

CHAPTER - III

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Nayar marriages are simple and hold much more social significance than religious. The institution of marriage was conceived in a loose sense in those days.¹ On the auspicious day, the bride's family welcomes the groom and is entourage at the venue of the wedding to the notes of the Nadaswaram (a long horn like instrument) and Taval (drums). The groom is accorded a special welcome by the bride's brother who washes his feet and garlands him. He is then escorted to the canopied stage (mandapam) by girls holding auspicious symbols such as a sacred oil lamp, the 'ashtamangalya', a plate holding mirror, bell, vermilion box, and a 'kindi' or water container with a spout. This mandapam is decorated with flower garlands, palm fronds and small plantain trees. The bride then arrives in a splendid silk saree and at the ascertained hour (muhurtham) the groom ties the taali or the sacred thread around her neck. This is a yellow thread with a golden pendent signifying the marital status of a woman. Then garlands are exchanged by the bride and groom. She is now gifted a silk saree and jewelry by her husband and in-laws.² Traditionally marriage

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1. Kapadia, K.M., "**Marriage and Family in India**", Oxford University Press, p. 0.
 2. Velu Pillai, T.K., "**Travancore State Manual**", Vol. I, The Govt. Press, Trivandrum, 1940, p. 414.

over the Nayar woman would go back to her Taravad, her matrilineal home but nowadays she accompanies her husband to his household. She enters her marital home right foot forward by kicking over a large measure of paddy signifying the prosperity and plenty she brings with her. A reception is usually held with social gathering and feasting.

The Nayars of Kerala are different from other castes mainly because they trace their descent through the female line and they had a marriage system in which women were allowed to have several husband simultaneously. The Nayars are of Dravidian stock. The original Nayars were undoubtedly a military body, holding land and serving as warriors. They enjoyed special privileges and power. Nayars lived in matrilineal joining families known as taravads.³ A taravad might have a number of members all living together in one big house. Each taravad was an independent economic unit ; its members collectively owned property from which they derive livelihood. The polyandrous kinship and marriage system of Nayars were the singular aspects of the society in Kerala.

The Nayars are one of the dominant castes in Kerala. They are one among the major divisions of Hindu population.⁴ The Nayars formed the traditional militia until the establishment of the British hegemony.

3. William Logan, **Malabar Manual**, Vol. 1, Trivandrum, 1981, p. 159.

4. Krishna Iyer, L.A., **Social History of Kerala**, Vol. II, Madras, 1970, p. 25.

Their name itself implies that they were the leaders of the people. The Nayars are said to be a mixed race generated from the original Dravidian stock, not intermixe with the Nambudiri Brahmin genes. They are a martial community, and high caste Naytars have Nambudiri fathers"⁵. According to I. K. Ananthakrishn Iyer, the Nayars are an interesting caste of people, forming a considerable portion of the population of the last of the honoured castes under the name (the pure Sudras of Malaya).⁶

They constitute one of the major castes in Kerala having different titles like Nayar, Pillai, Panicker, Kuruppilla, Kaimal, Unithan, Valiyathan and Menon. It does not include the low caste Nayars like Velakkuthala Nayars (Barbars), Velutheda Nayars (Dhobbies) Chakkala Nayars and the other numerous sub divisions. Each group has got its own distinctive practices related to marriage.

In the traditional system they were attached to the royal families of Nambudiri or Brahmins through hypergamous alliances. They rank high in the social hierarchy of Kerala. They come next to the Kshatriyas of Kerala Broadly speaking the Nayars rank after the Nambudiris in Malabar and they occupy the same position in the princely states of Cochin and Travancore.⁷ In Travancore, Nayars enjoyed the

5. Velu Pillai, T.K., **op.cit.**, Vol. I, p. 416.

6. Anantha Krishna Iyer, L.K., **Cochin Tribes and Castes**, Vol. II, London, 1909, p. 12.

7. Faw Cett, F., **Nayars of Malabar**, New Delhi, 1985, p. 185.

privilege of being the most numerous upper class Hindus. They could compel submission and subserviences from their caste inferiors.⁸

The Nayars lived jointly in a house which was called taravad. Taravad is derived from the word tara which means mount i.e., the raised foundation on which a Nayar house was built.⁹ A taravad consisted of a female ancestor her children, her daughter's children, grand daughters of her daughter and as such other descendants however remote in the female line. The male descendants themselves are its members but their children are not. Taravad membership arises by birth in the family. A female member of the taravad does not change her family by marriage.¹⁰

The size of the taravad used to vary from one another depending upon its stage in the developmental cycle and there were cases when the taravad had more than hundred persons at a given time. Every member of the taravad used to consider his taravad as something sacred. Each member of the taravad had a right to the taravad property by birth alone. If any member dies his or her share got developed upon the other members of the taravad. The eldest male of the taravad, also known as karanavar had legal rights to managing the taravad. In the event of his

8. Balakrishnan, V., and Leela Devi,R., **Mannathu Padmanabban and The Revival of Nayars in Kerala**, Delhi, 1982, p. 18.

9. David Schneider, M., Kathleen Gough, *Matrilineal Kinship*, New Delhi, 1961, p. 323.

10. Fuller, C.J., **The Nayars Today**, Cambridge, 1976, p. 103.

death the next senior male member of that taravad succeeded. Thus the taravad and its property had been kept under the control and management of the karanavar alone.¹¹

The position of the members other than the head of the marumakkathayam or matrilineal family was precisely analogous.¹² The relationship between the Karanavan and other members of the family was quite formal and determined by the principle of respect for seniority. Karanavan has been described as the keystone of the marumakkathayam arch. The junior members in the taravad were supposed to have no right to possess anything that formed the taravad property in antagonism to the taravad karanavan.¹³ He commanded such a great authority in the management of the taravad. In effect, he might be called an absolute ruler. It was his right and duty to manage alone the property of the taravad, to take care of it, to invest it in his own name (if it was movable) either on loans or on other security, or by purchasing land in his own name and to receive the rents of those lands. He was not accountable to any member in the taravad in respect of the income of it, though there were silent protests disposal of landed property. Protests became over towards the close of the

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11. Sreedhara Variar, K., **Marumakkathayam and Allied System of Law in the Kerala State**, Ernakulam, 1963, p. 29.
 12. Fuller, C.J., **op.cit.**, p. 114.
 13. Puthenkalam, J., **Marriage and the family in Kerala**, New Delhi, 1977, p. 213.

disintegration of the taravad in his own behalf. The karanavan might delegate his powers of management. This delegation of power had to be limited to the member of the taravad. In some cases, the delegation would become irrevocable except with the consent of all the adult members or by a decision of a court of law.¹⁴ He represented the taravad and he alone could sue and be sued of the taravad. In other words, we can say, the karanavan was the keystone of the Nayar taravad.

Both men and women had equal freedom. Women participated in all family functions equally with men. The taravad itself is a matrilineal unit. The children of the women in the taravad had got equal freedom. Though the legal power of the taravad was vested with a karanavar, the social position of the women in the taravad was high. The women either sisters or nieces, older than the karanavar could exert decision making influences on him. Women were respected in their taravad by giving them different rooms and beautiful courtyard. They were free enough to move elsewhere in the taravad except to the room of the karanavar. Logan in his Malabar Manual had written that 'Nayarwomen were free and they had equal freedom with men. They participated equally with men in public affairs'.¹⁵ In the marriage they were free to select their

14. **Ibid.**

15. William Logan, **op.cit**, p. 53.

partners and also free to divorce the partners when they found it difficult to compromise.

Marriage and morals generally go together. Kerala has evolved through the ages of its own marriage customs and code of morals.¹⁶ The Aryanization of Kerala brought about some changes in the institution of marriage and code of morals.¹⁷ The Chola-Chera war which brought about significant social and economic changes also had its effect on marriage customs and code of morals. Nayar marriage system had been undergoing many changes in both its internal and external functions with regard to the family and its functions.¹⁸ Marriage is a socially recognized cohabitation. The system of marriage among the Nayar witnessed a multitude of trials and tribulations in the course of last centuries. They became the victims of the fossilized customs and worn out practice, which ultimately undermined the vitals of the sacred system.¹⁹

In the past, there were two institutionalized forms of marriage; one was between a pre-pubescent girl and a man which was known as talikettukalyanam. The second was between a mature woman and a mature man of status equal or superior to her own, which was known

16. Sreedhara Menon, A, **Social and Cultural History of India**, Trivandrum, 1979, p. 53.

17. **Ibid.**, p. 93.

18. Desiga Vinayagam Pillai, S., **Marumakkal Vazhi Manmiyam**, (Tamil), Madras, 1991, p. 72.

19. Velu Pillai, T.K., **op.cit.**, Vol. I, p. 423.

as sambhandham. According to L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, there were two forms of marriage in vogue among the Nayars, namely, the talikettu kalyanam and the sambhandam (the customary nuptial union of man and woman). The first of which is performed for every girl before puberty and the second, the real adult marriage is celebrated after she comes of age.²⁰

Talikettu kalyanam

Sreedhara Menon writes : "While considering the institution of marriage, it may be appropriate to consider the custom of talikettu kalyanam which prevailed even in the early part of this century among such non-Brahmin castes as the Nayars, Ezhavas and kammalas. It has been prevalent among Nayars till recently in the name of kettukalyanam.²¹ The term talikettu kalyanam is a compound of three words, viz., tali (a badge) kettu (tying) and kalyanam (marriage)".²² Tali is a leaf shaped emblem made of gold or silver, which was worn on a string around the neck. It indicated the marital status of a woman. But among the early Nayars tali was tied to the girl before puberty. If she reached maturity

20. Anantha Krishna Iyer, L.K., **Cochin Tribes and Castes**, Vol. II, London, 1909, p. 89.

21. Fuller, C.J., **op.cit.**, p. 110.

22. Sreedhara Menon, A., **Social and Cultural History of India**, Trivandrum, 1979, p. 96.

before the talikettu she would have been expelled from her family as an outsider.

Tali tying was performed on a girl or on a group of girls between the age of 11 and 13. The tier belonged either to the same or to a superior caste. In Southern Travancore, the 'tali tier' can also be relatives of either male line or female line irrespective of their age. One condition was that the tier should be older than the girl. Logan writes that the strange thing about it all was that the girl was not really married to the man who performed the tali tying ceremony. In the case of good families, the man selected for this duty is usually either an Illathu or an East Coast Brahmin and in the case of others a man of their own kindred. He continues to write that after the ceremony he received a suitable present and departed.²³ When the girl comes of age he cannot claim her as his wife or should solicit her favours in after life. The tali tier had no claim to matrimony with the girl.²⁴ The practice is said to be the result of the belief that the human of a virgin is protected by the God of marriage. The ceremonies associated with talikettu were different in different parts of Kerala. Fawcett wrote ; "the details of this ceremony vary in different parts of Malabar. But the ceremony itself, in some form is essential and must be performed for every

23. William Logan, **op.cit.**, pp. 160 - 161.

24. Fuller, C.J., **op.cit.**, p. 101.

Nayar girl before she attains puberty. Talikettu kalyanam means marriage by tying the tali or ceremony of tying the tali, a small gold ornament, worn on the neck, the ordinary badge of marriage amongst the Dravidians".²⁵ Talikettu kalayanam was a social custom which proclaimed to the world at large the fact that a girl in a taravad had attained marriageable status. One important factor is that the tali tied to the neck of the girl is made by the family of the girl and not by the family of the groom. Today the custom of tali tying as a special ceremony before marriage among Nayers is no more. Under the stress of modern civilization and as a result of social action taken by social reformers, the Nayers and Ezhavas have practically given up the tali kettu kalyanam. Its gradual dying out is a landmark in the history of social change.²⁶

Sambhandham

Sambhandham was a form of marriage practiced among early Nayers in Kerala. Sambhandham was a social contract by which a man and a woman surrender their sexual rights to each other. Sambhandham was a term most widely used for the marital relationship of a Nayar woman. Even today some of the old Nayar people use the word Sambhandham for

25. Faw Cett, F., **op.cit.**, p. 129.

26. Anantha Krishna Iyer, L.K., **op.cit.**, p. 91.

marriage, the real meaning of the world is union or bond. It is a conjugal union, among the marumakkathayees.²⁷

Nagam Aiya describes Sambhandham as follows : Sambhandham is the marriage proper. The ceremony is also known by the name of pudavakoda or pudamuri (literally the giving of cloth). There is no religious element attached to the ceremony.²⁸ The custom allows a man to cohabit with a woman of an inferior social status while it prohibits the woman to exercise the same liberty. Marriage outside the same caste sub division is rare in Travancore. While in Malabar, marriage of a woman with a man of an inferior caste or a subdivision of caste is alone prohibited. The sambhandham is usually arranged by the karanavars of the families, of the partners.

Among the two systems of marriage, the talikettu kalyanam is more important than sambhandham.²⁹ K. M. Kapadia opines that talikettu ceremony is more a form of marriage than a sambhandham, the essential element being the giving of cloth. But the sambhandham is a personal affair, conducted in privacy which talikettu ceremony was performed with pomp and ceremony.³⁰ It is also stated that giving cloth is

27. Fuller, C.J., *op.cit.*, p. 102.

28. Nagam Aiya, V, **Travancore State Manual**, Vol.II, Travancore Government Press, 1906, p. 356.

29. Thankappan Nayar, P., **Defloration and Convade in Kerala**, Journal of Kerala Studies, Vol. III, pp. 456-459.

30. Kapadia, K.M., **Marriage and Families in India**, New Delhi, 1955, p. 81.

unimportant and cohabitation is the important element in marriage, cohabitation is possible only after sambhandham and sambhandham is more important than talikettu.³¹

In South Malabar and North Travancore the wife is rarely taken to the husband's taravad. The husband visiting her in her house in the night and going home in the next morning remained the practice. While in South and Central Travancore the practice is contrary, the husband always takes his wife to his taravad. The sambhandham is always a matter of careful arrangements in which the wishes of the parties to it are considered, and of which it is expected to bring mutual benefits to the taravad.³² In South Malabar the girl or woman never lives in her husband's house. She lives on in her own taravad house and is visited by the husband. The ordinary hugger mugger, which sometimes stultifies all pleasures in existence, is thus avoided. In North Malabar the woman lives with her husband. A point to be noted in this connection is that when her husband dies she must leave his house and return to her own house at once, before his body is taken out for cremation. Remarriage of widow was allowed. "The Nayar woman in the event of separation from their husband by

31. Thulasidharan, K.M., **Studies in Traditional Kerala Society**, Trivandrum, 1977, p. 87.

32. Desigavinayagam Pillai, S., **op.cit.**, p. 79.

divorce or death are free to remarry, but the second and subsequent marriages are not celebrated with as much formality as the first.³³

The Aryan Brahmins when they came into the country had the same social organizations as existed among their successors. Their laws strictly ordained that only the eldest member of a household should be left free to enter into lawful wedlock with a woman of their own caste, the younger members being left to shift for themselves in this matter. It should in this connection be remembered that the Brahmins formed an aristocratic order and as such they became the exclusive custodians of law. Naturally large number of Brahmin younger sons who were looking illegitimate unions of the nature of concubinage.³⁴ Now the sanctity of formal and religious marriages was incompatible with the baselessness and degradation involved in these illegitimate unions and Brahmin ingenuity discovered a ready means of getting over the difficulties by a social prohibition of all valid marriages among the Nayars. To enforce this social edict upon the Nayars, the Brahmins made use of the powerful weapon of their aristocratic ascendancy in the country and the Nayars readily submitted to the Brahmin supremacy. Thus it came about that the custom of concubinage, so freely indulged in by the Brahmins with the Nayar

33. Nagam Aiyar, V., **Travancore State Manual**, Vol. 11, Travancore Government Press, 1906, pp. 358 -359.

34. Velu Pillai, T.K., **op.cit.**, p. 414.

women, obtained such firm hold in the country that it had only been strengthened by the lapse of time.³⁵

Jeffrey observed that sambhandham among Nayars were contracted and ended with considerable ease. Jeffrey continues, a man negotiated with a woman's karanavar obtained the women's agreement and presented her with a cloth. This was called sambhandham. And a woman might have sambhandham with a number of men at the same time. They had no right over her or her children but were expected to provide her with small presents of luxury items bath oil and pay her expenses when she had a child.³⁶

According to Logan, after attainment of the age of puberty the girl chooses her real husband of her own free will though in this is often guided by the opinion of her elders. The man she selects is called as the Gunadoshkarana. Gunam being 'good' and dosham being 'bad' and karan being the 'doer'. This designation may be exactly reproduced by the phrase from the English wedding service in which the mutual contract of the parties is "for better for worse, for richer for poorer". The ceremony of installment of her husband is exceedingly simple. All that is necessary is that the husband should give and that the girl should receive a cloth in the

35. Gopala Panicker, T.K., **Malabar and its Folk**, Madras, 1900, pp. 36-38.

36. Robin Jeffrey, **The Decline of Nayar Dominance : Society and Politics in Travancore**, 1847 -1908, New Delhi, 1976, pp. 15-16.

presence of relatives and friends. If the pair is dissatisfied with each other the woman returns the cloth and the connection there upon ends.³⁷

The wife would not even speak or hint to him about her economic or personal needs, hence it was a shame for her taravad to accept any economic help from her sambhandham partners. She visited her husband's taravad during ceremonies and the karanavar of the husband sends cloths and tobacco to the wife's family on such occasions. When women became pregnant one or more of her sambhandham partners would claim paternity. Each one did this by giving a piece of cloth and some vegetables to the low caste woman who acted as mid wife. If no one claim parternity, then it was considered that the mother had sexual relations with a man of lower caste or non-hindu which was prohibited and thus both the mother and the child would be outcasted followed by execution or sale as slaves.³⁸

The upper class Nayars and members of the ruling families practiced hypergamy.³⁹ There were three types of hypergamy among Nayars viz. Nambudiri - Nayar hypergamy, Kshtriya - Nayar hypergamy and Nayar - Sub caste hypergamy. Both Nambudiri and Kshatriya hypergamy were prevalent largely in areas where those groups had

37. William Logan, **op.cit.**, p. 164.

38. **Ibid.**, pp. 164-165.

39. Fuller, C.J., **op.cit.**, p.115.

settlement, scattered in Northern Kerala, widespread in Central Kerala and few in Southern Kerala. At that time in Kerala, the women of Kshatriya royal lineage married Nambudiri Brahmins. Those of non-Kshatriyanized royal lineage married Nambudiris or man of Kshatriya royal lineage. Women of wealthy Nayar lineage married men of any of the three groups above. The hypergamous pattern of marital relationship existed in Kerala until the 1920's.⁴⁰

Literature revealed that it was the Nambudiris who were responsible for losing the sanctity of Nayar sambhandham. For the sake of the interest and convenience of Nambudiris only such a loose liaison among Nayars originated.⁴¹ Gough has pointed out that the Nambudiris did not regard sambhandham union as a true marriage but as a kind of concubinage. Among Nambudiris only the eldest son married a Nambudiri woman which was called Tali. The younger brother's called aphans entered into marital relationship with women of royal, ambalavasi and Nayar lineage.⁴² A Nayar woman married to a Kshatriya was called kettilamma. If she was an ordinary girl of a poor family, she was provided with land and housing.⁴³

40. Pillai, A.K.B., **The Culture of Social Stratification / Sexism The Nayars**, New York, 1987, p. 164.

41. Fuller, C.J., **op. cit.**, p. 116.

42. **Ibid.**

43. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., **Foreign Notices of South India**, Madras, 1922, pp.20-210.

The Nayar man who got into sambhandham had no economic rights or responsibilities with the women and children. The children of that woman were purely under the control of the karanavar or her taravad. The economic benefits of Nambudiri husband from Nayar wife's lineage are observed as follows. "The Nayar hypergamous families were usually those of upper economic groups, and they did utmost within their capacity to honour and please a Nambudiri husband.⁴⁴ A hypergamous royal lineage of upper group Nayar lineage would have one or more private temples for Nambudiri husband's thevaram and matom (a house made for a Nambudiri in Nayar compound) for their private living.⁴⁵ In middle class families, where they could not normally afford to have special temple and matom, either alone or together with similar Nambudiri husbands of the area, cooked and ate in the village temple. The rice, vegetables and other cooking materials would also be attained by male and female servant provided by the Nayar family. Usually a Nambudiri husband spent the day time in his matom or in the temple, and visited his wife at night. He would not eat any boiled food from his wife's house but drink boiled milk, and eat plantains and plantain chips. The hypergamous families followed many Brahminical rituals and life style like vegetarianism, ritual purity, daily offering to temples etc.

44. Pillai, A.K.B., **op.cit.**, p. 166.

45. Fuller, C.J., **op.cit.**, p. 116.

Since it was considered that the Nambudiri alliance was as a status symbol, many families provided the Nambudiri husbands with special houses and the daily ritual facilities to make them as regular husbands and thus the ancestral wealth of the Nambudiri illom remained constant. There was another opinion, since the Nambudiris as a rich group in the society, the economic benefit might not be a single factor for sambhandam. Their main aim was to subjugate the Nayar under their superiority. "Brahmin dominance was reinforced through marital relations with women to royal lineages and wealthy Nayar families, the offsprings of such relations were thought to be devoted to the Nambudiri".⁴⁶ Later there was a decline in the Nambudiri - Nayar alliances. C. J. Fuller in his village study of Ramankara Nayars observes : "by about 1925, such marriages had ceased, as Nayars were refusing to allow their womenfolk to marry Nambudiris".⁴⁷

Previously the sambhandham with the Nambudiri was considered as a status symbol, later it became a mockery. By that time, certain Nambudiris and some women started to campaign for the right of all Nambudiris to marry within the caste. The reform movement started in South Malabar around 1917. Nayar Nambudiri marriages were rather

46. Pillai, A.K.B., *op.cit.*, p. 164.

47. Fuller, C.J., *Nayars Today*, New York, 1976, p. 75.

rare in South Kerala because the number of Nambudiri illoms were few. However, Nayar-Kshatriya marriages were common in South Kerala. But today, both Nayar-Nambudiri or Nayar-Kshatriya marriages are not considered as a prestige to the Nayars.

The Nayars lost their importance, when the society shifted status from caste and wealth to cash and education. Social awakening made them to think about the weak points of their family and marriage systems. The instability of their sambhandham and supremacy of the Brahmins haunted them. In Nayar taravads in the past, the husbands had no responsibilities for the up bringing and education of the children.⁴⁸ And both the husband and the wife could at anytime terminate the marriage at will. Many social reformers came forward to get the Nayar marriage legalized. In 1890, a Bill was introduced in the Madras Legislative Council to permit Nayars in the British India to register Sambhandham. This Bill was strongly opposed by a section of conservative Nayars, Nambudiri, Kshatriyas and non-Malayali Brahmins.⁴⁹ A marriage commission was appointed. The commission made enquiries and submitted its report. In 1896, the Malabar Marriage Bill became law. By this law, people belonging to any caste in Malabar, following marumakkathayam could register their sambhandham. This law made

48. Sreedhara Menon, **op.cit.**, p. 54.

49. Pillai, A.K.B., **op.cit.**, p. 167.

sambhandham a legally valid marriage and a man would make over his self acquired property to his wife and children. In 1899, the Travancore Wills Act gave marumakkathais the right to get half of their self-acquired property on one's wife and children This was the first step of reform.⁵⁰

Efforts were made to change the existing system of marumakkathayam. The marriage in marumakkathayam system revealed many serious defects and thus the members felt strong resentment. The junior members of the taravad felt that the karanavars showed partiality towards the members of his own thaivazhi or branch viz. the children of his direct sisters.⁵¹ Conflicts were also started between the interest of the sisters of the karanavar and his wife. Wife of the karnavar (ammayi) exercised great influence over the affairs of the taravad though their children had no legal claim to the family property of the karanavar. The autocratic nature of the karanavar also felt by the junior members.⁵² When these problems intensified, the educated youth of matrilineal families revolted against the system. The movement for the reform of the marumakkathayam system reached its peak in the early decades of the 20th century. The Nayar Service Society was also in favour of changes in the existing laws. The Government took initiative and introduced bills to

50. Balakrishnan, V., and Leela Devi, **op.cit.**, pp. 19-20.

51. **Ibid.**

52. Fuller, C.J., **op.cit.**, p. 126.

regulate the personal laws of several communities in the state. The Travancore Nayar Act of 1912 allowed thaivazhi partition. The children were allowed to inherit half of the self acquired property of the father. The Nayar Act of 1925 allowed partition of the taravad property. The Act also prohibited polyandry and it marked the change from marumakkathayam to makkathayam.⁵³

In Cochin, the Nayar regulation of 1912 - 20 imposed restrictions on the power of the karanavar and legalized the customary marriage, it made all husbands including non-Nayars legally responsible for the maintenance of their Nayar wives and children. Polygamy was prohibited. The Cochin Nayar Act of 1937 to 1938 made wives and children of a husband or father the legal heirs to his property. In British Malabar too legislation was enacted to legalise inheritance. With the passing of the Hindu Succession Act which came into force in 1956, Hindu men and women have been given equal rights to property and monogamy has also become compulsory for all Hindus. The enactment of new personal laws by the different governments in the State changed the organization of Nayar families. Father became the head of the family and his children began to inherit his properties. Gradually nuclear family system came in vogue among Nayars.⁵⁴

53. Sreedhara Menon, A., **Social and Cultural History of Kerala**, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 91-92.

54. Pillai, A.K.B., **op.cit.**, p. 185.