriage etc. (Feroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, Pp 154 -61). According to the hundred and first canon of the *Chattavryola of Karkkidakom* 15, 1027 ME, even though there is no sacramental role, the presence of the priests was considered as essential during the social customs related to the marriage ceremony. (*Naalagamam MSS*, P 271)

⁶⁵¹ Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 212 -3

⁶⁵² The acts of Mar Diascoros, seems as mad, also carries the traces of his intolerance towards the Nazrani costumes (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 114-5) The *Puthiacavu Padiyola* of 964 ME did speak only about the partial acceptance of the West Syrian sacramental tradition. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhvari, Op. Cit.*, P 97)

⁶⁵³ The sixth canon of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* permits to perform *Thirandukuli* and *Pulakuli* without banquets. It also prohibits the *Vazhvu* (giving of blessings) and of *Onapudava* (giving of cloth as gift) (*Naalagamam MSS*, P 158 - 65)

The Nazranis absorbed some of the Roman traditions as part of their *Edathile Maryada*. They were simple adaptations in cases like the use of statues. Even after the zealous attempts of Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast and other West Syrians, the attachment of Nazranis towards statues introduced by the Roman Catholics in the seventeenth century remained. The doctrinal interpretations against them⁶⁵⁴ had little effect in the eighteenth century.⁶⁵⁵ But in most cases, it was a modified version to fit into the West Syrian theology and the ecclesiology⁶⁵⁶ that they started to follow from the eighteenth century. The conversion of the East Syrian *Rasa Qurbana* into *Moonnimel Qurbana* was the prime among them.⁶⁵⁷ To the West Syrians, all customs that were not West Syrian were Roman additions or heathen practices and should be removed.⁶⁵⁸ They, like Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast, were rigorously attempting to purify the Nazranis from those non-Christian practices.

The British also considered the local customs and the intercourse with the upper caste Hindus and their rituals as an impurity dissolved among the

⁶⁵⁴ The third article in the essays of Mar Ivanios, proves with biblical evidence that the use of Idols and statues are non-Christian (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., Pp 152-5, 231-2, 56-7)

⁶⁵⁵ Dr. Kerr reported in AD 1806 that "In some of their churches, divine service is performed in the Syrian and Latin ritual alternately...When the latter have celebrated mass, they carry away the images from the Church, before the others enter" (Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, Op. Cit., P 148). However, such a rejection was not universal among the Nazranis even in 1795 AD. When Puthencavu church was consecrated on Kumbam 2, 970 ME, a statue of Saint Mary was brought from Chengannur church. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 98) Puthencavu church is still keeping the statues of Saint George, Mar Dionysius I etc. and was carried in the processions even in the twentieth century. At Cheppadu church, a statue of Saint George, brought in during the Roman Catholic rule, is still kept in the sanctuary (not in the altar) as invisible to the public. It was said to the present author by the church authorities that they are afraid of throw it out.

⁶⁵⁶ The use of *Aruikkka* (reliquary) and the celebration of Ash Wednesday are the typical examples for this. Reliquary is used to carry relics or holy host in the Roman Catholic tradition during processions. Nazranis still using reliquaries for their processions by inserting a cross instead of relics or holy host in it. The great Lent begins on ash Wednesday according to Roman Catholic tradition instead of the same on the previous Monday according to the Syriac traditions. During the post-Portuguese period, Nazranis begins the Lent on Monday but celebrated Ash Wednesday too. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 96). They used oil instead of ash according to the Roman Catholic tradition. (Thomas, Dr. M. M., *Abraham Malpante Naveekaranam*, Thiruvalla, The Theological Literature Committee, 1984, P 18). Till the visit of Mar Patrose III, Patriarch of Antioch, to Kerala (AD 1875-7) this practice exists.

⁶⁵⁷ The Nazranis have special form of celebrating holy Eucharist that is called *Moonnimel Qurbana*. In this, three priests celebrating holy Qurbana in three alters of a church simultaneously. Only one priest should say prayers loudly. Such a practice is not existed among the West Syrians from whom the Nazranis adopted the liturgy in the eighteenth century. Hence, it is a product of Nazranis. The most colourful form of the celebration of holy Eucharist under East Syrian tradition is known as *Raza Qurbana*. The Romo-Syrians also using it. Minimum three priests and several deacons and sub deacons are required to celebrate it. The West Syrians have no such celebration. The Roman Catholics introduced more alters during the Portuguese regime to the Nazrani churches that usually had only one. (Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II*, Op. Cit., P 156) It is reasonable to think that after the formal acceptance of West Syrian liturgy in 964 ME, the East Syrian *Raza Qurbana* was modified as *Moonnimel Qurbana* with West Syrian anaphora by using the Roman inclusion of additional alters. It is also noteworthy that most of the churches constructed or reconstructed during the Portuguese period and later have three alters.

⁶⁵⁸ The best example was their aversion about the *Kudummi* of priests and the laymen. Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast and later Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah were very adamant in removing the *Kudummi*. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., Pp 86 -7)

Nazranis. They also considered the Roman rule over them inserted several of their customs to Nazranis to reduce them from the pure faith according to the Gospel. P. Cherian summarized Col. Munro's attitude on this subject as given below that is applicable to the general British concept.

He found that, as a Church, they were laden with all sorts of superstition. These he attributed to their long contact with paganism and their enforced union with the Church of Rome. Now that they were no longer under the rule of Rome, he thought that they were free to shape their lives according to their own convictions and not according to the dictates of a Pope or other ecclesiastic. He found some virtues in the Syrians and believed that many more were latent in them. He believed that before they came under the influence of the Roman Church, they had a religion more or less identical with the Protestant religion professed by him. He thought it quite necessary that the many superstitions, which deformed their Church should be banished immediately. He trusted that, when that was done, it would present such a spectacle of Christian doctrine and conduct as would facilitate the return to the bosom of the Syrian Church of many that were still united to the Roman Catholics. He therefore longed for the restoration of the Syrians to what he considered to be the pure religion of the Gospel...he decided to do everything in his power for their social and political advancement, believing that when released from civil oppression they would be better disposed, to apply with cheerfulness to their religious duties.⁶⁵⁹

Col. Munro and the British missionaries failed to notice the influence of Syriac tradition over the Nazranis in the formation of their *Edathile Maryada*. In several aspects, it was more similar to Roman Catholic rather than to Protestant. The observation of Dr. Buchanan as "too much formality in their service" is just reasonable according to his Protestant point of view.⁶⁶⁰ But the British were more conscious about the 'Hindu' practices of Nazranis, which also included in their social customs. The British considered that the role of Nazranis in the Brahmanic temple festivals was imposed forcefully over them. He failed to note that the Nazranis not only celebrated *Onam* and *Vishu*, but they even acted as the trustees of Hindu temples also.⁶⁶¹ Susan Bayly evaluates the liberation attempts put forward by the British as follows.

Munro was aware that large numbers of Syrians were donors at local Hindu temple festivals and as far as he and his missionary allies were concerned the Keralan Christians could only be participating in

⁶⁵⁹ Cherian, *Melabar Syrians...Op. Cit.*, P 84

⁶⁶⁰ For his full narration see Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 121-2

⁶⁶¹ "Documents kept in certain Christian families show that Christians were trustees of certain Hindu temples and were invited for their festivals." (Ferrol, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 156)

these 'abominable heathen orgies' under duress. In reality, the role of a donor was a privilege and a sign of rank and honour for Hindus as well as Syrians. Both Christian and Hindu festival donors were allocated the right to make offerings of goods, cash and services according to a complex series of judgments about the rank and ritual entitlements of local clan and caste groups... At the best of times, these were delicately balanced schemes of honour and precedence, but this was a period of exceptional stress and uncertainty for whole population. This explains the intensity of the reaction when Munro sent out orders; banning the 'forced' participation of Syrians in Hindu temple ceremonies... It did not matter that the supposed 'problem' of forced exactions had never existed: there were clearly any number of local conflicts which could now be recast as cases of friction and rivalry between Syrians and clean-caste Hindus.⁶⁶²

The existences of local issues were there always with Nazranis that interpreted with religious nature. They were interpreted as religious. The following examples may be taken into consideration.

1. When the Puthencavu church was established, the administrative *Yogams* of Chengannur temple prohibited it twice because the establishment of the church would reduce the strength of their god.⁶⁶³
2. It is reported by Dr. Buchanan "the bells of most of the Churches are within the building, and not in the tower. The reason they said was this. When a Hindoo temple happens to be near a church, the Hindoos do not like the bell to sound loud; for they say it frightens their God."⁶⁶⁴
3. On *Kumbham* 24, AD 1813. The newly built church at Thiruvalla was burned down by few *Pottis*,⁶⁶⁵ *Pattans*⁶⁶⁶ and Nairs along with some backward people and injured a *Kathanar* and Nazranis⁶⁶⁷

In the case of Puthencavu church, it seems that the decision of the governing *Yogams* was not unanimous.⁶⁶⁸ When the matter went to the Royal court of Travancore, the self declared protectors of Brahmins and the Brahmanic religion, did not favour the decision of the administrative *Yogams*. This could be treated only as an act of tension with pure local nature. The burning down of Thiruvalla church was also considered within this framework. There is no wonder

⁶⁶² Bayly, *Saints ...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 289-90

⁶⁶³ Thomas, *Nirnam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 96-7

⁶⁶⁴ Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 120-1

⁶⁶⁵ Brahmins in control of Thiruvalla temple

⁶⁶⁶ Tamil Brahmins

⁶⁶⁷ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla ...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 188-9

⁶⁶⁸ *Ponnurutel Panderathil*, one of the trustees of the temple and the donor of the land for Puthencavu church, was not participated in that conspiracy. (Thomas, *Nirnam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 96-7)

if the sound of bells, introduced to the Nazranis by the Portuguese, was said as disturbance to certain deities since several Hindu elements too were considered as disturbance at some temples.⁶⁶⁹ Hence, the religious persecution should not be treated as an explanation for keeping bells inside the churches.

Col. Munro and the British made a serious mistake in their judgment regarding the religious persecution of Nazranis. It so happened that they did not take the *Jathy* factor in the socio-religious structure of Kerala.⁶⁷⁰ The British tried to free the Nazranis from those religious persecutions like the West Syrians. Both the attempts did not succeed as expected.⁶⁷¹ However, those attempts were in reality intended to frame the Nazrani life strictly into the Greco-Roman way. The success of such attempts would have resulted in the alienation of the Nazranis from the main stream *Jathy*-oriented Kerala society and thus led to the communal disputes.⁶⁷² Such an orientation would have made the Nazranis think the local traditions as anti-Christian. Even though the West Syrian attempts partly succeeded in increasing the level of Christianisation, it failed to remove or alter the social customs of the Nazranis till AD 1815. And hence, the religious life of the Nazranis was *Jathy*-oriented even in those days.

Influence in Daily Life

The positive impacts of the Roman Catholic rule of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were clearly observable in the eighteenth century. It made the Nazranis to consider the dogmatic aspects of the Church and the difference in traditions of the rituals seriously that was unknown to them till the Portuguese period.⁶⁷³ The observance of the Church rituals was also intensified.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁶⁹ For example, elephants are prohibited at Trichambaram temple in Kannur district. Musical instruments and the festivals are not permitted at Sukapuram temple in Malappuram district.

⁶⁷⁰ Dr. Buchanan observes that "the Syrian Christians assimilate much to the Hindus in the practices of frequent ablutions for health and cleanliness, in the use of vegetables and light food." (Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 121)

⁶⁷¹ It is difficult to assert that the British generalized the ongoing problems of the neo converts with that of the Nazranis. In case of the newly converts, it was a social issue rather than religious since they had no compartment in the *Jathy*-based society whereas the Nazranis already have. The attempts of the neo converts to attain a higher level in the society leads to disputes and up to certain extent, to persecution in the eighteenth century especially in south Travancore and in the coastal areas.

⁶⁷² Rev. G. Curian points out in AD 1872 that the caste-Hindus started to degrade Nazranis when the latter withdrew from their participation in temple festivals, observance of untouchability etc. because of their interaction with the foreigners. (Curian, *Oru Prakaranam*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 76-7)

⁶⁷³ While describing Mar Gabriel, his doctrinal confessions are clearly mentioned in *Niranam Grandhavari* ((Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 85-6) The *Kathanars* thoroughly questioned Dr. Buchanan regarding his faith during his visitation (Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, 112 -34) Rev. Norton, the British missionary suggested by Col. Munro denied residence at seminary by Mar Dionysius II since "his faith and our faith are different." (Phillip, *Indian Church...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 181)

⁶⁷⁴ When Mar Thoma V summoned by the king of Travancore to Mavalikkara, he refused to take food "until he was permitted to perform the ritual at the church." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 88)

An incident mentioned in *Niranam Grandhavari* of 972 ME in connection with Thachil Mathu Tharakan's persecution of Mar Dionysius I explains the depth of Christian life of the Nazranis.

Lent begins on the next day, *Dhanu* 1. The Lent began at Kayamkulam on *Thulam* 1 was not closed since then. So that [we] rescued from the advise of the enemies and the temptations of Satan.⁶⁷⁵

The lent prefixing Christmas begins on *Dhanu* 1 according to the Syriac tradition. No canonical lent is fixed as begins on *Thulam* 1 in any tradition. It only indicates that the said lent was taken by Mar Dionysius I and his companions voluntarily with a special purpose and hence, it indicates the high level of religious consciousness of the Nazranis. From the statement of Ferroli we learn "Lent used to be kept very strictly, from the Sunday before Ash-Wednesday – i.e. for fifty days. During that time no meat, fish, milk, ghee and toddy was allowed and no sexual intercourse even in lawful marriage,"⁶⁷⁶ it is clear how strongly they observed the lents.

The fifth canon of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* confirms that Nazranis should observe the "prescribed five Lents."⁶⁷⁷ Their observances of the lents were not strictly according to the canons of other Greco-Roman Churches. The observance of *Ettu Noyampu*, for eight days lent from September 1, is a typical example of that. It is described in a document of AD 1836 as "When lent is decided as a way of penance and a tool to suppress body, in some churches, a lent was observed with specific purpose with the name *Ettu Noyampu* with rosary according to the Brahmanic tradition which is not permitted by the church or included [in the canons]. A few people gathered [at church] with maximum sweets."⁶⁷⁸

Feasts

Feasts had a prominent role in the life of Nazranis. The eleventh canon of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809 directed that "...the feasts of Christmas, Epiphany, Hosanna, Good Friday, Easter and Pentecost must be observed

⁶⁷⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 101

⁶⁷⁶ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 155

⁶⁷⁷ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 155. The five lents according to the West Syrian tradition are (1) Great Lent of fifty days ending on Easter. (2) Twenty five days ending on Christmas. (3) Fifteen days ending on the feast of assumption of Saint Mary (August 15) (4) Thirteen days ending on the feast of apostles Peter and Paul (June 29) and (5) Three days of Ninveits ending 18 days prior to the great Lent. Eight days lent ending on the feast of the birth of Saint Mary (*Ettunoyampu*) is not a canonical lent.

⁶⁷⁸ Thomas, *Abraham Malpante ...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 18

according to the tradition of the Jacobite Syrians.”⁶⁷⁹ The attempts of converting the feasts days into West Syrian tradition are found in the almanacs of the eighteenth century.⁶⁸⁰ Beyond these canonical feasts, several others like those of the saints,⁶⁸¹ the anniversary of the consecration of each church,⁶⁸² and anniversary of the demise of the former bishops⁶⁸³ were also celebrated as feasts.⁶⁸⁴ The mode of celebration of the feasts was deeply influenced by the temple festivals and local traditions. The intercourse of the Nazranis and Hindus were not limited to ideological influences. Not only the common pool of traditions continued in the eighteenth century, the inter borrowing of movable properties also existed.⁶⁸⁵

Agape, the banquet of love, was an essential element in the feasts. Fr. Ildephonse of Presentation reported this as an abuse.⁶⁸⁶ Perhaps this is taken as a token of the western view on the Nazrani tradition. He further states that “Sometimes the Christians follow many gentile practices in their celebration of feasts; during the feast days, the church is turned into a tavern, a place for eating and drinking.”⁶⁸⁷ All the above are indicating that the Nazranis led a deep Christian life in the eighteenth century. But it remains within the framework of *Eadthile Maryada* and not according to the Greco-Roman Christianity. But indeed the Greco-Roman influence was rapidly increasing through the West Syrians and later by the British Protestants in their Christian consciousness.

The Sacraments

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, Nazranis followed the same Latinised East Syrian liturgical tradition of the seventeenth century with slight alterations made by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah. The Christianisation process of the

⁶⁷⁹ *Naalagamam MSS*, P 165

⁶⁸⁰ For more details see the title 'Almanacs and Calendars' in this chapter

⁶⁸¹ “The patron saint of each church is honoured with a special solemnity.” (Ferrol, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 156)

⁶⁸² Normally, the consecration of a church became the major feast of that church. The consecration was usually fixed on the feast of the patron saint of that church. For example, the Puthupally Saint George church was consecrated on Medom 23, 815 ME, which is the feast of Saint George. (Paret, Z. M., *Puthuppally Pally*, Kottayam, Jacob Mathews Chemmarppally (Pub.), 1972, P 29) Puthencavu Church was consecrated on *Khumbam 2*, 970 ME that is the feast of the Presentation of Christ, a canonical feast. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., P 98) in both the churches, same dates are remaining as the major feast even today.

⁶⁸³ According to Fr. Boniface of Jesus “The schismatic bishops who died in Malabar are venerated, their anniversaries are celebrated.” (Quoted by Thonippara, Francis, *Saint Thomas Christians of India, A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self-Rule (1775-1787)*, Bangalore, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, 1999, Pp 140-1)

⁶⁸⁴ The feast of Mar Gabriel, always stated as a Nestorian heretic, was celebrated in a grand scale even in AD 1821 at Kottayam Cheriypally, where he buried (Paret, *Nazranikal... Vol. III, Op. Cit.*, P 11)

⁶⁸⁵ Ferrol, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, Pp 156-7

⁶⁸⁶ Thonippara, *Period of Struggle... Op. Cit.*, Pp 179-80

⁶⁸⁷ Thonippara, *Period of Struggle... Op. Cit.*, Pp 179-80

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had a prominent place for the sacraments in the Nazrani life.⁶⁸⁸ Jacob Canter Visscher narrates about the sacraments of the Nazranis from his Protestant point of view as "Their services being a medley, partly borrowed from the heathens among whom they live and whose fellow countrymen they are; partly from the Papists to whom very many of them have gone over...and partly from the Greek or Syrian Christians, by whose Bishops they are governed, and whose opinion they adopt."⁶⁸⁹ This narration confirms the use of the Latinised East Syrian sacraments by Nazranis. It also confirms the existence of the local traditions in the celebration of the sacraments. Perhaps the local customs that are treated as sacraments are mentioned as "borrowed from the heathens."⁶⁹⁰ The report of Fr. Ildephonse of Presentation of AD 1771 regarding the "23 abuses" prevalent in Malabar, applicable for both Nazranis and Romo-Syrians, confirms the existence of local traditions and rituals among the Nazrani sacraments. Francis Thonippara gives the following extract.

Priests do not say Mass without receiving offerings from the people; they fail to pray the Breviary, show negligence in baptising newborn babies, enjoy freely wandering from place to place; they do not explain the Word of God to the faithful and do not take seriously the sacrament of confession. Sometimes the Christians follow many gentile practices in their celebration of feasts; during the feast days, the church is turned into a tavern, a place for eating and drinking... Many Christians believe in devil possessions and seek the help of the parish priests for exorcism; and they perform sacrifices in Hindu temples; they subject themselves to many superstitious practices. They also send their children to schools run by gentiles. The traditional practice of *Agape* was also included in the list of abuses. The Christians did not show much interest in receiving the sacraments. Burial was done without proper prayers. Simony, usury,

⁶⁸⁸ For all the three traditions to which the Nazranis affiliated, the East and West Syrian and the Roman Catholic, the sacraments have the greatest importance. Even though they are slightly different in each tradition, its importance in the Christian life is same in all. Hence, there is no question of degrading the role of sacraments during the post-Portuguese period. Some of the Protestant writers, due to the lack of knowledge about the Syriac tradition, consider the Nazrani's devotion to the sacraments as a product of Roman Catholic Church.

⁶⁸⁹ Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 42

⁶⁹⁰ *Pulakuli, Thirandukuli*, rituals related to marriage etc., were treated as equal to the real sacraments. From the narrations about the demises of Mar Thoma V, VII and Mar Dionysius I in *Niranam Grandhavari*, it is evident that *Pulakuli* was treated as important as a sacrament. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 90,118,120) Ferroli states about *Pulakuli* as follows "Owing to death, pollution is incurred, which lasts seven days. On the eighth day the *Pulakuli* feast is held (*Pula* - Pollution; *Kuli* - Bath). This feast has been abolished among the Sudists. On the anniversary of the death, The *Shradha* ceremony is held at which fish and flesh meat are allowed. Evidently, these feasts are remnants of pagan ceremonies, usually at these feasts a number of poor people are fed. The priests are offered clothes and money." (Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 160)

etc., were also prevalent. The priests heard confessions of women outside the confessional, etc.⁶⁹¹

However, Dr. Kerr keeps a different view about the role of sacraments among the Nazranis. According to him, "In the creeds and doctrines of the Christians of Malabar, internal evidence exists of their being a primitive church; for the supremacy of the Pope is denied, and the doctrine of transubstantiation never has been held by them. They also regarded, and still regard, the worship of images as idolatrous, and the doctrines of purgatory to be fabulous. Moreover, they never admitted as sacraments, extreme unction, marriage, or confirmation."⁶⁹² Even though this report may be made under the Protestant prejudice, contemporary reports of the Roman Catholics point out the ignorance and negligence of Nazranis towards sacraments from the Roman Catholic point of view. Fr. Boniface of Jesus points out the following errors of Nazranis comparing with the Roman Catholic doctrines in the second half of the eighteenth century.

i) The schismatic follow the old calendar;⁶⁹³ ii) they abstain from eating flesh on Wednesdays and Fridays;⁶⁹⁴ iii) for the church fasting they follow the secular day beginning from sunset to the following evening; for the interpretation for fasting Holy Mass and Communion, they follow as the Catholics do⁶⁹⁵ iv) the schismatics keep the breviary, Mass text and the rituals reformed by Bishop Francis Roz, adding the name of the heretic Patriarch and the Archdeacon⁶⁹⁶ v) for the eucharistic celebration the Catholics use unleavened bread while the schismatic use leavened bread; and the latter celebrate the mass on a wooden altar and not a stone one.⁶⁹⁷

The following are the serious errors among the schismatic: the Jacobite bishops introduced monophysitism; some believe that there is no need of baptism if the children are born of Christian parents; confession is necessary only at the point of death; communion from the same bread blessed by the celebrant, the schismatic

⁶⁹¹ Thonippara, *Period of Struggle...*, Op. Cit., Pp 179-80

⁶⁹² Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, Op. Cit., P 148

⁶⁹³ Then the Roman Catholics using Gregorian calendar and the Syrians used the Julian calendar.

⁶⁹⁴ This confirms that the weekly lent, altered by the Synod of Udayamperor, was restored according to the Syriac tradition by then.

⁶⁹⁵ This also was a matter of controversy during the eighteenth century. The sixth article in the essays of Mar Ivanios in *Niranam Grandhavari* justifying the Syriac tradition of the beginning of the day in the previous evening. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Op. Cit., Pp 158 -9,233, 57)

⁶⁹⁶ For more details see the title 'Change of Liturgical Tradition' in this chapter

⁶⁹⁷ It indicates that the Nazranis by then started using *T'abliitha* of West Syrian tradition.

bishops who died in Malabar are venerated, their anniversaries are celebrated...⁶⁹⁸

From all the above observations, it may be concluded that the sacraments existed among the Nazranis in the eighteenth century and it was obligatory according to the doctrines. However, its real performance was in question and performance of them was not purely according to the Greco-Roman way of Christianity.

Baptism

All testimonials of the eighteenth century confirm that the sacrament of Baptism existed among the Nazranis. Both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant authors agree that the Nazranis do not baptize their children before forty days.⁶⁹⁹ Adriaan Moens describes, as "They do not baptize their children until they are 40 days old, unless they are in danger of death or in some other emergency. The water they use for baptism is a mixture of cold and warm water with salt and consecrated oil."⁷⁰⁰ Even though this narration confirms its Syriac tradition, the baptism of the Nazranis included a lot of local rituals beyond the Greco-Roman formula.⁷⁰¹ The lower limit of baptism was forty days and there was no upper limit. Hence, the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809 fix the upper limit for baptism as ninety days.⁷⁰² It is a clear evidence of the attempts of the Nazranis to return to the pre-colonial practices. It is reasonable to think that the complaint of Fr. Ildephonse of Presentation about the negligence of priests in baptizing new-born babies may be derived from the social resistance towards the Roman Catholic ruling for strict infant-baptism within eight days.

Confirmation

The approval of Alexandrian theology and West Syrian rituals in AD 1686 out-law the Roman Catholic sacrament of confirmation and its Latin rite. However, it remained in some form with the Nazranis in the eighteenth century like other Roman Catholic rituals. *Niranam Grandhavari* recorded an event of the administration of the sacrament of confirmation on April 6, AD 1808 by Mar Dionysius I at Niranam. There it is referred as *Mumpiluthe Opprusma* and its

⁶⁹⁸ Thonippara, *Period of Struggle...*, Op. Cit., Pp 140-1

⁶⁹⁹ See the above mentioned reports of Fr. Boniface of Jesus, Fr. Ildephonse of Presentation and Dr. Kerr

⁷⁰⁰ Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, Op. Cit., P 178

⁷⁰¹ For example, the blessing of *Poonool* (Sacred thread) was a part of Nazrani baptism (Ferrol, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 157)

⁷⁰² Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, Op. Cit., P 155

performance as pontifical.⁷⁰³ It was the continuation of a Roman Catholic practice since both the West and the East Syrian traditions prescribe confirmation along with baptism.⁷⁰⁴ There is no record about the rite and type of oil used for the confirmation in the eighteenth century. It is reasonable to think that the full rite of baptism including confirmation with holy oil was performed first and the Roman rite of confirmation was followed later.

The holy oil named *Mooron*,⁷⁰⁵ according to the West Syrian tradition was known to the Nazranis. It is recorded in the *Niranam Grandhavari* that the West Syrian prelates led by Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah reached Kochi on *Medom* 24, AD 1751, had *Saith*⁷⁰⁶ and *Mooron* with them.⁷⁰⁷ It had little use except with the West Syrian prelates and their disciples since the compromise treaty named *Puthiyacavu Padiyola* 964 ME (AD 1788/9) permitted to continue the use of East Syrian rite for baptism.⁷⁰⁸ Even though the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809 prohibited the use of any rite other than West Syrian even for baptism,⁷⁰⁹ it did not come into effect until the establishment of Kottayam Seminary.⁷¹⁰ Hence, it may be assumed that Nazranis used East Syrian holy oil and the Latin pontifical⁷¹¹ for confirmation till AD 1815.

Holy Eucharist

All authors agree that the Holy Eucharist was a sacrament for the Nazranis. The first description about the celebration of holy Eucharist in the eighteenth century is available from Jacob Canter Visscher in the first quarter of that century. He comments on it as "this resembles the Romish mass; but in essentials they are orthodox... They likewise give the cup to the laity, though their method of distributing the elements differs slightly from ours, the Priest taking the bread and dipping it into the wine, and then placing the pieces in the mouths of

⁷⁰³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 117

⁷⁰⁴ The report of Rev. Dr. Kerr to the Governor of Madras in 1806 AD states that the Nazranis did not accept confirmation as a sacrament. (Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 147) Perhaps the prelates know that the confirmation they perform is meaningless since the West Syrian theology did not support it.

⁷⁰⁵ *Mooron* is the holy oil essential for baptism and for the consecration of altars according to the West Syrian tradition. The Nomo Canon of Bar Hebrous reserve the right for the consecration of holy *Mooron* to the Supreme Pontiff of the church namely the Patriarch, Catholicos and the Metropolitan with autonomous authority. (Abraham Kathanar, *Hoodaya Canon*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 29 – 30)

⁷⁰⁶ This Syriac word means just as Olive oil. But in West Syrian liturgical usage, it is the Olive oil consecrated by the bishop, which is used in Baptism and for the anointing of sick. (Abraham Kathanar, *Hoodaya Canon*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 35 – 6)

⁷⁰⁷ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 86 – 7

⁷⁰⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 97

⁷⁰⁹ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 155 -7

⁷¹⁰ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 159

⁷¹¹ For more details see 'Impact on the Sacraments' in chapter V

the Communicants one after the other. They receive kneeling, with napkins round their necks."⁷¹² Adriaan Moens gives an almost similar description by the end of the eighteenth century.

They celebrate the Mass in the Eastern manner, with fermented bread and wine. If they cannot get wine, they make use of raisin water or something else, which according to their ideas⁷¹³, is nearest to wine. They communicate under both species with the peculiarity, however, they break the bread in a dish pour the wine from the chalice on it, and distribute this mixture with a spoon to the congregation⁷¹⁴

Between these two narrations, the liturgy was changed from East to West Syrian tradition.⁷¹⁵ Considering the Protestant prejudice of both the authors and the common factors in East and West Syrian traditions of Holy Eucharist, it is clear that the Nazranis were able to restore the Syriac tradition free from the Roman Catholic filtration⁷¹⁶ of Holy Eucharist and the leavened bread in the eighteenth century. There was great confusion about the celebration of holy Eucharist among the Nazranis in the eighteenth century. Hence, the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809 resolves the following regulations regarding the celebration of Holy Eucharist.

1. Third canon: On Sundays and feast days, everybody must attend the *Qurbana*. At least one from each house should come in case of the people living far away.
2. Fourth canon: [Everybody must] confess and receive *Qurbana* in 25 days and 50 days lent.
3. Fifth canon: Bride and groom must receive *Qurbana* on the previous Sunday of wedding
4. Seventh canon: On feast days, two priests should celebrate *Qurbanas*. One in the morning and one around noon⁷¹⁷

⁷¹² Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, Pp 42-3

⁷¹³ Even in the second half of the nineteenth century, the raisin-soaked water used instead of wine. Thirty third canon of the *Chattavriyola* of 1028 ME confirms it. (*Chattavriyola, Konat MSS, No. 385*)

⁷¹⁴ Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 178

⁷¹⁵ For more details, see the title 'Change of Liturgical tradition' in this chapter.

⁷¹⁶ See the above stated report of Fr. Boniface of Jesus, who points out in the second half of the eighteenth century that "...the schismatics keep the breviary, Mass text and the rituals reformed by Bishop Francis Roz..." that indeed Romanised East Syrian. However, the *Puthiyacavu Padiyola* of 964 ME accepted the Anaphors according to the West Syrian tradition (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 97) This was totally free from Roman elements

⁷¹⁷ *Neelagamam MSS*, Pp 159 - 161

These regulations are introduced to make the Nazranis attached to *Qurbana* as obligatory. Dr. Buchanan gives an account of the celebration of *Qurbana* in the early nineteenth century, as "Their Liturgy is that which was formerly used in the churches of the Patriarch of Antioch. Every man praying for himself...They use incense in the churches...At the conclusion of the service...The Priest, (or Bishop, if he be present) comes forward, and all the people pass by him as they go out, receiving his benediction individually. If any man has been guilty of any immorality, he does not receive the blessing...is accounted a severe punishment. Instruction by preaching is little in use among them now...they have some ceremonies nearly allied to those of the Greek Church."⁷¹⁸ Dr. Buchanan clearly states that their liturgy was the West Syrian during his visit. It may be concluded that by the beginning of nineteenth century, the Holy Eucharistic service was totally West Syrian without Roman Catholic infiltration and East Syrian influence since *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809, that specifically instruct the West Syrian sacramental tradition, did not mention any specific form of Eucharistic tradition.⁷¹⁹

Marriage

Dr. Kerr treats the Nazrani marriages as non-sacramental in AD 1806⁷²⁰ Theoretically his argument is right since the East Syrian tradition did not accept marriage as a sacrament and until the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809, the West Syrian tradition, that considers marriage as a sacrament, was not formally accepted.⁷²¹ In reality, marriage was a religious affair for the Nazranis in the eighteenth century⁷²². In the mean time, local rituals and social traditions were most found attached to the ceremony of marriage. Ferrolli gives a detailed account of the marriage function of Nazranis.

Many of the old marriage customs...reflect Hindu usages...the boy ties the *Thali* or *Minnu* - which is blessed by the priest - round the neck of the bride.⁷²³ The cross, made of 21 small gold balls⁷²⁴

⁷¹⁸ Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 121

⁷¹⁹ *Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 158 - 65

⁷²⁰ Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 148

⁷²¹ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 155-7. Even though the *Puthiacavu Padiyola* of 964 ME partially accepted the West Syrian tradition, allowed to continue the old rite for marriage. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 97)

⁷²² The fifth canon of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of 1809 AD regarding the seniority while more than one marriage took place at a time. (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 154) establishing that the marriages were took place at churches.

⁷²³ Mar Diascoros, the West Syrian bishop, perhaps due to the ignorance of the Nazrani practice, ties the *Thali* himself on *Edavam* 28, 982 ME, at Puthiacavu church (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 114)

distinguishes the Christian from the Hindu *Thali*... Next, the boy presents the girl with a veil. In former times, the bridegroom's sister used to take both *Thali*, veil and sweets⁷²⁵ in solemn procession to the church, to be blessed by the priest.⁷²⁶...Among the Sudists,⁷²⁷ even to this day, the mother places her hands on the heads of the couple and blesses them. The festivities during the first three or four days take place in the house of the bride or in that of the bridegroom. Then the couple leaves, goes to the other house and remains there till the next Sunday. Before that, the presenting of clothes on the part of the maternal uncle takes place.⁷²⁸ Then the couple goes round a lighted lamp and recite some prayers. Dances and action songs (*Margamkali*) used to be performed.⁷²⁹

It became difficult to interpret the mixture of old tradition and the Roman Catholic influence in the marriage customs in terms of the uprising West Syrian tradition during the eighteenth century. This situation is reflected in the lengthy sixth and seventh canons of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809 that standardizing certain rituals related to marriage.

Girls must be married before the age of fourteen. [Bride and groom should] come to the church on the previous Sunday of the marriage for confession and to test their knowledge in prayers. The *Vilichuchollu*⁷³⁰ must be done on the previous Sunday. In the southern part, one cross and three *Mudaku*⁷³¹ for groom and *Kathila*,⁷³² *Thala*,⁷³³ three lairs of *Kasu*,⁷³⁴ *Ottezha*,⁷³⁵ Two neck *Kontha*⁷³⁶ and for bride and in the northern part, one cross and seven *Mudaku* for groom and *Aranganam*,⁷³⁷ *Nettippattam*⁷³⁸ and seven *Uruvu* gold [for bride] should wear. On Sunday, after the marriage,

⁷²⁴ There is slight difference in the number of balls. In Kottayam and around, *Thali* with 13 balls representing Jesus Christ and 12 apostles is in use.

⁷²⁵ The fifty second canon of the *Chattavriyola* of 1208 ME confirms that there were certain things like battle leaf, Areca nut etc. to be given to the *Yogam* during the marriage. (*Chattavriyola, Op. Cit.*)

⁷²⁶ The hundred and first canon of the *Chattavriyola* gives the following information about the social customs in connection with marriage "it is not fair that the priests present when the bride and groom were bathed on Saturday evening for marriage and for the bathe on Wednesday, since there is no sacramental duty existed there. the priests accompanying the bride and groom to the church on Sunday for wedding is just for the monetary benefit alone." (*Chattavriyola, Op. Cit.*)

⁷²⁷ = *Southists*. *Northists* also performed it.

⁷²⁸ Perhaps this blessing was prohibited by the sixth canon of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809, which states as not to give *Onappudava* (*Naalagamam MSS, P 160*)

⁷²⁹ Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, Pp 157-9

⁷³⁰ = Public notice announced in both the churches of the bride and groom regarding the marriage

⁷³¹ = A type of bangle

⁷³² =A type of eardrop

⁷³³ =A type of neck chain

⁷³⁴ Literary it was the name of a coin used in Kerala. Here the mention is about an ornament made by gold coins.

⁷³⁵ =A type of neck chain

⁷³⁶ The literary meaning is Rosary. Hear the mention is about neck chain in that fashion.

⁷³⁷ = An ornament wearing at waist.

⁷³⁸ An ornament wearing at forehead. It is one among the 72 privileges

banquet should be given for one time. And another one banquet for *Kudivappu*⁷³⁹ can be given.

The marriage party should come to the church before the Holy *Qurbana*. It is not fair to argue for the position to stand for marriage when the ceremony begins after confession.⁷⁴⁰ To avoid this, the seniority should be fixed upon the age of the groom since there is no difference in the sacraments and in the Lord's concern. And the *Kudivappu* must be done before next Sunday.⁷⁴¹

The *Kandanadu Padiyola* gives the following information about the marriage

1. Marriage was administered on Sundays after the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.
2. Confession was made by bride and groom on the same day prior to the marriage
3. There were differences in the social customs of marriage in the north and in the south
4. Public notice was announced regarding marriage
5. Marriage was treated as a sacrament.
6. The efforts to eliminate social customs failed. However, the attempts to suppress them were continued in AD 1809.⁷⁴²

Confession

The Sacrament of confession, introduced by Roman Catholics and propagated well, did not play an important role in the Nazrani life. Even though the confession is a sacrament in West Syrian tradition, it made any good for its popularisation. Fr. Ildephonse of Presentation reported in AD 1771 that the Nazranis " do not take seriously the sacrament of confession."⁷⁴³ Fr. Boniface of Jesus points out that the Nazranis believe that "the confession is necessary only

⁷³⁹ *Kudivappu* is a *Samskara* that acknowledging the newly wed as a family and making the bride as a member of groom's family. For more details, see the title '*Samskaras*' in chapter III

⁷⁴⁰ In the Nazrani concept, most respected person always stands at the extreme north in the church. While more than one marriage is performing together, attempts are made to stand at the north to show as the 'most respected and privileged'. Even today, it is solved by the norms fixed by *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809.

⁷⁴¹ *Naalagamam MSS*, P 161

⁷⁴² The zealous West Syrians consider everything except those prescribed in West Syrian tradition and those were practiced by them, are hearsay. Hence, they always tried to eliminate the social customs of the Nazranis. Both the major decision makers of the *Malankara Pally Yogam* that passed *Kandanadu Padiyola*, Philipose Remban and Ittoop Kathanar, were the admirers of the West Syrian tradition.

⁷⁴³ Thonippara, *Period of Struggle...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 179-80

at the point of death.”⁷⁴⁴ It is clear from the statutes of Parammekkal Thomman Kathanar, then governor of Kodungallor diocese, of January 1, AD 1791 that even the Romo-Syrians receive the sacrament of confession only during own marriage.⁷⁴⁵ It is clear from the sixth canon of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809 that the Nazranis took confession in connection with marriage only on the same day.⁷⁴⁶ The *Kandanadu Padiyola* made it statutory to do the confession on the previous Sunday of the marriage and further instructed the Nazranis to do the confession in every twenty five days and in the great Lent.⁷⁴⁷ From all the above, it is really suspicious that the Nazranis ever strictly observed confession as obligatory except for marriage in the eighteenth century, even though Mar Thoma VIII informed the British authorities on *Medom* 2, 988 ME that annual confession was statutory.⁷⁴⁸

Extreme Unction

The report of Dr. Kerr as the Nazranis did not admit the sacrament of extreme unction⁷⁴⁹ is technically correct since no such sacrament existed in the Syriac traditions that the Nazranis followed during his visit. However, it seems that the West Syrian sacrament of ‘anointing the sick with oil’ was practised as the Roman Catholic sacrament of extreme unction.⁷⁵⁰ This abuse is clear from the petition given by some priests to the British resident.⁷⁵¹

Burial

Burials within the church were a usual practice in the eighteenth century. The same hierarchy developed in the seventeenth century for this purpose was continued.⁷⁵² The mortal remains of the bishops were carried to another church to find space in the sanctuary. *Niranam Grandhavari* states about the demise of

⁷⁴⁴ Thonippara, *Period of Struggle...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 140-1

⁷⁴⁵ Thomman Kathanar, *Varthamanappusthakam. Op. Cit.*, P 415

⁷⁴⁶ *Naalagamam MSS*, P 160

⁷⁴⁷ *Naalagamam MSS*, P 160

⁷⁴⁸ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 159

⁷⁴⁹ Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 148

⁷⁵⁰ The following narration of the last moments of Mar Dionysius Ion *Meenom* 27, 1808, gives the details of this practice. “It is decided to do the needful [*Vendunnathu Ethikkuka*] now. When Philipose Remban wore the robe and administered the *Upprisma* [extreme unction], there were twenty five other *Kathanars* present... Burn the candles and the *Remban* anointed with *Saith* [Olive oil] and completed *Vazhikkala* [The prayers during death]” (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, Pp 117)

⁷⁵¹ “It is not found in the *Taksa* [book of church functions] or in the book for the consecration of *Saith* or in the traditions of the Syrians that to anointing a dying person with oil. Instead of getting the confession and giving the holy *Qurbana* to the sick and dying persons as prescribed, administrating some thing with the name *Odukkathe Upprisma* [extreme unction] with a belief of that it is enough for the sake of the soul and for the absolution from sins.” (Thomas, *Abraham Malpante ...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 14)

⁷⁵² All bishops, both Indian and West Syrian, were buried in the sanctuary till the end of the Nineteenth century.

Mar Dionysius I at Niranam on April 7, AD 1808 as “since there are two tombs in Niranam,⁷⁵³ it is decided to take to Puthencavu.”⁷⁵⁴ On the demise of Mar Thoma VII on July 4, AD 1809 At Kandanadu, his mortal remains were taken to Kolancherry and buried there.⁷⁵⁵ It has become necessary since both Kandanadu and nearby Mulamthuruthy churches had two tombs each in the sanctuary.⁷⁵⁶ The same happened when Mar Thoma VIII passed away at Niranam on January 23, AD 1815 and was buried at Puthencavu.⁷⁵⁷

Even though the burial at churches had become common, there were exceptions also. The *Chattavariyola* of 1028 ME confirms that even then, those who were living away from churches did not bring their dead to the churches to bury.⁷⁵⁸ It also prohibits the burial of laymen in the church and of the priests within the rails.⁷⁵⁹ Neither such canons nor the propaganda of the West Syrian prelates stopped the burial in the churches till the end of the nineteenth century.⁷⁶⁰ By the nineteenth century, the burial was coming out from churches. But there were no formal cemeteries as demanded by the Synod of Udayamperor. The late nineteenth century documents are hinting the lack of use of coffins till then.⁷⁶¹ The *Chattavariyola* also points out that the body was brought to the churches in procession.⁷⁶²

Change of the Liturgical Tradition

The defence against the Gabriel factor needs the strengthening of the existing Latinised East Syrian liturgy and its allied practices. The possibility of the elimination of some Latin elements could not be ruled out since Mar Gabriel, an opportunist, tried to reconcile with Mar Thoma IV rather than with the Roman Catholics. But there was certainly no uniformity in liturgy due to the lack of centralized training facilities or curriculum for the priests. The *Malphanate* system then existed provided the continuation of the traditions favoured by each *Malpan*. Though the Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah-Mar Thoma IV agreement permitted

⁷⁵³ Of Mar Thoma II (AD 1686) and Mar Thoma V (AD 1765)

⁷⁵⁴ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 118

⁷⁵⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 120

⁷⁵⁶ Mar Thoma IV (AD 1728), Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah (AD 1763/4) are at Kandanadu and Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah (AD 1693/4) and Mar Gregorius Yoohanon (AD 1773) at Mulamthuruthy.

⁷⁵⁷ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 121

⁷⁵⁸ *Chattavariyola, Op. Cit.*, twentieth decree.

⁷⁵⁹ *Chattavariyola, Op. Cit.*, fifty first and fifty seventh decrees respectively.

⁷⁶⁰ Only the late nineteenth century attempts of Mar Coorilos Yooyakkim and Mar Patrose III, Patriarch of Antioch, stopped this practice.

⁷⁶¹ *Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 1088 -111

⁷⁶² *Chattavariyola, Op. Cit.*, fiftieth decree.

Nazranis to continue the post-Udayamperor liturgical format, the possibility of the infiltration of the West Syrian tradition could not be ruled out. There might have several pupils of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah, a great scholar and teacher, who started admiring the West Syrian liturgy through his influence.

Pontifical Vestments

According to Jacob Canter Visscher, Mar Thoma IV wears "on his head a silken cowele, embroidered with cross,⁷⁶³ in form much resembling that of the Carmelites"⁷⁶⁴. Apart from this West Syrian addition, the pontifical vestments remain as same of the one adopted from the Roman Catholics during the Portuguese period. This was continued even after the confirmation of Mar Thoma VI as Mar Dionysius Metropolitan under the West Syrian rite.⁷⁶⁵

Paulinus gives an impression that Mar Dionysius I was using the West Syrian vestments during his visit to Mar Dionysius I on December 22, AD 1785 at Niranam.⁷⁶⁶ But Dr. Claudius Buchanan, based on his meeting with Mar Dionysius I on November 23, AD 1806 at Kandanadu reports a combination of both Latin and West Syrian vestments.⁷⁶⁷ Even though the West Syrian influence gradually increased in the eighteenth century regarding the Pontifical vestment, it was never able to drive out fully the traditional Latin-derived vestments used since the period of Mar Thoma I.

Vestments of the Priests.

The casual vestments of the priests remain the same as that of the pre-Portuguese period.⁷⁶⁸ In the case of their customary *Kudummi*, the tuft of hair that marks dignity of the priest, there was a great dispute that arises in the eighteenth century. The West Syrians were adamant on introducing tonsure instead of *Kudummi* to the priests. Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast introduced a black cap for the priest instead of *Kudummi*.⁷⁶⁹ Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah and his companions continued the popularisation of black cap instead of *Kudummi*.⁷⁷⁰ The agreement of Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah of *Dhanu* 18, AD 1754

⁷⁶³ This *M'snapsa*, the sign of the West Syrian and Alexandrian monks is also became a part of the West Syrian pontifical vestments since all West Syrian bishops are monks.

⁷⁶⁴ Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 42.

⁷⁶⁵ Even today, it is remaining as the official vestment of the Malankara Metropolitan. But its use is seldom.

⁷⁶⁶ Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 118

⁷⁶⁷ Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 128 -9

⁷⁶⁸ For more details, see the title 'Dress and Tonsure' in this chapter.

⁷⁶⁹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 86

⁷⁷⁰ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 86

permitted to follow the new tradition "that priests who have shaved their beards and have adopted the wearing of caps shall continue to do so."⁷⁷¹ This was in fact a favourable condition for the West Syrian tradition. However, their long red customary cap hanging behind did not vanish even in AD 1806.⁷⁷² That was wiped out by the time of the establishment of the Seminary.⁷⁷³ However, the sacramental vestment of the priests faced a change during the eighteenth century. *Mapra*,⁷⁷⁴ the East Syrian equivalent of Roman handless Surplice gave way to the West Syrian *Kappa*⁷⁷⁵ in the celebration of holy Eucharist.⁷⁷⁶ Some historians said that *Kappa* was introduced by Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleed in the seventeenth century,⁷⁷⁷ which is most unlikely.

The Vestments of the Deacons

There is no mention about the liturgical vestments of the deacons during the eighteenth century. They wore the same white robe like priests during their lay life. The long stall, the only liturgical vestment of the deacons, may have been worn in the manner prescribed by the Synod of Udayamperor, that is on the left shoulder and the ends tug under the right arm. There is no conclusive record available to establish the period when it was turned to the West Syrian style, that is, simply wear on the left shoulder at equal length in front and back. Considering an act of Patriarch Mar Peter III of Antioch in AD 1876 at Kandanadu, it seems that a Latin addition, *Almuthy*, existed in the liturgical vestments of the deacons.⁷⁷⁸ Hence, *Almuthy* was existing in the eighteenth century.

East Syrian Liturgy

As discussed earlier, even though the theological base provided by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah was so strong, his attempts to introduce West Syrian liturgy failed.⁷⁷⁹ On that theological base, it had become difficult to practise the East

⁷⁷¹ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 258–9

⁷⁷² Buchanan, *Christian Researches...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 116

⁷⁷³ Even during the arrival of Patriarch Mar Peter III of Antioch in AD 1876, *Kathanars* sparingly had *Kudummi*, He prohibited it. (*Naalagamam MSS*, P 1088 – 111)

⁷⁷⁴ The East Syrian Church had two types of liturgical vestments. One is similar to that of the West Syrian and the other is "in square type with cross in the centre and four corners" (Placid, *Nammude Reethu, Op. Cit.*, P 221) The later is called *Mapra* (Aprem, *Sacraments...Op. Cit.*, P 57)

⁷⁷⁵ '*Kappa*' is the ceremonial clerical robe wears by the priest during the celebration of holy Eucharist and other sacraments. In all Eastern and Oriental Churches, its shape and use are almost identical.

⁷⁷⁶ The *Puthiacavu Padiyola*, an agreement between Mar Dionysius I and Mar Ivanios Yoohanon made at Puthiacavu, Mavalikkara, in 964 ME (AD 1789) introduced West Syrian *Kappa* along with other West Syrian liturgical traditions to Nazranis. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 97)

⁷⁷⁷ Samuel, Fr. Dr. V. C., *Sabha Valarunnu*, Kottayam, Divyabhodhanam Publications, 1984, P 158

⁷⁷⁸ *Naalagamam MSS*, P 1088 -111, this *Alumuty* is almost similar to the *Mapra*, and covering the chest tightly. Mar Peter III prohibited it.

⁷⁷⁹ See the title 'The Liturgy' in this chapter

Syrian liturgies as it is since it contains their Nestorian or Roman Catholic theology. Hence, attempts were made to correct the East Syrian liturgy according to the Alexandrian theology in the first half of the eighteenth century.⁷⁸⁰ A prayer book in Syriac language, copied in AD 1734 at Mulamthuruthy by one Deacon Abraham, gives a clear picture of those attempts of adaptation. This book, a collection of East Syrian liturgy, was corrected according to the Alexandrian theology. Van Der Ploeg comments on that as follows:

In the prayers preceding the canonical hours, we do not find *qaddisat allaha*, addressed to the Father or the Trinity, as in the Church of the East, but *qaddisat allaha*, addressed to Christ, as is the Jacobite custom. There is also the Jacobite formula: "And upon us, weak sinners, be mercy and grace at all times in the two worlds and for ever and ever. Amen" (following the Glory be to the Father...). This also is Jacobite... On pages 826-827 are indicated the psalms to be said on feast days... The order of these feasts is neither in accordance with that of the Church of the East, nor with the one of the WS Church. One gets the impression nevertheless that the Latin influence is still there, as for example, the feast of Circumcision... The manuscript we have described above is interesting for various reasons. It shows that in 1734 the Jacobites still used the canonical prayers of the Church of the East more than 80 years after their separation (1653), with only few and very small Jacobite variants. On page 686, in a *koruzutha*, Mary is called the Mother of God, which may well be a Catholic heritage.⁷⁸¹

These attempts of adaptation were not satisfactory to the West Syrian bishops arriving from AD 1748 onwards. As in the case of the Roman Catholics in the sixteenth century, every sacrament performed other than in West Syrian formula was invalid for them. They and their pupils started to introduce the West Syrian liturgy. The following details are available about the practices of Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast, the first among the West Syrian bishops arrived in India in the eighteenth century.

As to his mode of celebrating the liturgy, we have the following details. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist lasted more than three hours. He did not allow any image on the altar. At the instance of the people a cross was allowed, with which he blessed... He administered baptism by immersion and with warm and cold water, and anointed the whole body of the child with oil. Then he fastened

⁷⁸⁰ A *Hudra*, copied at Mulamthuruthy, compiled according to the East Syrian tradition, have prayers for all Sundays in an year, and for some feasts, found as corrected according to the Alexandrian theology in the issues like the nature of Christ. (Placid, *Nammude Raethu*, *Op. Cit.*, P 252)

⁷⁸¹ Van Der Ploeg, *The Syriac Manuscripts...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 155-6. However, Alexandrian Theology also accepts Saint Mary as the Mother of God.

the child with a stole and gave it back to its relatives in the hands of a cleric, accompanied by some with burning candles. The child was to remain three days so fastened with the stole. Leavened bread was used in the holy sacrifice, and holy communion was given with a small spoon. He ordered to make a very big chalice, and took much bread and wine, which he drank as if soup. He did not seem to know about extreme unction. Being forced to administer it, he sent a cleric to anoint the sick. He conferred the sacred orders without many ceremonies. The principal ceremony was tonsure, which he himself performed.⁷⁸²

Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast was able to insert West Syrian liturgical tradition to Nazranis at least partially. This is confirmed by the statement in *Niranam Grandhavari* as “[He] introduced the traditions which are not in practice in Malayalam.”⁷⁸³ His successors, Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah and his two companion bishops were far successful in the efforts begun by Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast, that is the replacement of the liturgical traditions of Nazranis by their West Syrian counterparts.

The Introduction of West Syrian Liturgy

The long stay of Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah and the other two bishops provided enough ground for the introduction of West Syrian Liturgy. Their most important contribution was the introduction of the Anaphora of Saint James, the brother of Christ,⁷⁸⁴ which is considered the mother of all West Syrian Anaphors. They used their training and ordination of clerics as an effective media to propagate the West Syrian liturgy. On the other hand, the faction led by Mar Thoma V advocated the continuation of the existing tradition which according to them, is *Edatthile Maryadha*,⁷⁸⁵ that is nothing but the Latinised East Syrian rite.⁷⁸⁶ Mar Thoma V demanded for the *status quo ante* of the system existing from the period of Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah.⁷⁸⁷ They were able to squeeze out a condition in the agreement of Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah dated *Dhanu* 18, AD 1754 that “Henceforth, the faith and rituals, made extant by Mar Thoma

⁷⁸² Perumthottam, *Period of Decline...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 196-7. As a Roman Catholic observation, this description has that prejudice.

⁷⁸³ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 86

⁷⁸⁴ (a) Johns Abraham Konat, Rev. Fr., *Malankara Orthodox Sabhaude Aradhanakramangal (Art.)*, Orthodox Theological Seminary 175th Anniversary Souvenir, Kottayam, 1990, P 129 (b) Paulinus, *India Orientalis...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 120 (c) Anquiel Du Peron witnessed the celebration of Holy Eucharist using the Anaphora of Saint James of Jerusalem (Ferroli, *Jesuits...Vol. II, Op. Cit.*, P 150)

⁷⁸⁵ =The law of the land

⁷⁸⁶ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 89

⁷⁸⁷ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 89

Metran who died at Kantanad, under orders of Mar Ivanios Metran shall be maintained."⁷⁸⁸ Even after that, the West Syrian liturgy went on spreading.⁷⁸⁹

Ironically, the strong base of Alexandrian theology established by Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah became the catalyst that increased the spread of the West Syrian liturgy. It is easy to explain the rightness of the West Syrian Liturgy on the basis of the Alexandrian theology since, like all primitive churches, the West Syrian Church also developed its liturgy over its theological foundation, whereas it was difficult for the advocates of *Edathile Maryadha* to interpret them on the basis of the Alexandrian theology.

As in the case of the Roman Catholics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, The West Syrian prelates used priestly training as an effective tool to introduce West Syrian rite. As an alternative source to get ordination, several among Nazranis approached the West Syrians who usually were trained under them in the West Syrian tradition. Naturally they too were becoming the advocates of the new tradition. Some of the pupils of the West Syrians also became the *Malpans* who taught the next generation. According to Ittoop, Kattumangattu Kurian Kathanar was a student of Mar Ivanios the Iconoclast.⁷⁹⁰ According to *Niranam Grandhavari*, "Kattumangattu Kurian Kathanar lived with the *Valiya Bava*, who is the *Mafrian*, and studied well all that required. He became a *Remban* by him [the *Mafrian*]. Since he became an expert in reading and preaching, he too started teaching deacons and children."⁷⁹¹

When his *Malpanate* was functioning at the north, probably at Mulamthuruthy, Mar Thoma VI started another one, certainly with *Eadthile Maryadha* as curriculum, at Chengannur immediately after his consecration in 936 ME.⁷⁹² But this was not enough to prevent the spread of West Syrian tradition. With his enthronement in AD 1770 as Mar Dionysius Metropolitan, Mar Thoma VI was forced to accept a title under the West Syrian tradition.⁷⁹³

⁷⁸⁸ *Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, Pp 258 –9

⁷⁸⁹ The bond executed by Porkattukulangurai Kuriesu Mathunni Tharaken of Adavur, on *Medom* 1, 941 ME to Mar Thoma VI confirms that his son, ordained by the West Syrian Prelates, performed "the rites and ceremonies of foreigners...in the church." (*Seminary Case Book, Vol. III Op. Cit.*, P 259)

⁷⁹⁰ Ittoop, *Malayalathulia...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 126

⁷⁹¹ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 90

⁷⁹² Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 90

⁷⁹³ *Niranam Grandhavari* states that one of the reasons for the initiative of Mar Thoma VI for the conciliation with the West Syrians was "his awareness about the existence of different traditions in churches." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari, Op. Cit.*, P 90)

The Puthiacavu Padiyola

The great turn in the introduction of West Syrian liturgical tradition was the execution of the *Puthiacavu Padiyola* of AD 1789.⁷⁹⁴ According to *Niranam Grandhavari*, "that decided to use the prayers, ordination and celebration of holy Eucharist wearing *Kappa* in the new rite and to continue to use the old rite for baptism and marriage."⁷⁹⁵ This decision of the *Malankara Pally Yogam* that is treaty in between Mar Dionysius I and Mar Ivanios Yoohanon, the sole survivor of the West Syrian prelates came along Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah, officially introduced the 'new', the West Syrian, rites to the Nazranis. They are the daily prayers, ordination and holy Eucharist using the Anaphora of Saint James. However, the permission to continue the 'old', the East Syrian, rite indicates that this decision was not unanimous. The increasing supporters of West Syrian tradition were forced to accept the continuation of the old rite at least for baptism and marriage though they won to get the consent to change most of the sacraments into the West Syrian tradition.

Mar Ivanios Yoohanon plays an effective role in the spreading of the West Syrian liturgical tradition for long twenty four years from the enthronement of Mar Dionysius I in AD 1770 till the demise of the former in AD 1794. After his settlement with Mar Dionysius I, he was able to devote his entire time for teaching. This period was sufficient to train an entire generation of priests that included Mathen Kathanar, the successor of Mar Dionysius I and Philipose Kathanar of Kayamkulam,⁷⁹⁶ his favourite student and companion.⁷⁹⁷ Mar Dionysius I also studied under Mar Ivanios Yoohanon.⁷⁹⁸ This cordial relation made the Nazranis to accept the West Syrian liturgical tradition. In AD 1808, the Nazranis became 'Jacobite' at least in liturgical context.⁷⁹⁹ This is certainly an outcome of the efforts of Mar Ivanios Yoohanon.

According to Ittoop, Mar Dionysius I encouraged the training of *Kathanars* and deacons. He also points out that Mar Dionysius I took "efforts to spread the

⁷⁹⁴ The name *Padiyola* (= minutes) confirms that it was a declaration of the *Malankara Pally Yogam*.

⁷⁹⁵ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 97

⁷⁹⁶ He was became a *Ramban* in AD 1794. This learned *Malpan* was the translator of the first Malayalam Bible printed in AD 1811 by Dr. Claudius Buchanan. (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp 97-8, 113 - 4)

⁷⁹⁷ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 97

⁷⁹⁸ Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 97

⁷⁹⁹ In *Medom* AD 1808, Mar Thoma VII stated at *Niranam* that "[Nazranis] are namesake Jacobites without according performance. [This is] due to the betrayal and untruthfulness of the people." (Thomas, *Niranam Grandhavari*, *Op. Cit.*, P 119)

Anaphora, prayers and songs in Syriac and in Malayalam by copying of them by experienced priests.”⁸⁰⁰ Some other authors also confirm it.⁸⁰¹ Perhaps he encouraged the priests to study under Mar Ivanios Yoohanon just like he and his successor. It is also stated that Mar Coorilos II, brother of Kattumangattu Mar Coorilos I,⁸⁰² stayed at Mulamthuruthy and taught clergy.⁸⁰³ This also strengthened the spread of West Syrian liturgical tradition.

Later Developments

The demise of Mar Dionysius I in AD 1808 speeded up the process of establishment of West Syrian liturgical tradition. Apart from the presence of Mar Thoma VII as the prelate of the Nazranis, the emergence of two strong advocates of West Syrian tradition, Kayamkulam Philipose Remban and Pulikkottil Ittoop Kathanar⁸⁰⁴ as the popular leaders of Nazranis in the south and the north became an added advantage for this process.

The uprising started during the period of Mar Thoma VII which became serious during the period of Mar Thoma VIII strengthened the *Rembans*⁸⁰⁵ faction that is pro-West Syrian. One of the allegations raised against Pulikkottil Ittoop Remban who became the sole leader of *Rembans*' faction after the death of Kayamkulam Philipose Remban in 987ME was that he “introduced some new practices in the church,”⁸⁰⁶ which may be a hint about his West Syrian liturgy.⁸⁰⁷ The *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809, which was mostly dominated by the influence of both the *Rembans*, officially wiped out all remaining non-West Syrian liturgical practices. The eleventh decree of the same directing “That everything like prayers, holy Eucharist, baptism, marriage, Christmas, Epiphany, Hosanna, Good Friday, Resurrection and Pentecost must be practised according to the rite of the Jacobite Syrians.”⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰⁰ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 134

⁸⁰¹ David, Fr. K., *Malankara Suriyani Sabha Charithrom*, Kottayam, 1952, P 134

⁸⁰² See the title 'Parallel administration' in this chapter.

⁸⁰³ Cheeren, Fr. Joseph, *Pulikkottil Joseph Mar Dionysius*, Kunnamkulam, Paulose Mar Militios Metropolitan (Pub.) 1992, Pp. 78-9. Mar Coorilos II spend his last days at Mulamthuruthy and buried at nearby Vettical Dyara. (*Naalagamam MSS*, P 153)

⁸⁰⁴ Pulikkottil Ittoop Kathanar was a student of Mafrian Mar Baselius Sakrallah at Mulamthuruthy. (Cheeren, *Pulikkottil...*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 53-4, 73)

⁸⁰⁵ The faction led by Kayamkulam Philipose Remban and Pulikkottil Ittoop Kathanar. The latter too became a *Remban* in AD 1809.

⁸⁰⁶ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 158

⁸⁰⁷ A mention in the *Aarthattu Padiyola* of AD 1808 confirms the affinity of Ittoop Remban towards West Syrian liturgy. See the title 'Canons regarding secular life' in this chapter.

⁸⁰⁸ *Naalagamam MSS*, P 165. Ittoop generalized them as Christmas, Epiphany, Hosanna, Good Friday, Resurrection and Pentecost as feasts (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, *Op. Cit.*, P 157)

This decree was the last step in the process of the adaptation of West Syrian rite. The remaining two sacraments, baptism and marriage, permitted by the *Puthiacavu Padiyola* of AD 1789 to practise according to the old rite were also converted into West Syrian. In effect, there was no further room officially for any tradition other than West Syrian to Nazranis, since then.

Tools of Implementation

The *Kandanadu Padiyola* contains the tools for effective implementation of the West Syrian rite. As like the Roman Catholics in the sixteenth century, it utilized the training of priests and ordination as an effective control which confirms the use of nothing other than the West Syrian rite in the future. The eighth decree of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* is as follows:

For the general benefit of the Syrians, one school⁸⁰⁹ each should be built in the south and in the north. One *Malpan* each should stay there and teach children and deacons. Their expenses should be met from the shares [of donation] of each *Pally*. The priests should complete the study of the liturgy and should be well versed in it. The priests should get the permission for performing the sacraments from the bishop after producing a letter from the *Malpan* confirming this.⁸¹⁰

This decree confirms that the establishment of seminaries was meant for the establishment of the West Syrian liturgy. It will centralize the training of clergy to a uniform curriculum. The twelfth decree of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* prohibits the teaching of everything except West Syrian liturgy. Hence, the consent letter from the *Malpan* of the seminary assured that nobody would be a *Kathanar* without the satisfactory completion of the curriculum of the seminary that is the West Syrian. Philipose Remban and Ittoop *Kathanar* had the highest chances to be the *Malpans* of both the seminaries. The further acts of Ittoop Remban justifies that the foundation of the Seminary was for the establishment of uniform liturgy that is the West Syrian liturgy. In a letter to Mar Thoma VIII regarding his lack of interest to execute the *Kandanadu Padiyola*, Ittoop Remban states as follows:

There should be no more delay in establishing the Seminary and appointing Philipose Remban as its *Malpan*. The study must be started immediately with at least one priest, one deacon and one child per church. There should also be no delay for copying and spreading of the *Andu Taksa*.⁸¹¹

⁸⁰⁹ In the original, it is used as *Paditha Veedu* (= House of learning)

⁸¹⁰ *Naalagamam MSS*, Pp 162 - 3. Ittoop adds "teach holy scriptures etc..." (Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, Op. Cit., P 156)

⁸¹¹ Ittoop, *Malayalathulla...*, Op. Cit., P 161

From the demand for the training of *Kathanars*, it is clear that Ittoop Remban had intentions not only to form the entire clergy in West Syrian tradition in future, but to execute it with immediate effect also. The need for the confirmation of the knowledge of the existing *Kathanars* demanded by the eighth decree of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* also points the same.⁸¹²

The ninth decree of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* that ordered "the *Andu Taksa*⁸¹³ for the services of the church should be copied and the churches must purchase it at the expense of the church"⁸¹⁴ was a long-term strategy; Yet, it had an immediate effect to the establishment of West Syrian liturgy. The shortage of books would no more be a reason for reciting the old rite. In his above-mentioned letter to Mar Thoma VIII, Ittoop Remban mentions this also.

The Seminary

The favourable political and ecclesial conditions turned up in the second decade of the nineteenth century, realized the dream of Ittoop Remban, namely the construction of a seminary.⁸¹⁵ By AD 1815, the Kottayam seminary started functioning. The circumstances that led to his consecration as the Malankara Metropolitan⁸¹⁶ also became an added advantage to the process of unification of liturgy. After the confusions of one and a half centuries, there became a uniform liturgical tradition, the West Syrian rite, at least officially⁸¹⁷ and the instrument for its proper establishment in future.

⁸¹² *Naalagamam MSS*, P 163

⁸¹³ *Andu Taksa* is the book in the West Syrian tradition contains the services for all major feasts year round.

⁸¹⁴ *Naalagamam MSS*, P 163

⁸¹⁵ See the title 'The British and the Seminary' in this chapter

⁸¹⁶ See the title 'The Pakalomattom lineage' in this chapter

⁸¹⁷ Some of the old tradition, East Syrian and Latinised East Syrian, was existed till the arrival of Mar Peter III in AD 1876. The traces of some other still exist.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSIONS

This study has reached the following conclusions about the identity question of the Malankara Nazranis during the period AD 1708 –1815.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Nazranis were in a relatively peaceful environment. The Portuguese persecution was over and the political condition of Kerala was somewhat stable. The Dutch, even though least interested in the religion, favoured the Nazranis due to the enmity of both towards the Roman Catholics. The Nazranis were able to 'buy' the protection from the Dutch against the sale of pepper. Their profession, trading, and the domestic trade networks were safe in the hands of the Nazranis. Their *Jathy* dignity was intact and they were still under the protection of the *Kuladharmā*.

Even though the division with the Romo-Syrians was a reality, the co-existence was established. Both the factions of the Nazranis shared several churches. The attempts to force the Nazranis to surrender to the Roman Catholic Church ceased after the departure of the Portuguese. The unification attempts also were at a vanishing point since the Nazranis refused to abolish their native Mar Thoma bishopric and the Roman Catholic Church refused to accept any Indian bishops.

The difference between the Nazranis and the Romo- Syrians was very thin except that the former were under the Mar Thoma bishops and the latter were under the Latin bishops. The formal recognition of the Alexandrian theology and of the Patriarch of Antioch as the titular head by the Nazranis had little effect in the day-to-day affairs. Their life system, the *Marthomayude Maargam*, was a culmination of the pre-colonial traditions along with the infiltrations of the colonial period. It was then called the *Edathile Maryada*. The post-Portuguese additions like the Pakalomattom bishopric, Alexandrian theology and a little West Syrian rituals were also a part of this life system.

Throughout the eighteenth century, attempts for unification between the Nazranis and the Romo-Syrians were made. This was initiated by the Romo-Syrians who were humiliated by their European prelates. Their interest was to get a native bishop by absorbing the Mar Thoma bishops and the Nazranis into the

Roman Catholic Church. At a time, the Nazranis were also interested in the unification to restore their *Jathy* unity. However, Rome's denial of the succession right of the Pakalomattom bishopric and the later persecution by Thachil Mathu Tharakan made the unity impossible. The polarisation of the Nazranis towards the West Syrian sacramental and ecclesial traditions also made the unification difficult. Since the unification was unattainable, most of the commonly owned churches were divided between the Nazranis and the Romo-Syrians during the eighteenth century. Hence, the last string connecting both the factions of the Nazranis was broken.

The division of Nazranis raised the need of different appellations. The Dutch introduction of the term 'Syrian Christian' was not sufficient since it was applicable to the Romo-Syrians also. The Roman Catholics introduced the term *Jacobite* because of the West Syrian connection of the Nazranis. The seventeenth century term *Puthencoor* also remains. Even though the individuals were still known as Nazranis, the appellation *Puthencoor Syrians* and even the *Jacobites* were in use to identify the community by the end of the eighteenth century. This established the religious identity of the Nazrani appellation over the *Jathy* identity in the society.

The arrival of Mar Gabriel disturbed the stability that the Nazranis enjoyed in the beginning of the eighteenth century. As a Nestorian, he advocated the pre-colonial Christianity of the Nazranis that included the rule of the Persian bishops. Since some Nazranis joined them, probably because of their disagreement with the Mar Thoma bishops on personal grounds, the Nazranis were again divided. Even though the Mar Thoma bishops were able to retain their Episcopal dignity and the division ceased after the demise of Mar Gabriel, the work of Mar Gabriel had long standing impacts on the Nazranis. Due to their inability to withstand the teachings of Mar Gabriel, Mar Thoma bishops were forced to request the Patriarch of Antioch to send scholars in West Syrian tradition and theology. Thus begins the arrival of a series of West Syrian bishops in the eighteenth century.

The West Syrian prelates, with the support of the Patriarch of Antioch, claimed the office of the Church. They also demanded the reformation of the Nazranis according to the West Syrian norms. Even though these attempts faced strong resistance, they too attained followers. After decades of negotiations and several political interferences, the West Syrians were forced to withdraw the

claims on the office of the Church. However, the Nazranis were forced to recognise the status of the Patriarch of Antioch as the titular head of the Church in this process.

It became difficult for the Nazranis to interpret the East Syrian and Latinised East Syrian liturgy and the sacraments that they used in the beginning of the eighteenth century on the West Syrian ideological base. Attempts to correct the existing liturgy according to the West Syrian theology did not succeed due to the continued presence of the West Syrian prelates who took priestly training as an effective tool to spread the West Syrian ecclesiology. Gradually, the Nazranis replaced their liturgy and the sacraments with its West Syrian counterparts. The establishment of the Seminary in AD 1815 and the provisions in the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809 ensured that no other form of liturgy, except the West Syrian, should exist in future. Even though some minor East Syrian elements remain, the liturgical identity of the Nazranis became West Syrian by AD 1815.

In this process, the remaining Roman-Catholic elements were eliminated or modified. Some rituals were modified in this process like *Raza Qurbana*, which became *Moонnummel Qurbana*. However, the veneration of idols diminished but not fully vanished against the paintings that were permitted in the West Syrian theology. This complex nature is reflected in the art and architecture of the Nazranis in the early nineteenth century also.

The ecclesial administration of the Nazranis was of a complex nature in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Their traditional *Yogams* were powerful even after the Roman Catholic attempts of the seventeenth century to abolish them. In fact, the strength of the Nazranis and their legitimate prelates was the support of the *Yogam* in the eighteenth century. The *Malankara Pally Yogam* took all decisions, both spiritual and temporal, in the eighteenth century. The local *Pally Yogams* also retained their authority. The *Pally Yogams*, through their *Kaikkarans* controlled the local church affairs.

In the meantime, the Roman Catholic introduction of the Episcopal hierarchy also existed under the Mar Thoma bishops. The Roman Catholic introduction of the Episcopal appointment of vicars also continued. But the priests were not salaried employees like the Roman Catholic priests. Their income was derived from the services they offered. However, the *Pally Yogams* retained the

right in the selection of the priests. The bishops also needed recognition of the *Malankara Pally Yogam* even though it was a hereditary succession. After the fall of the Pakalomattom lineage, the right to the selection of bishops also went to the *Malankara Pally Yogam*. This retained the democratic identity of the Church along with the Episcopal nature. However, the appointment of the chancellors for the bishops in the early nineteenth century indicated that the Nazranis desired a controlled Episcopacy only.

The existence of the Pakalomattom Episcopal lineage helped the stability of the Nazranis in the eighteenth century. It checked the possibility of a dissident line or claim for the office of the Church. The West Syrian claims and the rebel Episcopal line initiated by them failed mainly because of the unquestionable right of the Pakalomattom family to hold the office and the adherence of the Nazranis towards that lineage. However, when the Pakalomattom lineage became weak in the early nineteenth century, the Nazranis were able to replace it by elected bishops irrespective of any family.

The titular name of the Pakalomattom bishops *Mar Thoma* was a sign of the Saint Thomas consciousness that was deep-rooted among the Nazranis even in the eighteenth century. The West Syrians always tried to replace it for the same reason. By the collapse of Pakalomattom lineage, the title *Mar Thoma* was replaced by *Mar Dionysius* as the West Syrians suggested. However by then, the new bishops started using the *Throne of Saint Thomas* along with their title. This indicates that the Nazranis retained their Saint Thomas identity that was known earlier as *Marthomayude Maargavum Vazhipadum*. The use of the term *Throne of Saint Thomas* along with their title indicates the autonomy of the Church.

The change of liturgical tradition and the attempts of the West Syrian reformations led to the decline of the importance of some local rituals and practices followed by the Nazranis in the eighteenth century. This is also a sign of increasing religious consciousness over the caste identity. Efforts were also made to eliminate the local customs related to the sacraments that are not explainable under the West Syrian tradition. The attempts for the elimination of the non-sacramental rituals show the increase in the religious consciousness of the Nazranis. As in the case of liturgical tradition, the social rituals also changed gradually and hence it was found to be practised without uniformity at the same time.

The Nazranis had no written code of canons in the post-Portuguese period. Their unwritten law, *Edathile Maryada*, became more complicated by the West Syrian interference. Even the administration and revenue of the churches were not in a uniform nature. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Nazranis were trying to formulate a code of canons for uniformity in liturgy, social customs, administration etc. Through a series of *Malankara Pally Yogams*, this was fulfilled partially in the eighteenth century. By the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809, the Nazranis were able to establish an identity as a Church with its own code of canons.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the existence of different traditions, especially the liturgical, was a troublemaker for the Nazranis. Even in the case of inheritance, there were differences in practice. The need for the unification of traditions became a necessity for the stability of the Nazranis. The West Syrian attempts for reformation also played a vital role in this process. After the Mathu Tharakan persecution, there was no need for retaining the old liturgical traditions since the hope for the unification with the Romo-Syrians vanished. The gradual introduction of the West Syrian liturgical tradition speeded up the process of making the uniform liturgical tradition. The execution of the *Kandanadu Padiyola* of AD 1809 declared the West Syrian liturgical tradition as the only and official one of the Nazranis. The establishment of the seminary was meant as a tool for establishing uniform liturgical tradition by common priestly education since the old *Malpanates* would slow down the process of unification.

The Syriac language and Syriac identity of the Nazranis remained intact in the eighteenth century. But they gradually changed from the East Syrian to the West Syrian in the eighteenth century. Even though the script and pronunciation remained East Syrian, the grammar was changed to West Syrian.

The rapid changes in the political condition of Kerala in the eighteenth century seriously affected the identity of the Nazranis. In the beginning of the century the Nazranis were affluent in several small chiefdoms of Kerala. Their position was almost intact except for the internal quarrels that invited the interference of the local chieftains and the bribe that they demanded from the Nazranis. The favourable Dutch policy towards the Nazranis prevented the possibility of the political pressure initiated by the Roman Catholics.

The formation of Travancore was the most affected factor in the eighteenth century for the Nazranis. Most of the chiefdoms in which the Nazranis were affluent were merged into the Trivandrum-centred Travancore. The Nazranis lost the offices, which they had in the small chiefdoms and they were out from all the government services. Even though they were able to cultivate a good relation with the Travancore Royal house, they also underwent the bureaucratic corruption of the Travancore officials.

The formation of the Trivandrum-centred Travancore opened the doors of trading activities throughout the kingdom to the Tamil Brahmins. This put an end to the monopoly of the Nazranis in trading. It also made the *Kuladharmā* meaningless to the Nazranis. The changes in the trade system by the changes in political environment and the state imposed monopolies further damaged the Nazrani trade system. The Mysore invasions and the economic factors related to it also diminished the Nazrani trade. It led to an occupational shift of the Nazranis. Since the bounds of *Kuladharmā* were broken, the Nazranis got the freedom to choose any profession of their own choices. Consequently, many of them turned to agriculture.

The abolition of the Travancore army after the Velu Thampi revolt rendered lot of the Nazranis, who were soldiers, jobless. They had no other choice but to turn as landless farmers or agricultural workers. This led a lot of the Nazranis to engage themselves in contracts like *Uzhiyam* and *Viruthy* and hence exposed them to future persecution. This process also made the Nazranis mainly an agrarian community.

The collapse of traditional occupations, especially, military service, destroyed the Nazrani education system also. The traditional *Kalari* system ceased to exist. Hence, the British introduction of the parish schools, obviously in their pattern, led to the beginning of the new education system of the Nazranis by AD 1815.

After the establishment of the total British control over Travancore and Kochi, the Nazranis were absorbed into the revenue and newly formed judicial services. Even though only a few were benefited, this was a morale boost for the Nazranis. It also led the Nazranis to look into the non-conventional occupations. Perhaps these opportunities also helped the Nazranis to welcome the new education system.

Even though the Dutch had certain religious interests over the Nazranis, their influence was limited because of their policy and the lack of total political control. However, the British, who had the total political control, had well-defined religious and political intentions towards the Nazranis. The British considered the Nazranis as the stepping-stone for building up a Christian India that would be loyal to the British Empire. They believed that all traditions of the Nazranis that were against the Protestant faith were the Roman Catholic or Hindu infiltrations. They also believed that if the Nazranis were purified from all of these, they would become true Protestant Christians. More or less, the British intentions were the same as those of the Portuguese towards the Nazranis.

The British misunderstood that the Nazranis were under religious persecution. They considered that their participation in the local and temple festivals was forced on them. The British failed to understand its significance in the *Jathy*-based society. The British thought that if the Nazranis were relieved from their pathetic conditions, they would be loyal and faithful to the British Empire. In this situation, instead of using force like the Portuguese, the British extended a helping hand to the Nazranis. However, those helps like the immunity from the corrupt officials, assistance for building the education system, opportunities in the judicial and revenue services were extended with clear colonial intentions. Their assistance to the establishment of the seminary and in the Bible translation also was with the intentions to convert the Nazranis to Protestants in the future. Even though the Nazranis received the British assistance, they were not ready to accept the British advancements towards their religion in AD 1815.

By AD 1815, the Nazranis crystallized their identity far beyond the *Edathile Maryada* of AD 1708. They were free from the *Kuladharna* and its occupational limitations. Still they were retaining their Saint Thomas consciousness and *Jathy* dignity. They adopted a uniform West Syrian liturgical tradition. They developed an elected and autonomous Episcopal administrative system without losing the democratic nature. They developed their own canonical framework. They were well known to understand and explain their ideological base. They were politically safe under the British protection. However, religion overrode the caste in the identity of the Nazranis between AD 1708 and AD 1815 due to the series of events evaluated in this study.

The year AD 1815 was a clear turning point in the course of the Nazrani history. The religious identity, centralised priestly training, elected bishops, occupational pattern and the British connection had sustainable impacts in the future. This would provide the necessary platform for the further study about the impacts of these on the Nazranis in the nineteenth century.

Bibliography

English

- Abraham Mattam, Mar, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas and Her Missionary Enterprises Before Sixteenth Century*, Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1985
- Achutha Menon, C, *The Cochin State Manuel*, Ernakulam, Government of Cochin, 1911
- Agur, C.M., *Church History of Travancore*, Madras, 1903
- Anikuzhikattil, Mathew, *Ecclesial Response to the Negativity in Human Life*, Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1996
- Aprem, Mar, *Nestorian Lectionary and Julian Calendar*, Thrissur, Mar Narsai Press, 1982
- Aprem, Mar, *Nestorian Missions*, Trichur, Mar Narsai Press, 1976
- Aprem, Mar, *Sacraments of the Church of the East*, Thrissur, Mar Narsai Press, 1978
- Attwater, Donald, *The Christian Churches of the East Vol. II*, Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1947
- Ayyar, L. K. Ananthakrishna, *Anthropology of the Syrian Christians*, Ernakulam, 1924
- Barsoum, Patriarch Ignatius Aphram, *The History of Syriac Literature and Sciences*, Pueblo, Passeggiata Press, 2000
- Bayly, Susan, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992
- Bndge, E. A. Wallis, *The Book of Governors*, London, 1893, P 447
- Brown, Leslie, *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas*, Madras, B. I. Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1980
- Buchanan, Rev. Claudius, *Christian Researches in Asia*, London, 1814
- Buttrick, George Arthur (Editor), *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. III*, New York, Abingdom Press, 1962
- Cherian, P., *The Malabar Syrians and Church Missionary Society*, Kottayam, CMS Press, 1935
- Cortesco, Armando, (Editor), *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires 1512-1515*, New Delhi, 1990
- Daniel, K. N., *Jacobitism and the Church of Malabar*, Kottayam, 1919
- Daniel, K. N., *The Copper Plates of St. Thomas Christians*, Bombay, 1925
- Day, Francis, *The Land of Perumals*, Madras, 1863, (AES Reprint 1990), Madras, Asian Education Services, 1990
- Ethiopian Orthodox Thawhido Church (Pub.), *The Church of Ethiopia Past and Present*, Addis Ababa, 1997
- Eusabius, *The History of the Church*, Baltimore, Penguin Classics, 1967
- Ferrol S. J., D., *The Jesuits in Malabar Vol. I*, Bangalore, 1939
- Ferrol S. J., D., *The Jesuits in Malabar Vol. II*, Bangalore, 1951
- Gangadharan, M., *Duarte Barbosa's The Land of Malabar*, Kottayam, Mahatma Gandhi University, 2000

- Geddes, Michael, *The History of the Church of Malabar*, London, 1694 as re-printed in Indian Church History Classics, Vol. I, *The Nazranis*, Ollur, 1998
- Geevarghese, Rev. P. T., *Where the Syrian Christians Nestorians?*, re-printed in Moolayil, Kuriakose Coepiscopa in *Four Historic Documents*, Cheeramchira, Mor Adai Study Center, 2002
- Hambye S. J., E. R., *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, Vadavathoor, Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1983
- Heras S. J., Rev. Henry, *The Two Apostles of India*, Trichinopoly, The Catholic Truth Society of India, 1944
- Hough, James, *The History of Christianity in India, Vol. I*, London, 1839
- Howard, Rev. George Broadley, *The Christians of St. Thomas and their Liturgies*, London, 1864
- Jacob Seth, Mesrovb, *Armenians in India*, (Reprint of 1937 edition), New Delhi, Oxford and IBH Publishing Co., 1983
- Meyendorff, John, (Ed.), *Primacy of Peter*, New York, St. Vlademir's Seminary Press, 1992
- Joseph, T. K., *Six St. Thomases of South India*, Chenganoor, 1955
- Kollaparambil, Jacob, *The Archdeacon of All India*, Rome, Pontifical institute of Oriental Studies, 1972
- Kollaparambil, Rev. Jacob, *The St. Thomas' Christian Revolution of 1653*, Kottayam, The Catholic Bishop's House, 1981
- Lea, H. C., *The Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1969
- Mackenzie, G. T., *Christianity in Travancore*, Trivandrum, 1901, as re-printed in *Indian Church History Classics, Vol. I, The Nazranis*, Ollur, 1998
- Maclean, Arthur John, *The Catholicos of the East and His People*, London, 1892
- Malekandathil, Pius, *Jomada of Dom Alexis De Menezes*, Thrikkakkara, LRC Publications, 2003
- Mateer, Rev. Samuel, *The Land of Charity*, London, 1870, (AES reprint 1991), Madras, Asian Education Services, 1991
- Medlycott, A. E., *India and Apostle Thomas*, London, 1905
- Mingana, A., *The Early Spread of Christianity in India*, The John Rylands Library Bulletin, Manchester, 1926
- Morris, J.J., *Kerala in the First Millennium AD*, Quilon, 1984
- Mundadan, A. Mathias, *History of Christianity in India, Vol. I*, Church History Association of India, Bangalore, 1984
- Mundadan, A. Mathias, *Sixteenth Century Traditions of St. Thomas Christians*, Bangalore, Dharmaram College, 1970
- Mundadan, A. Mathias, *The Arrival of Portuguese in India and the Thomas Christians Under Mar Jacob*, Bangalore, Dharmaram College, 1967
- Nagam Ayya, V., *The Travancore State Manuel, Vol. II*, Trivandrum, The Travancore Government, 1906

- Narayanan, M.G.S., *Aspects of Aryanisation in Kerala*, Trivandrum, Kerala Historical Society, 1973
- Narayanan, M.G.S., *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*, Trivandrum, Kerala Historical Society, 1972
- Narayanan, M. G. S., *Socio- Economic Implications of the Concept of Mahapatata in the Feudal Society of South India*, Proceedings of Indian History Congress, Calicut, 1976
- New Catholic Encyclopaedia Vol. XIV*, Washington D. C., Catholic University of America, 1967
- Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. II*, Madras 1924 (AES Reprint), Madras, Asian Education Services, 1982
- Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. III*, Madras 1924 (AES Reprint), Madras, Asian Education Services, 1982
- Panjikkaran, J. C., *The Syrian Church in Malabar*, Trichinappally, 1914. As re-printed in *Indian Church History Classics Vol. I, The Nazranis*, Ollur, 1998
- Paul, D. Babu, *The Saint from Kooded*, Kothamangalam, Mar Thomman Cheriya Pally (Pub.), 1985
- Poduaval, Jayaram, *Christian art in Kerala and its European connection*, Unpublished seminar paper presented at the FokCH seminar –2 at Kottayam on the Christian art and architecture
- Perumthottam, Joseph, *A Period of Decline of Marthoma Christians (1712- 1752)*, Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies Publications, 1994
- Philip, E. M., *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, Cheeramchira, Mor Adai Study Center, 2002
- Podipara, Placid J., *The Canonical Sources of the Syro- Malabar Church*, Kottayam, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1986
- Poonen, Dr. T. I., *Dutch Hegemony in Malabar*, Trivandrum, University of Kerala, 1978
- Rev. Dr. John Panikker, Rev. Fr Xavier Koodopuzha and, (Ed.), *Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic and The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church*, Kottayam, Joint International Commission for Dialogue, 2001
- Rice, Jr., Eugene F., *The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460-1559*, New York, W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1970
- Sesha Aiyar, K. G., *Manikka Vacagar and His Date*, Madras 1909, AES reprint, New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1986
- Stewart, John, *Nestorian Missionary Enterprises*, Madras, The Christian Literature Society, 1928
- Thaliath, Jonas, *The Synod of Diamper*, Bangalore, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, 1999
- Thazhath, Andrews, *The Juridical Sources of the Syro- Malabar Church*, Vadavathoor, Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1987
- The Rev. P. Groot, s.s.J. and A. Galletti I.C.S., *The Dutch in Malabar*, Madras, Government Press, 1911
- The Seminary Case Book Vol. I*, Case No. III of 1061, The Travancore Royal Court
- The Seminary Case Book, Vol. III*, Case No. III of 1061, The Travancore Royal Court
- The State Editor, Kerala Gazetteers, *Kerala Society Papers Vol. I & II*, Trivandrum, Gazetteers Department, 1997

Thonippara, Francis, *Saint Thomas Christians of India, A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self-Rule (1775-1787)*, Bangalore, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, 1999

Travancore Archaeological Series Vol. VI Part II, Trivandrum, 1927

Urumpackal, Alex Paul, *The Juridical Status of the Catholicos of Malabar*, Rome, Pontifical Institute of Oriental Studies, 1977

Vallavanthara, Antony, *India in 1500 AD*, Kottayam, Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute of religious studies Publications, 1984

Van Der Ploeg, O. P., J. P. M., *The Syriac Manuscripts of St. Thomas Christians*. Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications, 1983

Vazheparambil, Prasanna, *The Making and Unmaking of Tradition*, Rome, Mar Thoma Yogam, 1998

Vellilamthadam, Thomas *et. al*, *Ecclesial Identity of the Thomas Christians*, Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute Publications, 1985

Velu Pillai, Sadasyatilaka T. K., *The Travancore State Manual, Vol. I*, Trivandrum, Travancore Government, 1940

V. K. R. Menon & V. N. D. Nambiar, "Two Vatteluthu Inscriptions from the Irinjilakkuda Temple"(Art.), *The Bulletin of the Rama Varma Research Institute*, Vol. IX, Part- I, Trichur, Kerala Sahithya Academy, 1973

Zacharia, Scaria, *The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper*, Edamattom, Indian Institute of Christian Studies, 1994

Malayalam

Abraham Kathanar, Konat, *Hoodaya Canon (Malayalam Translation)*, Pampakuda, Mar Julios Press, 1952

Abraham, Prof. K. M., *Thomasleehayum Kerala Nazranikalum*, Kuravalingadu, Deepa Books, 2000

Abraham, Rev. Dr. C. E., *Sabha Charithra Samgraham*, Thiruvalla, CLS, 1959

Alanchery, Fr. Bernard, *Marthoma Christianikal*, Second Edition, Kottayam, CMI Publications Department, 1992,

Alexander, Dr. J., *Kanianthra Kudumbam*, Thiruvananthapuram, Kanianthra Kudumba Yogam, 1991

Antony, C. L., *Bhasha Padanangal*, Thrissur, Kerala Sahithya Academy, 1989

Aprem, Mar, *Paurasthya Sabha Charithra Pravashika*, Thiruvalla, The Theological Literature Committee, 1976

Audisho Metrapolitha, Mar, *Margyaneetha (Malayalam translation)*, Trichur, Mar Narsai Press, 1982

Barthelemeo O. C. D., Fr. Paulinus, *Paurasthya Bharathathile Christhu Matham*, (Translation of *India Orientalis Christiana*), Kalamassery, Jyothir Bhavan Publications, 1988

Bartheloyo, Abduel Aahad Ramban, *Suriyani Sabha Charitram*, Kottayam, 1948

Baskaranunni, P., *Pathombatham Noottandile Keralam*, Trissur, Kerala Sahithya Academy, 1988

- Chazhikattu, Joseph, *The Syrian Colonisation of Malabar*, Kottayam, The Catholic Mission Press, 1940
- Chediath, G. G. Appassery, *Bar Ebraya - Sabha Chgarithram Randam Bhagam*, (Translation Of the Chronicle of Barhebraeus Part II) Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1980
- Chediath, G. Joseph. K. V., *Synodicon Orientale* (Malayalam translation), Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1996
- Chediath, G., *Mar Maruthayude Canonakal*, Vadavathoor, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1989
- Chediath, G., *Pourasthya Catholicos*, Vadavathoor, Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1985
- Cheeren, Fr. Joseph, *Pulikkottil Joseph Mar Dionysius*, Kunnampkulem, Paulose Mar Militios Metropolitan (Pub.) 1992
- Curian Cor – Episcopa, Kaniyamparambil, *Suriyani Sabha*, Thiruvalla, Kt. Alexander (Pub.), 1982
- Curian, Rev. G., *Oru Prakaranam*, Kottayam, 1872
- Daniel, K. N., *Udayamperor Sunnahadosinte Kanonakal*, Thiruvalla, CLS, 1951
- David, Fr. K., *Malankara Suriyani Sabha Charithrem*, Kottayam, 1952
- Eapan, Rev. Ittyerach, *Oru Viruthu Prakaranam*, Kottayam, 1871
- Elayaavoor, Vanidas, *Vadakkē Ithehyamala*, Kottayam, D. C. Books, 1998
- Fr. Dr. Johns Abraham Konat and M. Kurian Thomas, "*Mar Ivanios Hidaythullayude Kalppana*" (Art.), *Mar Koorilos Souvenir Second Edition*, Mulamthuruthy, 2002
- Geevarghese I, Mar Baselius, *Sabhajeevitha Naalvazhi MSS*
- Geevarghese Kathanaar, Malpan Vattasseril, *Mathopadesha Sarangel*, Kottayam, OSSAE, 1940
- Gopalakrishnan, P. K., *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram*, Trivandrum, Kerala Bhasha Institute, 1984
- Gregorios, Dr. Paulose Mar (Ed.), *Sabha Vijananakoshem*, Kottayam, Orthodox Theological Seminary, 1993
- Gundert, Dr. Hermann, *Kerala Pazhama*, Forth Edition, Kottayam, Vidyarthi Mitram, 1983
- Gundert, Dr. Hermann, *Keralolppathiyum Mattum*, Kottayam, D. C. Books, 1992
- Gundert, Dr. Hermann, *A Malayalam and English Dictionary*, Kottayam, D. C. Books, 1991
- Jameson, Fr. Varghese, *Thrippunithura Nadamal Vi Marthzmaryam Palliyude Charithra Samgraham*, Thrippunithura, 1960
- Jeffrey, Dr. Robin, *Nayar Medavithathinte Pathanam*, Kottayam, D. C. Books, 1979
- Johns Abraham Konat, Rev. Fr., *Malankara Orthodox Sabhaude Aradhanakramangal (Art.)*, Orthodox Theological Seminary 175th Anniversary Souvenir, Kottayam, 1990
- Jose, N. K., *Kudavachoor Pally*, Vaikom, Hobby Publishers, 1985
- Joseph Ittoop, Pukidiyil, *Malayalathulla Suriyani Kristhanikalude Sabha Charithram*, Kottayam, 1869

- Joseph T.C., Edamaruku, *Kerala Samskaram*, Kottayam, Vidyarthi Mithram, 1995
- Joseph, Dr. P. M., *Malayalathile Parakeeya Padangal*, Thiruvananthapuram, The Kerala Bhasha Institute, 1995
- Joseph, M. O., *Kerala Christianikal*, Cochin, Janatha Book Stall, 1972
- Joseph, M.O., *Villarvattom*, Ernakulam, Book – A - Month Club, 1953
- Joseph, T. K., *Malabar Christians and Their Ancient Documents*, Trivandrum, 1929
- Joseph, T. K., *Pracheena Indiyile Kristhumatha Pracharanam*, Thiruvalla, CLS, 1950
- Kochuthomman Appothikkiri, Kannukuzhiyil, *Parishkkarappathy*, Second Edition, Kottayam, Vidyarthi Mithram, 1977
- Konat MSS, No. 385, *Chattavriyola* (in Malayalam)
- Kottayil, Fr. Jose, *Pakalomattam Mahakudumbayogam Samkshiptha Charithram*, Kuravalingadu, Pakalomattam Mahakudumba Yogam, 2000
- Krishnapilla, Nalankal, *Mahaksatrangalkku Mumpil*, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 1980
- Kunjan Pillai, Elamkulam, *Chila Kerala Charithra Presnangal, Vol. II*, Trivandrum, 1955
- Kunjathu, Panakkal C., *Aarthattu Pally Charithram*, Kunnamkulam, Aarthattu Pally, 1946
- Kuruville, Rev. K., *Prakaranam*, Cochin, 1872
- Logan, William, *Logante Malabar Manuel*, Calicut, Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Company Ltd., 1997
- Lukose, P. U., *Purathana Pattukal*, (Ninth edition), Kottayam, Jyothi Book House, 1998
- Mar Simon Dionysius, Karottuveetil, *Mar Seemon Dionysiusinte Naalagamam* (Chronicle of Mar Simon Dionysius) MSS
- Mathew Cherusseril, Fr., *Kaduthuruthy Valiyapally*, Kumarakam, 1982
- Mathew, Alex, *Joseph Panikkarude Kollooppa Pally Charithram*, Thiruvalla, Kristhava Sahithya Samathy, 2003
- Mathews Kathanar, Valiya Parettu, *Marthoma Sleehayude Nadapadikal* (Malayalam Trasalation of *Acta Thoma*), Kottayam, 1937
- Menon, P. Sankunny, *Thiruvathamcore Charithram*, Trivandrum, Kerala Bhasha Institute, 1988
- Metran, Mar Selinaus, *Keralathile Satya Veda Charithram*, Koonammavu, 1872
- Nampoothiri, Dr. N. M., *Vellayude Charithram*, Sukapuram, Vallathol Vidyapeedom, 1998
- Nampoothiri, Dr. N.M. *Saamuthiri Charithrathile Keanappurungal*, Sukapuram, Vallathol Vidyapeedom, 1987
- Narayanan, M.G.S., *Kozhikkodinte Katha*, Ottappalam, Chettur Sankaran Nair Foundation, 2001
- Ookken, C. C. Lonappen, *Thachil Mathu Tharakan*, Irinjalakkuda, 1966
- Oommen, P.A., *Chappattu Mar Dionysius*, Chappadu, Fr. I. David (Pub.) 1956

- Padmanabha Menon, K. P., *Kochi Raagya Charitram*, Vol. I, Cochin, 1914
- Padre, Arnos, *Vocabularium Malabarico Lusitanum*, Trichur, Kerala Shithya Academy, 1988
- Pallath, Fr. John, *Pourtugel Yougathile Bharatha Sabha*, Kottayam, Pellissery Publications, 1992
- Panikkassery, Velayudhan, *Marco Polo Indiyil*, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 1980
- Panikkassery, Velayudhan, *Keralam Pathinanjum Pathinarum Noottandukalil* (Translation of *Tufat-Al-Mujahidin* of Shaykh Zaynuddin in Arabic), Kottayam, Current Books, 1997
- Panikkassery, Velayudhan, *Sancharikal Kanda Keralam*, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 2001
- Paret, Z. M., *Malankara Nazranikal Vol. I*, Kottayam, Jacob Mathews Chemmarppally (Pub.), 1965
- Paret, Z. M., *Malankara Nazranikal Vol. II*, Kottayam, Jacob Mathews Chemmarppally (Pub.), 1966
- Paret, Z. M., *Malankara Nazranikal Vol. III*, Kottayam, Jacob Mathews Chemmarppally (Pub.), 1967
- Paret, Z. M., *Malankara Nazranikalude Pathaviyum Jathyacharangalum*, Kottayam, Jacob Mathews Chemmarppally (Pub.), 1967
- Paret, Z. M., *Puthuppally Pally*, Kottayam, Jacob Mathews Chemmarppally (Pub.), 1972
- Paret, Z. M., *Vakrappuliyum Perumpattayam*, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 1966
- Paulose, Chevalier K. V., *Stuthi Chovakkapetta Visudha Sabhayude Charithram*, Puthencruz, St. Gregarious Publications, 2002
- Philip, E. M., *Marthomasleehayude Indian Sabha*, Chingavanam, E. P. Books, 1977
- Philipose Corepiscopa, Edavazhikkal, *Malankara Suriyani Sabhayude Swaroopam*, Kochi, 1870
- Pianius, Fr. Clement, *Samkshepa Vedartham*, Rome, 1772, (Reprint) Thivananthapuram, Carmel Publishing House, 1980
- Placid TOCD, Dr., *Nammude Reethu*, Mannanam, St. Joseph's Press, 1997
- Pontifical Taksa of Ordination*, MSS (in Malayalam) of H. H. Baselius Marthoma Mathews I
- Ragahva Variar, Rajan Gurukkal, and, *Kerala Charithram*, Sukapuram, Vallathol Vidyapeedom, 1995
- Rajandren, P. G., *Keshetravijanakosham*, Kottayam, D. C. Books, 2000
- Rama Menon, Puthazhathu, *Sakthen Thampuran*, Kozhikkodu, Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Company Ltd. 1989
- Ramachandran, Dr. Puthussery, *Sasanabhasha Mathrukakal*, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 1986
- Raphal Vattakuzhi, Corepiscopa, *Taksa Prathanakal Part IV*, Trichur, Rev. Fr. M. I. David (Pub.), 1989
- Raphal Vattakuzhi, Corepiscopa, *Thaksa Prathanakal Part II*, Thrissur, Rev. Fr. M. I. David (Pub.), 1983
- Rappai, N. V., *Paurasthya Suriyani Sabha Part I*, Trichur, Mar Narsai Press, 1982

- Rappai, Rev. Fr. V. T., *Thaksa Prathanakal Part I*, Thrissur, 1973
- Rayar, Samuel, 'Bible'(Art.), in *Viswa Vijnanakosam Vol. IX*, Kottayam, S.P.C.S., 1972
- Rozario, Msgr. A. J., *Kollam Christhanikal*, Kottayam, Pellissery Publications, 1995
- Sam, N. (Ed.), *Elamkulam Kunjanpillayude Thiranjadutha Krithikal, Part – I*, Thiruvananthapuram, University of Kerala, 2005
- Samuel, Rev. Fr. Dr. V. C., *Sabha Valarunnu*, Kottayam, Divyabhodhanam Publications, 1984
- Sankaran Namboothirippadu, Kanippayoor, *Ente Smaranakal Vol. III*, Kunnamkulam, Panjagam Pusthakasala, 1964.
- Sankaran Namboothirippadu, Kanippayoor, *Aryanmarude Kudiyettam Keralathil Vol. I*, Kunnamkulam, Panjagam Pusthakasala, 1965
- Sankaran Namboothirippadu, Kanippayoor, *Aryanmarude Kudiyettam Keralathil Vol. II*, Kunnamkulam, Panjagam Pusthakasala, 1965
- Sankaran Namboothirippadu, Kanippayoor, *Aryanmarude Kudiyettam Keralathil Vol. III*, Kunnamkulam, Panjagam Pusthakasala, 1966
- Sankarathil Nedyavila Kudumba Yogam (Pub.), *Pandalam Sankarathil Kudumbacharithram*, Pandalam, 1997
- Sasibhushen, M. G., *Keralathile Chuver Chitrangal*, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala Bhasha Institute, 1994
- Sivasankaran Nair, K., *Marthanda Varma Muthel Munro Vare*, Kottayam, D. C. Books, 1996
- Sreedhara Menon, A, *Kerala Charitram*, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 1988
- The Diocese of Kottayam, *Platinum Jubilee Souvenir*, Kottayam, 1986
- The State Institute of Encyclopaedic Publications, *Sarva Vinjanakosham Vol. III*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997
- The State Institute of Encyclopaedic Publications, *Sarva Vinjanakosham Vol. VII*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1984
- Thomas, Maunam (Ed.), *Koodasa Smrithi*, Puthupally, Puthupally Church (Pub.), 2003
- Thomas, Dr. M. M., *Abraham Malpante Naveekaranam*, Thiruvalla, The Theological Literature Committee, 1984
- Thomas, Dr. P.J., *Malayala Sahithyavum Christhianikalum*, D.C.Books, Kottayam, 1989
- Thomas, M. Kurian, "Achenum Kathanaarum Pathiriyum" (Art.) in *Galad Tri-monthly*, 2001 July – September issues
- Thomas, M. Kurian, "Arkkadiyokken Paschathya Pourasthya Parambaryangalil" (Art.), *Malankara Sabha Magazine*, 1993 July & September issue
- Thomas, M. Kurian, "Edavaka Charithraparamaya Paschathalathil"(Art.), *Purohithen Tri –monthly*, 1994 April – August issue
- Thomas, M. Kurian, *Aarthattu Padiyola (Art.)*, *Sabha Jyothis Souvenir*, Kottayam, Malankara Sabha Magazine (Pub.), 1991

- Thomas, M. Kurian, *Niranam Grandhavari*, Kottayam, Sophia Books, 2000
- Thomas, M. Kurian, "Sathya Viswasa Punasthapakanaya Mar Ivanios Hidatahullah", (Art.), *Mar Koorilos Souvenir Second Edition*, Mulamthuruthy, 2002
- Thomman Kathanar, Parammekkal, *Vrthamanappusthakam*, Thevara, Janatha Book Stall, 1971
- Thottappuzha, Varghis John, "Christhava Lokatthe Catholikkamar" (Art.), *Baselius Marthoma Mathews II Souvenir*, Kottayam, 1999
- Thottappuzha, Verghis John, *Krithabdathinoramugham* (Art.), *Manorama Year Book (Malayalam) 2000*, Kottayam, 2000, Malayala Manorama Co. Ltd
- Tisserant, Eugene Cardinal, *Indiyale Pourastya Krithavarude Katha*, (Translation of *Eastern Christianity in India*) Kottayam, Deepika Book House
- Unnikrishnan Nair, P., *Thiruvalla Grandhavari Vol. I*, Kottayam, School of Social Sciences, 1999
- Varghese, Chitramazhuthu K. M., *Ancham Marthommayude Peedayum Dutchukarude Pantheerayiravum*, Kottayam, MOC Publications, 1987
- Varghese, Chitramezhuthu K.M. 'Malankara Sabha Viswasm' (Art.), *Malankara Sabha Magazine, Kumbham, Meenom & Medom* issues of 1124 ME.
- Varghese, George, *Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church History Part I*, Kottayam, 1993
- Varghese, George, *Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church History Part II*, Kottayam, 1993
- Vasanthan, Prof. S. K., *Kujikutten Thapurante Gadya Lakahanagal*, Kottayam, D. C. Books, 1983
- Vasudeva Bhattathiri, C. V., *Niyamam Annum Innum*, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 1982
- Vattakuzhy, Corepiscopa *Thaksa Prathanakal Part IV*, Trichur, Rev. Fr. M. I. David (Pub.), 1984
- Veltuvazhiyil, Fr. Emmanuel, *Saint Thomasum Pakalomattom Kudumbavum* (Kurichithanam), Pala
- Yohannan Kathanar, P. J., *Paraur Marthomman Pally Charithram*, Paraur, Marthomman Pally, 1919
- Zacharia, Scaria, *Randu Praacheena Gadya Krithikal*, Chenganassery, 1976
- Zacharia, Scaria, *Udayamperor Sunnhadosinte Canonakal, Edamattom*, Indian Institute of Christian Studies, 1994
- Other Languages**
- Assamanus, J. S., *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clemenntino-Vaticana, Vol. III-2*, Rome, 1728
- Assamanus, J. S., *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clemenntino-Vaticana, Vol. IV*, Rome, 1719-1728
- Konat MSS, No. 34, *Pontifical of Mar Ivanios* (In Syriac), AD 1749
- Konat MSS, No. 154, *Memras* (In Syriac)

T1531