

The Christian Missionaries and Abolition of Slavery in South Travancore

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Abstract: Many factors contributed for the growth of slavery in Travancore. Most of the castes below the Nadars and Ezhavas, such as Pulayas, Parayas, Paravas, Kuravas and Vettuvans were generally regarded as slaves. Wars and conquests between petty chieftains and Princes were always followed by the capture of the vanquished. These vanquished were afterwards made slaves. During the times of famine, parents used to sell their children for petty sums of money to work in the houses or in the fields of the rich. Later, they were converted as slaves by these rich people. Women of higher-castes, in case of association with men of low-caste, were invariably reduced to slavery and were removed from their parental community. Christian Missionaries while preaching the love of God, came in touch with the slaves and knew the social, political and economic disabilities of the slaves and their sufferings. They felt that the slaves should be liberated at the outset. To make them to understand the predicament of the slaves, the Missionaries started to educate the people first.

Key Words – Slavery, Reform, Social Evils, Jennum, Canum, Pattom, Panams, Talayara, Valayara, Savarnas, Avarnas

Introduction

Slavery was a social evil. The institution of slavery existed in Travancore even from the early period of her history. Its impact was felt throughout Travancore. The origin of the institution of slavery is closely associated with the beginning of the caste system in Travancore. The people of Travancore were divided into Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Sudras. Of these, the Sudras might have been reduced to the status of slaves. From this slavery began to grow in Travancore [1].

There were many responsible factors for the origin and growth of slavery in Travancore. The early period of history of Travancore was fluctuating. The social set up too was unsteady. It was during the fluid situation, the foreign incursion took place from the North [2]. These invaders subjugated the original inhabitants and settled down in Travancore. But, these slave communities assumed importance and then formed their own class of ruling dynasty and established a form of government that suited to them. During the Second Chera Empire (800-1102), the Pulayas enjoyed rights equal to that of the high class people. Pulayanar Kottai, now a suburb of Trivandrum, was the centre of Pulaya ruler who established his sway over the surrounding parts. It is evident from inscriptions that the Pulayas enjoyed all privileges of high-class people [3].

The Brahmins from the North who came and settled in Travancore were responsible to create caste rules and barriers, to obtain superiority in the society. In course of time, they had established their undisputed dominance over the land as well as the people of various regions of Travancore [4]. The opposition of the original inhabitants created many problems for the Brahmins in the early stages. After securing a safe footing, the Brahmins claimed superiority over the inhabitants in all walks of life. Their religious and social customs and fair complexion fascinated a section of the natives who considered it as a privilege to be in close association with the Brahmins [5]. As a result, the Brahmins extended special treatment to those inhabitants who accepted their supremacy and were called Sath-Sudras or Good Sudras. The other group who refused to accept their supremacy continued to be outside of the new social setup [6]. “The joining of the dejected local people with the invaders, resulted in a social convulsion of far-reaching consequences. It destroyed the harmonious life of several centuries and paved the way for the introduction of inequalities based on casteism”. Thus, the caste system came to Travancore [7].

Many factors contributed for the growth of slavery in Travancore. Most of the castes below the Nadars and Ezhavas, such as Pulayas, Parayas, Paravas, Kuravas and Vettuvans were generally regarded as slaves. Wars and conquests between petty chieftains and Princes were always followed by the capture of the vanquished. These vanquished were afterwards made slaves. During the times of famine, parents used to sell their children for petty sums of money to work in the houses or in the fields of the rich. Later, they were converted as slaves by these rich people. Women of higher-castes, in case of association with men of low-caste, were invariably reduced to slavery and were removed from their parental community. This was well depicted by Francis Day in his book, “The Land of Perumals” [8].

In Travancore, the people followed a peculiar custom in transferring the slaves. The first was *Jennum* or sale, by which the slave became the property of the master. The value of the slave was given and the property of the slave was transferred to a new master. It was the duty of the new master to look after the slaves in the same manner as done by the former master. The second method was *Canum* or mortgage. The procedure of *Canum* was that the proprietor would get two thirds of the value of the slaves. Besides, he was entitled to get a small quantity of rice yearly as a token of his partial claim over the slaves. He could reclaim and

recover the slaves on repayment of the money that he had borrowed. He was not liable to pay any interest. If a slave died while he was in the custody of the new master, he was responsible for returning a slave of equal value.

The third way of possession of slave was by letting them for *Pattom* or rent. The annual hire was eight *Panams* for a man slave and four *Panams* for a woman. The second and third tenures were highly abominable for the person who exacted the labour and furnished the subsistence of slaves. He was only interested in grinding his own axe than in protecting and helping the latter. The slaves received no education. The house of a slave was called *Madam*, means a hut and his children 'Monkeys'. He could not look at the face of his master and speak freely. "When he wanted to speak, he had to place the hand over the mouth lest the breath should go forth and pollute the person". Heavy taxes were imposed on them. A special fee was levied on their marriages and on special occasion, they were squeezed of their hard earnings [9].

The slaves were compelled to pay even for the hair they grew, and moustache they had. Women were compelled to pay a tax called the breast-tax. Even though the Government was informed of these harassments no steps were taken by the Government to ameliorate their sufferings. Utilising the situation the officials too tried to extract much from them, but, did nothing for their welfare. The masters considered the slaves as their property and their position was less than that of animals. In the later periods, the masters employed their slaves in their fields and kept them away from their houses. The masters never permitted the slaves to touch them. Death punishment was given if they happened to touch them accidentally. Even in the fields, their work was supervised from certain distance.

All children born of slaves belonged to the master. If the husband wanted to meet the wife, that too was done with the permission of the master. If the master wanted to sell them, that was done without any human consideration. The husband, wife and children were driven to the market like cattles and sold or sometimes auctioned. In the fields when they were at work, the slaves starved and lodged like buffalos. They had to work all days from dawn to dusk under the scorching heat of the sun for rice and that too was kept at a distance. Thus, in a caste dominated society, the caste masters had the right to sell or kill the slaves [10].

The Parayas were another group of slaves. Like other slaves, they were also maintained by their masters who extracted labour from them. The Vettuvans were hunters who belonged to the slave-caste and there were several denominations and sub-divisions among them. The value of a Vettuvan woman was very low as compared with that of many other slaves. The slaves underwent great hardships and social disabilities under the high caste [11].

The Christian Missionaries while preaching the love of God, came in touch with the slaves and knew the social, political and economic disabilities of the slaves and their sufferings. They felt that the slaves should be liberated at the outset. To make them to understand the predicament of the slaves, the Missionaries started to educate the people first. The responsibility of educating the people and their attempt to fight for the liberation goes to Rev. Mead, Mrs. Mead, Rev. Mault and Mrs. Mault and a group of other Christian Missionaries who sacrificed many of their comforts to liberate the people of the slave community. Rev. Mead also felt that education should not be the monopoly of the high-caste. So he concentrated on establishing schools attached to the Churches. Mrs. Mead only worked on this line to open Boarding Schools for girls [12].

The regard for establishing the first English School goes to Rev. Ringletaube in 1806. In spite of opposition, he opened an English School in the Church premises at Mylaudy. When Mead took charge of the London Missionary Society, he shifted the Mission Station to Nagercoil and shifted the school also. It was the first institution to give regular English education in South Travancore.

The admission of slave children in the schools of the Missionaries began in a very interesting manner. The school master of Ponnani adjoining the Manalicaud Church got a slave boy and admitted him in his school. The Missionaries made inquiries with regard to this and they got pleasing facts. Then Mead published it as a rule that all school masters who collected slave children, would get an addition of one *Panam* (2 annas) in their monthly pay for every slave boy and one and half *Panam* for every slave girl, they collected and admitted into the Christian Schools for education. It was understood that within a year, after Mead had made this new rule, more than 1000 slave children were collected and brought into education in all this schools in the Neyyoor area [13].

The work of the lady Missionaries like Mrs. Mead and Mrs. Mault among the slaves, made a turning point in the history of South Travancore. The slaves progressed rapidly because of their dealings. They started a Boarding School at Nagercoil in 1820, for admitting slave girls. Their idea was to secure freedom for the slaves. They paid the cost of the slaves to their masters for freeing them from bondage. But, some masters refused to receive the amount from the Missionaries, and their only aim was to retain their slaves.

Slave owners oppressed the slaves too much, and so they protested for their rights and privileges. Slaves were not allowed to use public roads. They used only by lanes outside the village. But, the slaves resented the same [14].

The Proclamation of 1823

By the treaties of 1795 and 1805, that were concluded between the English East India Company and Travancore, the Company became a decisive political power. It empowered the British with the right to interfere in the administrative and political affairs of the State.

The administrators could very well understand the existence of the obnoxious institution of slavery. They could do nothing to abolish it. When Col. Munro became the Resident Dewan of Travancore, he learnt that the whole of Travancore was infested with slavery, which was an unfortunate institution. He made use of his good office to influence Rani Lakshmi Bai (1811 – 1815) to introduce several social reforms which helped the slaves to get certain privileges denied to them. By the Proclamation of 1812,

Rani Lakshmi Bai issued a notification to the abolition of slavery. This Proclamation was published on the 21st *Virichikam* 987 M.E “with reference to the natives and foreigners who for the sake of profit, buy at a cheap rate, the boys and girls of several low-caste people of this country and sell them for a higher prices, take them to distant places and pay tolls at sea ports and thus make a regular bargain of them. As this is really an inhuman and disgraceful custom, which ought to be checked, we hereby notify that no person shall, for purpose of cultivation buy or sell Kuravars, Pariahs, Pulayahs, Malayars, Vetars and others in *mortgage, janmam* or *pattam*, as is done in many places or get title deeds with the prominent landholders of the place concerning them or engaged such people for cultivation and that no people of any other caste shall beyond this natural customs, buy or sell children of their own caste or pay toll to the Sarkar. Any one that acts in opposition to the notification given above and has a regular dealing of the slaves shall be subjected to severe punishments, their property confiscated and they themselves banished from the country” [15].

Subsequently, several obnoxious taxes such as ‘*Talayara*’, ‘*Valayara*’ were also abolished by Proclamation of 990 M.E. (1815 A.D.). By another Proclamation of that year, the taboo imposed on the Ezhavas and other low-castes in carrying umbrellas, lights and knives chained with gold and in wearing ear-rings was removed. Even then, the oppressive attitude of the high-class continued.

On 5 May 1816, Paktiyudayan, a Christian according to his custom proceeded in pomp and show to the Church of Mylaudy in order to celebrate his marriage. But, on the public roads, he was stopped by caste Hindus, who ordered him to proceed along a lane outside the village. As a result, the marriage was postponed. Subsequently, a number of Christian marriages of the season were put off. At once with the help of Vedamonickam, who fought for the just cause of the Christians at Mylaudy, Paktiyudayan lodged a complaint in the Court.

Several inhabitants of Mylaudy were summoned as witnesses. The investigations proved beyond doubt that from the period of the Protestant Church was erected in Mylaudy, it was customary for all Protestant marriages and funerals to pass through the public streets and roads of Mylaudy. This enquiry was done by Everest, Judge of the Appeal Court. According to his report, the British Resident of Travancore granted permission to the Christians to continue the privilege they had hitherto been enjoying. Thus by 1816, the Christian public of Travancore secured the right to use public roads [16].

But, the same right was denied to the non-caste Hindus. The caste- Hindus wanted to maintain the age old barbarous customs at all cost. On one occasion, a number of Brahmin travellers met a set of coolies carrying a heavy log of timber, the Brahmins ordered them to put it down and run off the road. The coolies refused. This attitude infuriated the Brahmins and they started to beat them, and the infuriated slaves laid down their load and retaliated and gave the Brahmins a good beating. In another incident, a high-caste man, a drunkard and of violent character, happened to pass by the road from the market, saw a slave woman fatigued with footsore, sitting down on the road side to rest for a while. This was not liked by him, and assaulted and struck her to go away from that place. Her son, who was present, defended his mother by giving two strokes in return to the high caste man. So this case went to the Court. The Judge gave the judgment that “..... It may be grievous offence for a low caste man especially a slave, to strike one of the higher caste, according to the *Dharmasastram*”. The slaves protested the prevention of low-castes by the high-caste.

However, all these Proclamations had nothing to do with the abolition of slavery. Slaves continued to be bought and sold. The Government itself owned a large number of slaves. Though the motives behind these Proclamations are to be appreciated, they indirectly aimed at the retention of slavery in Travancore, for generations to come [17].

The Christian Missionaries while preaching among the common people came into contact with the slaves and learnt the gruesome realities connected with slavery. In 1841 Rev. Abbs, J., observed the plight of the slaves of Southern Travancore in person. The other Missionaries also noticed the evils: “We cannot but feel sorry for these poor sufferers; and if consistency with their higher objects, we can produce for them some relief from their temporal distress, it is our delight to do so”. The Missionaries declared that the “State was Priest-ridden and by no means a model which it had long been represented to be”. The Missionaries believed that it was the inalienable right of the lower-classes of South Travancore as of any other people to fight for their rights and to enjoy the fruits of their toil.

Mrs. Mault narrated a touching incident of a girl, who was educated in the Boarding School and she failed to secure freedom from the master. A girl of about 11 years age was found near the residence of Mrs. Mault in astute of exhaustion due to hungry. After some relief, she told Mrs. Mault that she was a slave and due to her master’s heartless flogging, she had run away. So she was given asylum by Mrs. Mault. After ten days, a morose looking man appeared and demanded his slave girl. Every possible effort was made by Mrs. Mault to induce him to show clemency by offering to accept the cost of her freedom; but this was in vain. He said that “I want not your money but my slave”, and walked away with her.

Missionaries through a series of memorandums and petitions ventilated the grievances of slaves and pressed the Indian Government to find out an early solution to this social evil. However, the Government also felt that the earlier Proclamations could neither be abolished nor contained, hence, a fresh legislation was issued in 1843 [18].

Act of 1843

The Government of India felt that all the efforts of the Missionaries and laws enacted became ineffective. Hence, the Viceroy and Council decided to enact an Act for the emancipation of slaves throughout India in 1843. By this Act, slave owners were severely punished if they retain slaves. This Act was not applicable in Travancore because the Kingdom of Travancore was under the sway of the Rajas of Travancore. Hence, it induced the Missionaries to send more petitions to Raja, for emancipation of the slaves.

In 1847, the Missionaries submitted a memorandum to Utram Thirunal Maharaja portraying the plight of the slaves for considerations. It was with this petition that the demand for the abolition of slavery in Travancore began. The Missionaries pleaded to the Maharaja, "to pass a law in reference to the slave population of Travancore, similar to that passed by the Government of Bengal and now in operation" [19].

Reaction of the Resident

It was General Cullen, the Resident of Travancore who forwarded the memorandum to the Maharaja for necessary action. On behalf of the Maharaja, the Dewan replied to the Resident that "His highness would never fail to give his attention to the unfortunate class of people referred to in the Missionaries petition".

The Resident was not satisfied with the reply sent by the Dewan. The continuous efforts of the Missionaries compelled the Resident, to address a memorandum in the early part of 1849 to the Dewan of Travancore, "Recommending certain measures for improving the condition of slaves and for the gradual abolition of slavery in the State."

In his memorandum to the Dewan, the Resident wanted the Dewan to observe the provision of the Act V of 1843 passed by the Indian Government. He also put forth certain suggestions like the Government to publicly disassociate itself with, the perpetuation of slavery and to work for the abolition of slavery and also demanded the non-separation of father, mother and children and the restriction of slaves or transfer beyond a certain distance from the place of their birth. Securing for the slaves, the full amount when employed on Government work, prohibition of child-labour, allowance to the slaves when they had no work in the fields of their masters were also found in the list of suggestions. Dewan of Cochin was also given a copy of this memorandum regarding the same. Cochin Sarkar expressed its consent to the said reform, but Travancore was wavering. However, because of the pressure of the Court of Directors, the Travancore authorities expressed their feelings to look into this vital issue, and they prepared a draft Proclamation and sent it to the Resident. But, the Resident found that the draft Proclamation was inadequate. Therefore, on 20 November 1852, the Dewan sent a revised draft largely observing the guidelines laid down by the Resident in the memorandum dated 13 March 1849 and submitted it for the approval of the Resident. But, the recommendations of the Resident were not fully found in the Proclamation [20].

In September 1853, the Travancore authorities prepared another draft of Proclamation, and the copies were sent to the Dewan of Cochin and the Resident for their consideration. The Resident "Perfectly approved" the same. The contents of this draft Proclamation congratulated the Raja for this beneficial and liberal policy. He also justified the reluctance of the Travancore Government to free adult *Sarkar* slaves as they almost exclusively cultivated Raja's extensive paddy-lands and commented the second clause as controversial since it blamed the Missionaries for making use of emancipation for conversion.

In the meantime, the Government of Madras wanted to see the proposed reform enacted at the earliest. This could be seen from M.S. Montgomery's letter to the Chief Secretary to the Madras Government. It was in this background that the historic Proclamation of 1853 abolishing slavery was issued.

However, the Proclamation of 1853 was not devoid of loopholes and drawbacks. Despite the Proclamation dealing in slaves continued and this could not go unnoticed by the English, the Resident, was dissatisfied with the working of the controversial second and fifth clauses in the Proclamation. The drawbacks of 1853 Proclamation was so glaring. The Resident wrote a series of letters to the Dewan of Travancore stressing one clause or the other. In one of the letters, he requested the Government to discontinue the tax levied on the *Sarkar* slaves. In another letter, the Resident mentioned the cruel practice of selling free men as slaves in Eraniel. But, the Government of Travancore replied that the parties involved in the transaction were men who were perfectly unaware of the recent Proclamation. At the same time, the indifferent attitude of the Travancore Government became "Well-known to the authorities both in this country and abroad". As a solution to this problem that the Resident suggested the re-publication of the Proclamation of 1853 by Her Highness, the Maharani for the formation of another Proclamation which is more definite than this. In order to make the matters clear; the Government arranged many discussions [21].

The Proclamation of 1857

The main features of the discussion between the different parties were (a) abolition of slavery was not to attempt after a full understanding of its origin, nature and extent and the institution's impact on the slaves, (b) all those who come forward with the idea of abolition of slavery or amelioration of the condition of the slaves were eager not to stir the socio-economic system which had backed slavery.

Despite the discussion and debates held at different stages the defects of the Proclamation could not be rectified. The failure of the 1853 Proclamation to achieve the real purpose for which it was meant created a sense of awareness in the minds of both English and the native State of Travancore. Finally, yielding to the persistent pressure on the part of the Resident, the King withdrew the first Proclamation and issued another in the place on 24 June, 1855 and according to this Proclamation (a) slavery was totally abolished and extent and the institution's impact on the slaves, (b) all those who came forward with the idea of abolition of slavery or amelioration of the condition of the slaves were accepted and agreed not to disturb the economic structure.

This Proclamation declared that all those who are included in the denomination of *Circar* Slaves shall be considered free as well as their posterity the tax hitherto leviable on them being hereby abolished. All slaves who may hereafter become the property of the *Sarkar* by the escheat of Estates without heirs shall also be free. No public office shall, in execution of any decree or order of Court or for the enforcement of a demand of Rent or Revenue, sell or cause to be sold, any person, on the ground that such person is in a state of slavery. No right arising out of an alleged property in the person and services of any individual as a slave, shall be enforced by any Civil or Criminal Court or Magistrate within this territory. No person who may have acquired property by his

own industry, or by the exercise of any art, calling or profession, or by inheritance, assignment, gift or bequest shall be dispossessed of such property or prevented from taking possession thereof, on the ground that such person, or that the person from whom the property may have been derived was a slave. Any Act which would be a penal offence if done to a free man shall be equally an offence if done to any person on the pretext of his being in a condition of slavery.

The remission of all Government slaves satisfied the Court of Directors. They wrote, "The way has been paved for the amelioration of slavery in Travancore. In dealing with this question, the greatest direction and circumspection are necessary to avoid arousing the jealousies and suspicion of the population in a manner that the benevolence of the Government. The means should be left untried by perseverance in a conciliatory policy and by persuasion, to induce the private owners of slaves to follow the laudable example of the Raja" [22].

The Last Blow

A final blow to slavery in India was struck by Section 370, 371 of the Indian Penal Code, which came into force in January 1862. Following this, any person found to possess slaves became punishable.

The zeal and enthusiasm of the Missionaries in the amelioration of slaves must be duly appreciated. It was their drive and initiative which shook the conscience of all. Their enthusiasm was later championed by the Resident. It was the Missionaries who drew the attention of the public as well as the authorities to this social evil. The memorandum which they submitted in 1847 was the first of its kind, in which lamentable plight of the slaves was comprehensively portrayed. In their attempt for social equality in Travancore, the Missionaries had to face stiff opposition from the State authorities and the high-caste people.

The history of the abolition of slavery in Travancore, is closely associated with the untiring and persistent efforts of English. The British Residents of Travancore like Colonel Munro and General Cullen openly interfered in the administration. Their pressure and persuasion virtually persuaded the concerned authorities into action. The Gossip that these benevolent measures owed their origin to the enlighten of the then rulers – and not to the political power exercised by these Residents – is far from true. At the same time, the initial reluctance displayed by Utram Thirunal, the Raja of Travancore on this important social reform should not be interpreted as a reactionary attitude. He being a symbol of the period in which he lived, wanted to preserve the status as far as possible. The Travancore authorities knew that the abolition of slavery would surely disturb the social balance cemented and fortified by age old customs and institutions. Yet, unmindful of the orthodox public opinion, the most potent obstacle that stood in the way of very reform of the English insisted on the abolition of slavery and stage by stage they succeeded in realizing their object [23].

Thus, the advent of L.M.S. Missionaries to South Travancore established a new era in the history of South Travancore. They awakened the people by imparting education and bring to light their talents. Thereby the people were able to get liberation from the clutches of the feudal Lords. In addition to their attempt to the enlightenment of the depressed people the social reformers like Bagavan Muthukutty Swamigal and Sri Narayana Guru started their propaganda against oppression and taught them to break the chains of oppression and bondage. Thus, they not only enlightened the people, but created social awakening in their minds.

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There were Christian Judges only in the five District Courts and the Appeal Court. These Christian Judges were so placed as to be outnumbered by the Hindu Judges. The Missionaries demanded the appointment of Christian Officials in the lower offices. The Missionaries complained that by the laws of Travancore, the native Christian converts were deprived of their ancestral property. The native Christians, even after their conversion were considered to belong to the caste in which they were born. According to the peculiar customs of Travancore, a man was obliged to recognise as his heirs, not his own children, but those of his sisters.

The Christians were thus exposed to the interposition of the authority of the maternal uncle of their children even to withdraw them from their own parents to prevent them from being converted to Christianity.

During this period, the Missionaries found that they were being gradually deprived of their position as a privileged class in Travancore. It was ordered by the Government of India in 1837 that the Europeans residing in Travancore or other native States, not being servants of the British Government must be held to be in all respects and in all cases, Civil and Criminal, subject to the law of the country in which they reside [25].

The Missionaries protested against this decision and argued that by the covenants which they had entered into with the English East India Company. They were bound to submit only to the Company's Government. They alleged that the only acknowledged standard of Criminal Law in Travancore, both in the definition of crime and its punishment, was that of the *Dharmasartras* which were barbarous and cruel in many of their provisions, while the Civil Law contained no provision for the protection of widows without children.

They demanded that the complaints against them should be made to and investigated by the Resident or the Consul appointed by the British Government. The Missionaries knew very well that the loss of their superior position as British subjects would reduce their ability to intervene on behalf of their converts.

But, the protest was in vain and the Missionaries had to accept the restrictions imposed by the Government. General Cullen also was not in favour of granting special privileges to the European Missionaries. The upper cloth movement in South Travancore clearly reflected the attempts of the Nadars to improve their social position [26].

The Proclamation was warmly received with delight, enthusiasm and admiration all over the nation. The Temple Entry Proclamation, by the sublimity of its conception, the loftiness of its ideals and the magnitude of its effects, occupies a unique place in the history of social and religious reform in India. The Proclamation introduced a revolutionary change in the Hindu society by destroying the last vestige of discrimination against two million human-beings. It is an epoch making manifestation of unparalleled beneficence.

Gandhiji hailed it as “a miracle of modern times”, a Smriti which is the People’s Charter of spiritual emancipation and the Proclamation is the beginning of the process of purification of Hinduism and in the process both *Savarnas* and *Avarnas* have to play their due part. It is an act of justice to the submerged Hindus in the State and the Magnacarta of a resurgent Hinduism purified, ennobled and equipped to prosper and conquer. It is undoubtedly a bold step and this stroke has remove the blot of inequality and denial of man’s birth right from Hinduism.

Thus, the twenty four year old Maharaja levelled what is considered the severest blow ever struck at the Hindu caste system. The Proclamation marked the beginning of a new epoch in the socio-religious history of the Hindus. It brought about a silent and bloodless revolution in the Hindu society [27].

It rather liberated the Hindu Gods and Goddesses from the grip of the caste-Hindus and was made available to the non-caste-Hindus. The Temple Entry Proclamation had far-reaching effects on the Hindu society. With the Proclamation the suffering section found a remedy for many of their ills.

The outcaste Parayars and Pulayars gained the right to stand along with Brahmins before the sanctum sanctorum of the Hindu temples. It sanctioned temple-entry right, road-entry and the common rights to use all public wells, tanks, *satroms*, and rooms. Hence, the Proclamation ushered in the birth of a new era ‘an era of quality and freedom’ in the State. But, it was a bleak period for the Missionaries of South Travancore.

Further, the Proclamation led to the fusion of sub-castes which in turn fostered inter-caste marriages and inter-dining. The Proclamation facilitated a healthy and vigorous spiritual life and helped the advancement of the various castes and classes among the Hindus. It offered a reconversion impulse and helped continuance of the process of socio-religious movements in South Travancore [28].

The *Nanchilnad Sambhavar Sangam* extended its co-operation to the caste-Hindu organization in seeking the reconversion of their fellowmen and participated in the Hindu conferences. Further, in South Travancore as early as in 1937, a Centre was opened at Arumanai and propogandists were sent to Colachel, Mondaikkadu, Manavalakurichi and Eraneal. As part of the after-care services to the reconverts, the *All Travancore Hindu Maha Sabha* arranged weekly feeding and provided the members with employment [29].

The *Sabha* also built burial ground, prayer-halls, reading rooms, schools and libraries and also special care was taken to protect them from molestation. These incentives and stimulant factors yielded permanent result and the mass exodus to alien faith was arrested forthwith. The structural reform through the Temple Entry Proclamation paved the way for a splendid social approachment among the Hindu communities.

On its process of attaining social harmony, the macro conflict prevailed on wider perspective among the Hindus as *Savarnas* and *Avarnas* began to disappear and the micro conflict rose up on caste and communal line. Conspicuously, the Temple Entry Movement gave birth to agitational politics and radical programmes during the subsequent years.

Yet, the overall impulse created by the Temple Entry Proclamation was short-lived, obviously due to the politicization of the social religious movement in the succeeding years. The Temple Entry Proclamation and subsequent development in temple administration put the management of temples in a new track and it paved the way for the popularisation of temple worship in South Travancore [30].

The LMS Missionaries were the Pioneers of raising voices against slavery and untouchability. With the help and guidance of the British Government, slaves were liberated in 1855 and the Temple-Entry Proclamation was made in 1936. To remove this caste-stigma and untouchability completely from the society, the following things are to be done:- Protection of Civil Right Act, to be strictly adhered to by all; The Government Political Parties, Religious Leaders and Human Rights Organisations should work together to eradicate this social virus; Affected parties should join together and fight against the evil till its removal from the heart of the people and from the society; Proper education should be given so that every individual must feel that he/she is equal in birth to others in the society; Steps are to be taken for the Spiritual, Moral, Economic, Social and Cultural growth of the masses.

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