

Viruthi: The System and Practice in Travancore

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Relationship between human being and land are basic and intimate. Land provides man with living room, working space, food and much of the basic resources to meet his needs. The struggle for the ownership of land has passed through different stages in the history of the world. Such struggles resulted in the evolution and emergence of different kinds of land system in the world. The structure and pattern of land tenures was different from country to country and even region to region. In addition to the economic significance, the system of land tenure moulded the socio-religious and cultural life of the people. The land system of India is entirely different from any other part of the world. Land, the most desired form of wealth, caused a spurt in transactions revolving around land and it paved the way for expansion in all economic activities of the country. The land ownership in India is an important factor for establishing dominance in the socio-economic system. Such kind of land pattern prevailed in Travancore known as *Viruthi* system.

Objectives of the study

The principal objective of the study is to focus the social structuring of Travancore on the basis of *viruthi*, the bonded labour system. The study also analyzes the features of land based caste-labour relations in Travancore. The study also focused various land tenures of Travancore and their socio-economic functions.

Methodology

The present study is being prepared as theoretical, descriptive, analytical and argumentative methodology. The renowned theory of class struggle and social stratification put forward by Karl Marx is of great help to present this issue of socio-economic exploitation of the land lords and caste authorities of Travancore. According to the theory of Marx, every society was stratified on the basis of the control of means of production. In Travancore the land was the main source of wealth and which was fully controlled by the land lords and the Brahmins. Therefore, landlords exploited the landless sections, which caused an inevitable struggle between the haves and have-nots. The caste-oriented social structuring helped the upper castes to render ideological hegemonic positions to

suppress the lower caste people. This helped them to frame labour relations according to the land and caste based social rules.

The word *viruthi* is the Tamil form of the Sanskrit word *visti*, which means the obligation to render labour services. *Viruthi* was also a permanent tenure so long as the holder continued to render service regularly. They rendered certain services on the prescribed occasions in temples and charitable institutions like *uttupuras*. In return of their services, the *viruthi* holder received land on light assessment. This land was known as *viruthi* land and the holders of the *viruthi* land were called *viruthikkar*.

The system of *viruthi* found in the early years of the Kulesekharas of Mahodayapuram. Reference to *bhattaviruthi* has been found during the period. The Manalikkara Inscription of 411 M.E and the Padmanabhapuram Inscription of 412 M.E throw some light on the *bhatta-viruthi*. But the authors of the Land Revenue Manual were silent on the *viruthi* system of the period.¹ During the time of MarthandaVarma (1729-1758), the services of the *viruthi* holders were classified by his minister Ramayyan Dalawa.²

Land was also the primary source of income and was the most important factor of production in the agrarian economy of Travancore. In pre-colonial Travancore, land was held as the possession of the state as well as the property of big landlord families and temples. With the *Pandarapattom* Proclamation of 1865, there emerged a middle-stratum peasantry that was drawn mainly from the upper castes, including a substantial number of Ezhavas.³ The proclamation bestowed ownership rights on the tenants that were qualified as 'heritable, saleable and otherwise transferable, subject only to the obligation of paying the land tax assessed to them'.

The Nair *viruthi* formed an important class of tenure during the 18th and 19th centuries.⁴ It was otherwise popularly known as *oozhiam* or *irayali*.⁵ Nair *viruthi* system incorporated all the lands granted at concessionary rent or tax in return for the performance of certain services.⁶ The Nairs were the major caste group in Travancore and got *viruthi* land from the government. Various services were rendered by them, but the main duty was to supply articles of provisions at the

¹Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, *Kerala Charitrahile Eruladanja Edukal* (mal), p.92.

²T.K.Vijayamohan, *History of Devaswam Administration in Travancore -1811-1936*, p.217.

³ P.Sanal Mohan, *Modernity of slavery*, p.16.

⁴*Ibid*

⁵*Ibid*.

⁶G.Sugeetha, 'The Nair Viruthi in Travancore', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, 1988, Trivandrum, p.27.

ulsavamattam on occasions of *ulsavam* and *bhadradeepam* festivals in the Sree Padmanabha Swami Pagoda at Trivandrum, during Maharaja's birthday, *murajapam*, *tulapurushadhanam*, *hiranyagharbam*, royal marriage, *thirumadambu*, *punnyaham* and other ceremonies.⁷

On the basis of its nature, the system of *viruthi* was categorized as personal *viruthi*, *munnila viruthi*, *vazhathoppu viruthi* or *kandukrishi viruthi* and *viruthis* for the collection of vital statistics. The personal *viruthikkar* rendered certain personal services to the temples, Brahmins and the *uttupuras*. In return of their services, they received land. The *munnilaviruthikkar* assisted the village authorities or *proverthikkar* in times of tax collection. They also acted as supervisors to collect materials and supplied labour services to the government and *devaswams*.⁸ The *vazhathoppu viruthikkar* performed military services to the state. All these services of the *viruthikkars* were remunerated in the form of land.

The system of *viruthi* strengthened after the development of feudalism. During the feudalistic period, the system of *viruthi* became more complicated and was almost unique in respect of their complexity and multiplicity of incidence. No other parts of India present such a bewildering variety of land tenures as Travancore.⁹

There were different arguments regarding the land tenure system of the state. According to M.G.S Narayanan, during the period of the *Perumals*, the king had his own land called *cerikkal*, something of a demesne in which there were different categories like *karalar* and *kudiyalar*. Below the *karalar*, there were a number of labourers attached to the land known as *adiyalar*. In Travancore, a portion of *cerikkal* land may have been granted as *viruthi* or service tenure to the religious and secular functionaries. But one of the important features is that the pattern of *karalar-kudiyalar-adiyalar* hierarchy retained the same status.¹⁰ Rajan Gurukkal states that the chiefs, *nadus*, the *urs* and the *devadanams* or the *brahmadayas* as the case may be, who had the *miyatci* rights, and the *karalars* in that descending order.¹¹

In the 19th century A.D, there were different kinds of land tenures found in Travancore. Generally, they may be divided into two broad heads – *jenmom* and *Pandaravaka* or *sirkar*. The

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Revenue Settlement of Travancore, Final Report, 1913, pp.87-91.

⁹NagamAiya could identify as many as 455 different kinds of land tenures in Travancore.

¹⁰M.G.S. Narayanan, "The Traditional Land System of Kerala: Problems of Change and Perspective", Unpublished seminar paper on Land Reforms in Kerala (Calicut, 1981), Kesavan Veluthat, *op.cit*, p.87.

¹¹Rajan Gurukkal, *Agrarian System*, p.135.

jenmom was again categorized into various kinds. The *jenmom* lands are entirely free-hold and exempt from payment or any revenue to the government under any circumstances. The *jenmom* lands were originally exempt from payment to the government, but subsequently became liable to it under certain conditions; *jenmom* property was subject to the payment of a light demand.¹² The ruler did not have any right to impose levy of any kind to the *jenmom* lands. But whenever the property was alienated, it became liable to a small tax called *rajabhogam*.¹³ There were more than 156 such land tenures in Travancore.¹⁴

The *Pandaravaka* land was liable for full assessment or *pattam*. They may be broadly divided into six categories: (1) *Kandukrishipattam*, (2) *Kuttakapattam*, (3) *Vempattam*, (4) *Otti*, (5) *Anubhogam* or personal inams, (6) *Oozhiyam* service.¹⁵ In addition to the *jenmam* and *pandaravaka* land tenures, there existed a number of other tenures in Travancore, which were closely related to the *devaswam* lands. Each of these land tenures was different from others on the basis of their nature of tenancy and payment of rent. Following were the important land tenures in Travancore which were related to the *devaswam* land. (1) *Adima*, (2) *Alakkuviruthi*, (3) *Anubhogam*, (4) *Arthaccilav*, (5) *Cantu viruthi*, (6) *Chilavupattam*, (7) *Kottuviruthi*, (8) *Dhanam*, (9) *Karanmapattam*, (10) *Karamillattavaka*, (11) *Karanma*, (12) *Karanmathittam*, (13) *Kodikkurviruthi*, (14) *Cottuviruthi*, (15) *Melanma*, (16) *Kottunermappattam*, (17) *Natakkaval viruthi*, (18) *Nerorri*, (19) *Orri*, (20) *Nermapattam*, (21) *Neyyattum Cheri pattam*, (22) *Palpayasamvaka*, (23) *Pariapat*, (24) *Poliatama*, (25) *Pativaram*, (26) *Pattu viruthi*, (27) *Pattam*, (28) *Rekshabhogam*, (29) *Sanku viruthi*, (30) *Santhi viruthi*, (31) *Tanatu*, (32) *Thiruvallom*, (33) *Vedi viruthi*, (34) *Venpattam*, (35) *Vilakkupattam*, (36) *Vilakku viruthi*, (37) *Viruthi Anubhogam*, etc.¹⁶

The *viruthi* holders rendered bonded services to the temples and royal palaces. Besides the supply of provisions and materials, they were used for certain manual services to public work. The village authorities had the right to demand additional duties from the *viruthikkar* in times of emergency. They were also used to carry head loads from distant places to the capital. All these

¹²*Ibid.*, pp.69-71.

¹³A tax to be state on land of favourable tenures which varied from 1/8 to 2/5 of the full assessment, was in every case to be invariably fixed at 1/8, the lowest of the prevailing rates.

¹⁴Revenue Handbook, 1889,p.69.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p.74.

¹⁶T.K. Vijaya Mohan,*op.cit.*, p.118.

supplies and services were nominally paid by certain *pathivu* or fixed rates, which were always below the market rates.¹⁷

The *viruthikkar* forcibly rendered bonded services to the temples. Apart from the professional caste, the temple had a lot of non-specialized workers who performed various menial services to the temples. The *atikkumavar* or sweepers, *virakitumavar* or suppliers of firewood, *ilayitumavar* or suppliers of plantain leaves, *vayirkkalanirkkumavar* or gate keepers, *arikuttumavar* or rice-pounders, *vilakketukkmnambi* or the lamp-attender and *atakkainalkumavar* or distributor of areca nuts.¹⁸ In the temples, different types of sweepers like *akattatikkumavar*, those who swept the holy courtyard of the temple and *ecciliatippan* or those who swept the dining hall of the *uttupuras* prevailed in the state.

In Travancore, there were several *viruthis* for the different services that prevailed. There was *canti viruthi*, the land allotted to the priests and the *panikal viruthi* that allotted to the temple servants. In addition to this, there were *kottatikkal viruthi* or land allotted to the drummers, *panicca viruthi* or land allotted to the *panikkar* or fencing masters, *palli viruthi* or land to the servants of the *palli* etc. *Kaval viruthi* or the land of the watchman, *parayana viruthi* or land of recitors of epic poems, *thirunandavana viruthi* or land assigned for the livelihood of gardeners, *cakkaimar viruthi* or land assigned to the traditional actors were some of the *viruthis* that prevailed in Travancore. *Urpotuval viruthi* or land assigned to the village secretary, *uvacca viruthi* or land assigned to drummers, *tali viruthi* or land for temple officers, *purappotuval viruthi* or land given to the village secretary for outside services, *kalavaniya viruthi* or land assigned to the potters also mentioned in Kollur-Madham Plates of 1189 A.D, which are claimed to be the re-issue of a prasasti of the time of Srivallavan Kota.¹⁹

The *viruthikkar* forcibly rendered gratuitous services such as constructing sheds, finding supplies during the royal tours, thatching public buildings and performing other miscellaneous functions.²⁰ They also assisted the village officers to collect taxes from the people and also the police to maintain law and order. The *oozhiyam* duties inside the temples was performed by the Nairs because the untouchable *oozhiyam* servants strictly kept the distance fixed by a kind of

¹⁷UlloorS.PameswaraAiyer, *op.cit.*, p.245.

¹⁸RajanGurukkal, *op.cit.*, p.300.

¹⁹M.G.S.Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala*, pp.320-321.

²⁰T.K.Vijayamohan, *op.cit.*, p.216.

arithmetic precision from the temples and the higher castes. The *viruthikkar* were also used to carry palanquin of the rulers and Brahmins in times of their travel.

The village authorities compelled the *viruthikkar* to supply paddy, rice, fruits, plantain leaves, milk products, coconut, gram, jaggery, sugar, molasses, salt, oil and firewood to the *uttupuras*.²¹ At the time of festivals like *murajapam* and *lakshadeepam*, thousands of Brahmins arrived in Trivandrum and were freely fed in the *uttupuras* at the cost of poor *viruthikkar*. The *Viruthi* Committee Report shows that during the extra-ordinary festivals of Sri Padmanabha Swami Temple at Trivandrum such as *bhadradeepam*, *tirumasam*, *thulabharam*, etc., nearly 3000 Brahmins had to be freely fed on all days at the *uttupuras*.²² There is an interesting account that shows that more than four lakhs of mangoes were supplied by the *viruthikkar* for the pickles at the *uttupuras*.²³

In Travancore, each and every member of the society with rare exemption was forced to render gratuitous services to the temples and *uttupuras*. The Brahmins were used to cook food in large quantities and also serve the same to all who came to partake of them during the time of festivals and other religious ceremonies. They also held umbrellas during the religious processions. In return of their services, they would get remuneration.

The Ambalavasis were considered as superior to other Sudras and had duties performed in the temples. They assisted the Brahmins to cook food and also supplied flowers to the temple. Their services were also paid for. The Ezhavas and the Nadars were largely used to supply provisions, vegetables and firewood to the temples and the *uttupuras*. One of the important features of the *viruthi* system of Travancore was that the shopkeepers were exempt from doing *oozhiam* services to the state.²⁴

The *viruthikkars* of Karamana, Chalai and Puthentheruvu supplied enormous quantity of provisions and vegetables to the Sree Padmanabha Swami Temple during the festivals like *tirumasam* and *thulabharam*.²⁵ In *murajapam*, a grand sexennial ceremony, the *viruthikkar* of Kollam pounded the paddy and rice for the Sree Padmanabha Swami Temple.²⁶ The *viruthikkars* of

²¹Western Star, June, 1881.

²²T.K.Vijayamohan, *op.cit.*, p.217-29.

²³P.Bhaskaranunni, *Pathonpatham Nootandile Keralam(mal)*, p.636.

²⁴Bonded services.

²⁵Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Devaswam and State Charities, pp.12-13.

²⁶Viruthi Committee Report, 1889, Vol.VI, p.324.

different places of the state brought milk and milk products to the Padmanabha Swami Temple. The *viruthikkars* of Paravur, nearly 40 miles from Trivandrum, were asked to supply *tayir* or curd to the temple.²⁷ The price of curd was fixed at ten *chuckram* which was about 36 *paise* per *para*, a local measuring unit. In addition to the price, they got eight *chackrams* as their loading charge.²⁸

The *viruthikkars* of Ambalapuzha taluk supplied *amritari* or rice to the palace at Trivandrum. They had to carry the rice on head load five times a month and three loads were sent at each time. The tenants carried the load by turn and were paid a wage at the rate of 15 *chackrams* per load. These *viruthikkars* also got meals on the wayside *sirkar uttupuras*.²⁹ Later, their wages were enhanced by a Royal Proclamation issued by the then ruler of Travancore Rani lekshmi Bai in 1813 A.D.³⁰ They also used to carry treasure from different taluks to the Huzur treasury of the Dewan. The temple authorities of Sree Padmanabha Swami Temple demanded personal services from the *viruthikkars* of Trikkunnappuzha. Their assigned duty was to carry Namboothiri guests such as *vadyars* and *vaidikans* in a palanquin to Trivandrum.

Viruthikkars were obliged to supply coconut leaves for the food of state's elephants. The system of *viruthi* was closely associated with the temples. In the festivals of *chittiraiulsavam*, *tirukkarkikai* and *makarasamkranthi* of the Subramanya Swami Temple at Haripad, large number of *viruthikkars* from Karthikapalli were asked to render personal services to the temple. In addition to that the local *viruthikkars* of Harippad, Kumarapuram and Kizhekkekara were also asked to render menial services to the temple of Harippad at times of festivals.³¹ They were also used to lighting *chuttivilakku* and *kapavilakku*.³² The torch bearers provided the necessary torch lights during the *sevai* at sunset and the *sivelies* later on.³³ The *viruthikkars* used to carry the images of the swans and flags in connection with the *thirukkarkikai* and *makarasamkranthi* festivals. There were fifty *viruthikkars* called for the services of carrying flags in connection with the annual festival of Srikrishna Swami Temple at Ambalapuzha. One set of flag known as *valakalay* was usually carried by government officers or *madampimars*.³⁴

²⁷*Ibid.*, p.171.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p.324.

²⁹P.Ramachandran, *Abolition of Uliam and Viruthi in Travancore*, Journal of Kerala Studies, 522-523.

³⁰Fixing higher rate of mileage for coolies carrying sirkar loads.

³¹*Ibid*

³²Cover File No.4635/1892-93, Bundle No.174, State Archives, Trivandrum.

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴*Ibid.*, p.522.

Another important gratuitous service rendered by the *viruthi* holders in the temple was the *velakali* performance. The *velakali* used to be performed twice a day during the festival time. In the evening, it was performed outside the temple and in the night it was performed only within the temple premises, which was known as *tirumumpuvela*. The *viruthikkar*, those who performed the *velakali*, received a nominal allowance, which was much less than the additional allowance drawn by the temple officers supervising the ceremony.

In Travancore, there were also male actors in the temple known as *Cakkai* or *Cakyar*. Their descendants continue to perform *kuttu* or mono acting or storytelling and *kutiyattam* or play acting, forming a sub caste of hereditary professional actors in Kerala. The Chola inscriptions refer to *Cakkaimar* and the payment of 'nrtyabhoga' to them in terms of 'Cakkaikani' land by way of remuneration for their 'Ariyakkuttu' performance.

The *viruthikkars* carried salt load from different salt banks to the palace and *uttupuras*.³⁵ The salt trade was then under the control of the government. The price of the salt was 24 *chackrams* per *para*, but the *viruthikkar* would get only 6 *chackrams* per *para* of salt, which was supplied by the *viruthikkar*. They were also used to convert paddy into rice and delivered the same to the respective feeding houses.³⁶ Another bonded service of the *viruthikkar* was to carry luggage in times of tours of royal persons and the travelling of the British residents. They also served as boatmen, whenever the Namboothiris and the royal persons traveled in the black water.

In the absence of a well-developed police force in Travancore, the *viruthikkar* assisted the police in performing their duties. They also guarded the prison, watched crops and villages and assisted revenue officers for collecting taxes.³⁷ Those *viruthikkar*, who performed such duties were known as *munnila viruthikkar*. The government granted land to the *munnilakkar* and *churumakkar* in return for their services. The *munnilakkar* and *cherumakkar* collected taxes from the ryots as per the list given by the *proverthikkar*. The *munnila viruthikkar* was a petty cultivator in Travancore.³⁸ During peaceful times, they were engaged in cultivation on a limited scale. Proper cultivation depended upon the availability of the *viruthikkar* on their land. The regular demand for the services affected the cultivation of the *viruthi* land. Therefore, the *viruthi* land was the worst cultivated land

³⁵Cover File No. 16040/1958, Bundle No.29, State Archives,Trivandrum.

³⁶G.Sugeetha,*The NayarViruthi in Travancore*, Journal of Kerala Studies, p.28.

³⁷NoorjamBeevi,*Evolution of Land Tenure System in Travancore*, p.65.

³⁸*Ibid.*

in Travancore. The *viruthikkar* also received advance money from the *proverthikkar* to purchase and supply articles of provision for the *sirkar* festivals.

The land assigned to the *viruthikkar* in return of their services was enfranchised and brought under full revenue settlement. The tenure had fixity and the holders were entitled to undisturbed possession so long as they continued to discharge their service regularly. The tahsildars examined the *viruthi* land every year and ascertained their services.³⁹

The Government of Travancore always authorized the *viruthikkar* to collect provisions and materials from the tenants. The *viruthikkar* also supplied labourers to the government and the *devaswams*.⁴⁰ Sometimes, they acted as supervisors of the low caste *oozhiyam* servants. The *cherumakkaran* supervised the duties of carpenters, a job allotted to them under the direction of the *proverthikkar*.⁴¹ There were also the *viruthis* for the collection of vital statistics. The main duty of such *viruthikkar* was to collect vital statistics according to the direction of the sanitary commissioner. They had to attend the *proverty cutchery* on every working day and furnish information regarding births and deaths to the *proverty* official who kept the register.⁴² Those *viruthikkar* who failed to perform the duty were fined by the sanitary commissioner. The *viruthikkar* received a nominal remuneration as in the form of land to their services.

In course of time, the *viruthi* system lost its vitality and became obnoxious, the work being distasteful to the *viruthikkar*. The government and the landlords always created difficulties for the *viruthi* holders. The government was very adamant and severely punished those who failed to perform the *oozhiyam* services. Torturing was the common feature of the *viruthi* system. Sometimes, those who failed to comply with the orders of the *proverthikkar* were captured and summoned before the palace *karyakkar* for enquiry and those who deemed guilty were severely punished.⁴³ The defaulters were sometimes killed by the orders of the government. The living condition of the *viruthikkar* was abject and deplorable. They suffered heavily from the government authorities and the Brahmin land lords.

The Royal Proclamation of 1886 abolished the old system of paying remuneration to the *viruthikkar* on the basis of the fixed rates but they would pay at the market rates. The Proclamation

³⁹T.K.Vijyamohan, *op.cit.*, p.83.

⁴⁰Land Revenue Settlement of Travancore, Final Report, pp.87-91.

⁴¹P.Ramachandran, *op.cit.*, p.525.

⁴²NoorjamBeevi, *op.cit.*, p.65.

⁴³ T.C. Varghese, *Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences: Land Tenures in Kerala 1850-1960*, p.221.

also made a careful scrutiny and revision of the services of the *viruthikkar*. Their services were in the form of supplying vegetables and provisions or providing labour and building materials on specific occasions and the future requisition for such provision and labour being reduced and restricted.⁴⁴ The Travancore government also issued a notice of auction sale of contract for the supply of fire wood and other articles for *mathilagom*.⁴⁵ Such notices were published in different divisions of Travancore like Kottayam and Kollam for the supply of vegetables and provisions to the *uttupuras* on contract basis.⁴⁶ In such system, the suppliers received certain kinds of market rates for their supplies.

The government of Travancore took keen interest to improve the social condition of the *viruthikkar*. They appointed a committee to examine the functions of *viruthi* system and suggest various measures to improve the condition of the *viruthikkar*.⁴⁷ The *viruthi* committee submitted its report on 12 June 1889 and it suggested a number of measures to improve the condition of the *viruthikkar*. The committee pointed out that there were altogether 20880 holders dependent on *viruthi* lands. The land comprised 20000 acres, 5507 *cherikal* lands and 4459 garden lands in the state. The committee also recommended that so far as the supply of provisions was concerned it would not entail much extra expense on the state. The *Viruthi* Committee Report also pointed out that the practice of drawing supplies from *viruthikkar* who came from remote taluks to meet the demands of the capital should be put to an end and restricts the area for the purpose as far as possible.⁴⁸

The gist of the recommendations of the *Viruthi* Committee was that the *viruthi* system should be retained only to the personal services and that their supplies should be given fair value. Soon after, the *viruthikkar* were relieved of the duty of supplying provisions and rendering personal services. The report also recommended that the local land revenue officials and contractors should be authorized to supply provisions and materials from the markets.⁴⁹ In 1889, a Royal Proclamation was issued and which abolished the *vilavasi* due from the *viruthikkars*. The Proclamation terminated the additional duties of the *viruthikkar* without any remuneration. In 1908, another

⁴⁴Travancore Government Gazette, May 25, 1886, p.482.

⁴⁵Travancore Government Gazette, September, 1869, p.686.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p.685.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p.33.

⁴⁸G.Sugeetha, *op.cit.*, p.34.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p.35.

Royal Proclamation was issued which completely writing off the arrears of *vilavasi* due from the *viruthikkars*.

On 1068 ME (1893), the Government of Travancore issued a Proclamation, which completely and permanently exempted the *viruthikkar* from all mofussil obligations.⁵⁰ The Proclamation gave some relief to the *viruthikkar*, but in certain ceremonies of the Sri Padmanabha Swami Temple, Trivandrum, the *viruthikkar* were used to supply provisions and materials. Ultimately the Proclamation of 1893 reduced the burden of *viruthikkar* in the state. The abolition of *viruthi* system resulted in a huge loss of revenue in the state, but Sri Moolam Tirunal made a generous sacrifice of his revenue in the interest of the *viruthi* holders.⁵¹

In Travancore, the government continuously took measures to provide complete relief to the *viruthi* holders. In 1906, *vilayartham* the levy from the original holders of the *viruthi* land, was simplified and later discontinued. The system of *munnila viruthis* for revenue collection of vital statistics was ordered to be dispensed with, by the proceedings of the Government No. S/247, dated 15 May 1905. The *viruthi* services for the Ambalapuzha Temple for rowing the royal boats and boats of Thekkedathu Bhattathiri and for carrying of rice to the Palace were also discontinued. Ultimately, the system of *viruthi* was eventually abolished in 1084 ME (1909 A.D) excepting few cases such as related to the personal services in the Sri Padmanabha Temple, at Trivandrum. It was retained for historic reasons and in the interests of prestige.

Conclusion

The system of *viruthi* was completely abolished in Travancore, which gave new relief to the riots. Even though the system of *viruthi* was abolished by laws, certain kinds of bonded labour still existed in the state. Caste-based social gradation and exploitation continue even now. Hence, there is scope for further study about the topic. It is hoped that the research may help to stimulate the study of entire history of *viruthi* in Travancore.

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⁵⁰Royal Proclamations on 24-12-1068. M.E.

⁵¹Ulloor S. Parameswara Aiyer, *Colonel Munro*, Kerala Society Papers, Vol.II, Series, 7, p.249.

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