

History of Village and Taluk division in Travancore as a model to other states in the formation of Kerala State

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Abstract

Travancore lies between the parallel of 8°4'10" 22 north Latitude and between 76' and 77' 38' east longitude and is situated at the south western extremity of the Indian peninsula. Travancore is triangular in shape with the apex towards the south at cape Camorin but the contiguity and compactness of the figure is marred by a deep indentation which a narrow strip of Cochin territory makes on the North West angle. The western side is longer than the eastern and runs in a north westerly direction. For purposes of land revenue administration, the State is divided into five Divisions of which the smallest Padmanabhapuram covers 62797 square miles and the largest Quilon 256431 square miles. The Devikulam Division was constituted only in 1910 and formed part of the Kottayam Division during the time for settlement. The formation of Village and Taluk is a difficult problem at the time of Kerala formation in 1956 but settled as a model to other states. The primary sources were used for the swot up. The analytical and descriptive method used for the description of study.

Keywords: Ghats, Edavagais, Khandom, Muries, karas, kayal, Olay, Punja, ola

Introduction

Travancore is bounded on the north by the British Collectorate of Coimbatore and the state of cochin on the east by the western Ghats which separate it from the Tinnevely and Madura Districts, and on the south and west by the Arabian sea and the Cochin state which runs down in Puthenchira of the Parur Taluk lies detached from the mainland and is wholly surrounded by cochin territory. The villages of Achenpudur, Ilattur, Klanakad, Ayikudi and are surrounded on all sides by British territory. The Taluk and Village administration caused internal conflict as well as external conflict of Travancore. The formation of Travancore Cochin in 1949 created a great divide between the places on the splitting of power and area. But it settled in 1956 by the recommendation of committees and implements the changes of administration.

Trace the History of village and Taluk in Travancore

The extreme length of the state, Travancore from north to south is 174 miles and its greatest breadth near the northern boundary 75 miles. In its narrowest part it measures 30 miles and it has an average width of 40 miles. It has a coastline of 168 miles and a periphery of 559 $\frac{4}{3}$ miles.ⁱ Its superficial extent which is rendered disproportionate to the circumference by the irregularity of its configuration amounts to 7, 60630 square miles compared with Cochin and the adjacent British collectorate. Travancore is more than 5 times the size of Cochin and (1,412 square miles) larger than Tinnevely (5,381 square miles) and Malabar (6,002 square miles) and smaller than Coimbatore (7,804 square miles) and Madura (8,789 square miles).ⁱⁱ Each of the Divisions is portioned out into a number of Taluk's which vary in extent from 53.87 square (Parur in the Kottayam Division) to 925.97 square miles (Chengannur in the Quilon Division). The Devikulam Taluk forming a part of the Devikulam Division was constituted in 1910 and includes, among others, the Anchanad tract dealt with as separate Taluk at these settlements; and the Peerimade Taluk was created in 1911 and comprises portions of the Changanachery and Minachil Taluk's and the Cardamom Hills.ⁱⁱⁱ The Taluk's are subdivided into *pakudis* or villages which constitute the revenue units. There are 427 villages were comprised in the Peermade and Devikulam Taluk's, were originally included in the Cardamom Hills and were formed only subsequent to the revenue survey and settlement.^{iv} The number of villages according to survey and settlement no to 420, or 422 taking Parur bund and Peruvanatanam 2nd bits as two distinct villages in pursuance of the separate treatment accorded to them at the settlement; and they vary in extent from 81 to 203.54 square miles.

Proposal and Distribution

The proposals for redistribution were discussed at conference held with the District Collectors and Tahasildars on 13-9-1955, 3-11-1955, 9-11-1955, 3-12-1955 and 5-12-1955.^v Representations from the public were also considered. The Committee also heard several deputations which met at Trivandrum and in the camps of the Committee. The decisions of the Committee could be grouped under the following heads: In making the recommendations the Committee have decided upon as little interference with the structure of the villages as possible. Considerations of administrative efficiency, the opinion of the Collectors and also the voice of the people, together with the principles laid down in the redistribution of the villages, have been the deciding factors:^{vi}

- (1) Bifurcation or splitting up of villages.
- (2) Clubbing together of villages.
- (3) Transfer of one village or portion thereof to another village or Taluk.
- (4) Proposals regarding Edavagais.^{vii}

The details of the redistribution proposed are based on the recommendations of the Collectors to whom definite directions were issued to the effect that, in sending up proposals, the following principles should be kept in view:^{viii}

- (i) Khandom lines should not be disturbed as far as possible
- (ii) Muries or karas should be kept intact.

- (iii) A fair proportion of area, population and revenue should be included in each of the villages.
- (iv) The new villages should have equal benefit of roads and other communications.
- (v) In making the recommendations the representatives of the public should be freely consulted.^{ix}

Bifurcation or splitting up of villages

The following villages have been recommended to be split up into two. In several cases the bifurcation has been supported by representations from the people as well. They were Thovala in Thovala taluk; Thengarputhur in Agaateeswaran taluk; Colachel in kalkulam taluk; kaliel in Vilavanede taluk; kunnathukal, Ottasekharanangalam and Perumadavila in Neyyattikara taluk; Aryanad, Uzhanalakkal, Anad, Vantarapuram and Palode in Nedumangad taluk: paravoor, Meerad, Eravipuram, Thrikkadavoor and Perinad in Quilon taluk; Kottarakara, Liyan, Velinalloor, Chadayanangalar and Kulil in Kottarakara taluk: Punalur and Edamulakkal in Pathanapuram taluk: Soornad, Poruvazhy, Kunnathur, Pallickal, Adoor and Kodumon in Kannathur taluk; Omalloor, Cherokole and Valli code in Pathanamthitta taluk.^x The other villages merged with Ezhumattur and pandalan north in Thiruvella taluk; krishnapuram in karunagapalli taluk; Pulinkunnu and Alleppey in Ambalapuzha taluk; Thanneermukkom south in shertallai taluk; Madapally, Puthupally, Nedumkunnam, kulathoorvazhoor and kanjirapally north in Changanacherry taluk; Vijayapuraiab, Ettumanoor and Pampady in kottayam taluk; Vadayar, Thalayazham and Kaduthuruthy in Vaikom taluk; Puliyanoor, Meenachil, Kanakari, Elaccaud and Uzhavur in Meenaohil taluk; Thodupuzha and Manakad in Thodupuzha taluk; Varapetty, Enanalloor, Koothattukulam, Thirumaradi, Piravam and Arakuzha in Moovattupuzha taluk; Pallivasal in Devicolan taluk, Kothakulangara, Thrikkakara and Vengoor in Kunnathunad taluk.

In respect of the following villages further splitting up into three villages has been recommended.^{xi} These villages are extensive. There is a lot of revenue work to be done. The villages are capable of further expansion and would bring in additional revenue if manageable units are provided: Ezhukone in Kottarakara taluk; Enadimangalam in kunnathur taluk; Kkalakunnam in Kottayan taluk; Ramapuram and kondoor in Meenachil taluk; Karimannoor and Kumaramangalax in Thodupuzha taluk. Ramamangalam, Mulavoor, Kothamangalam and Kuttamangalam in Moovattupuzha taluk; Poopara in Devicolam taluk and Permaded in Peermade taluk were considered for splitting.

Split and Division of Village

Considering the area administrative convenience and the possibility of further development, the splitting up of the following villages into the units noted against each are also recommended:

- (1) Anchal village in Pathanapuram taluk to be split up into four.
- (2) Pathanapuram village in Pathanapuram taluk to be split up into four
- (3) Kumbazha village in Pathanamthitta taluk to be split up into four.
- (4) Ranni Village in Pathanamthitta taluk to be split up into six

- (5) Karikod E village in Thodupuzha taluk to be split up in to six.
- (6) Udumbanchola in Devicolam taluk to be split up into five.
- (7) Vandamettu in Peermade taluk to be split up into four.
- (8) Kallooppara (with Edavagai village) in Thiruvella taluk to be split up into five.

Details showing the allotting up recommended would be found. To avoid unnecessary agitation and consequent unrest in locating the headquarters of the bifurcated or split up villages, a task which the Revenue Department should conveniently perform in due course after careful and proper enquiry the split up villages have been assigned the letters A, B, C, D etc., affixed to the name of the original village.^{xii}

Clubbing together of villages:

Several villages are too small in extent and in point of work to afford a staff wholly for them. They could be conveniently clubbed with the adjoining villages. A list of the villages to be clubbed together, with details regarding their area is furnished as village Though Committee makes the following recommendations in the matter.

- (1) Bhoothapandy and Easanthimangalan in Thovala Taluk.
- (2) Suchindram and Parakka in Agasteeswaram taluk.
- (3) Mekkara and Achenputhur in Shencottah taluk.
- (4) Menmkulam and Kazhakkootam in Trivandrum Taluk.
- (5) Sarkara and ChirayinkilKeezhvalam and KunthalloorandVettoor and Cherunniyoor in Chirayihkil taluk.
- (6) Cheppad and Valiakuzhi, Nangiarkulangara and Pallipad and Haripad and Kizhakkekara in Kartigapally taluk.
- (7) Alymanam, Kummanam, Thiruvarppu, Kudamaloor and Perumbaikad in Kottayam taluk to be clubbed to form three villages
- (8) Kulasekharamangalan and Maravanthuruthu in Vaikomtaluk.
- (9) Patinjare kara muri in Patinjare kara village to be added on to Naduvila village in Vaikom taluk.
- (10) Vaikaprayar kara and Erumboozhi kara in Patinjare kara village to be added on to Vadamke muri village,eliminatingPatinjare kara village.
- (11) Anakulam and K,D,H villages and Natchivayel and Marayoor villages in Devicolam taluk.
- (12) Kummanam to be clubbed with Thiruvarpuvil area in Kottayam taluk. (Less *kayal* areas)
- (13) Aiymanam and Kudamaloor villages in Kottayam taluk.
- (14) Perumbaikad to be clubbed with Parambuzha, Nattassery and Mallusseri karas of Aiymanam village.
- (15) Chennamkari village in Changanacherry taluk and Pulinkunnam B, Village in the Ambalapuzha taluk.

Village and Taluk Administration

Apart from the splitting up or clubbing together of villages there is necessity to make some small adjustments between adjacent villages on grounds of public and administrative convenience. Some of the villages lie on the borders of taluks and give the latter a bad shape example Kulathummel in Nedumangad taluk. Others are in

remote corners of the old taluks away from their headquarters, but have identity of interests with the neighboring taluks of Manakunnam village in Vaikon Taluk . The public and the revenue Officers are greatly inconvenienced.^{xiii} The *Kayal* areas in the Kottayam Taluk which have physical features and interested identical with Kuttanad have to be transferred to that taluk. These and other small adjustments have been proposed by the Collectors. The Committee has considered the proposals and makes the following recommendations in the matter:^{xiv}

- (1) Kulathunnel village in Nedumangad taluk to be transferred to Neyyattinkara Taluk.
- (2) Nemom and Thiruvallan villages of Neyyattinkara taluk to be transferred to Trivandrum Taluk.
- (3) Manakunnam in Vaikam Taluk to be transferred to Kannayannoor Taluk.
- (4) Pulikalloor or Pulikattukara in Kallooppa village, Thiruvella taluk, to be transferred to Manimale village in Changanacherry taluk.
- (5) The two enclaves of Ezhumattoor village in Kallooppa village to be transferred to the letter village after the enfranchisement of the Kallooppa *Edavagai*.
- (6) The *kayal* areas of Nattakam, Kumarakam and Thiruvappu in the Kottayam taluk (14.23 Sq.Miles) to be transferred to the new Kuttanad taluk.
- (7) The small island called Pezhumthuruthu (29.81 acres), which formed part of Perinad village, Quilon Taluk, to be transferred to Munro Island village of the same taluk, for the convenience of the people and the Village officers.
- (8) Melukara muri of Cherukole village, which forms part of Kozhenchery Panchayat, to be included in Illepuzhasseri village, for rectification of boundaries.
- (9) Ullannoor kara in Puthencavu village to be tagged on to Vadakkekara village agreeably to public demand.
- (10) Puthencavu kara from Puthencavu village to be tagged on to Vadakkekara village agreeably to public demand.^{xv}
- (11) Kandankary and Pullangadykaras of Thakashi village and a portion of Attuvathala kara east of Nedumudy river in Nedumudy village and a portion of Ponga kara east of Moonnattuukhom in Kainakary village to be added on to Champakulan.
- (12) 20 Sq.Miles of Neelamperur village to go to Vazha pally west with 23 sq.Miles to Kurichi village, as recommended by the District Collector of Kottayam
- (13) 19 sq.Miles of Yuzhupattit Veliyanad village to go to Vazhapalli West and 17 Sq. Miles to Changanacherry village.
- (14) 29 Sq. Milee of Vazhapalli West village to be added on to Veliyanad village as proposed by the Collector, Kottayam.
- (15) 52 sq.Milee of Muttar village to go to Changanacherry taluk (Changanacherry village).
- (16) 08 sq.Miles of Madapalli village to be joined to Changanacherry village so as to conform to return boundaries, without dislocating survey
- (17) Perunthuruthu kara in Vechoor village to be added on to Thalayashan Measurements
- (18) Mararikulom North from Shertallet taluk to acted on to Embalapuzha taluk.
- (19) Kuttanangan A from Moovattupuha taluk to be added on to Devikulamtaluk

- (20) Edavilangu, Poyyo, Pallipuri and Madathumpadi of Mukundapuram taluk to be annexed to Cranganur taluk.
- (21) Puthenchirs of Parur taluk to be added on to Mukundapuram taluk
- (22) Mundnbankare of Vadakkekara village, Parur taluk to be transferred to Cochin Taluk.
- (23) Edapalli North and Edapally South of Parur taluk to be added on to Kanayannoor taluk
- (24) Vaduvu code of C.K. Taluk to be transferred to Kunnathunad taluk.
- (25) Chennamangalan or C.K. Taluk to be transferred to Parur Taluk.
- (26) Thrikkakara of Kunnathunad taluk to be tagged on to Kanayannoor taluk.
- (27) Puthupally B village to be tagged on to Kottayam taluk.
- (28) Chennamkari to be added on to Pulikunnu village.
- (29) Njarakkalkars in Kunnathunad village to be added on to Kizhakkambalam village.
- (30) Nannoorkadkarr, Mylapra, Kambazhn kara and Eundemonkars to be added on to Pathanamthitta village.

Proposals regarding *Edavagai* villages

With the taking over of the *Edavagais* with effect from the 1st January 1956 the Committee suggests that they may be included in the taluk as shown below^{xvi}

1 Rathayeconnammel to Chirayinkil, 2. kilimanoor in to Kilimanoor taluk. 3. Thrikkunnapuzha to be tagged on to. Kartigapalli taluk. 4. Edapally North, to be tagged on to mix. 5. Edapally South, Kanayannur taluk. 6. Kallooppa to be tagged on to Thiruvella taluk. 7. Vazhakulen to be tagged on to Kunnathunad taluk. 8. Cheruvalli to be tagged on to 9. Chirakkadavu to be Kanjirapalli taluk. 10. Peruvanthanam to be tagged on to Peermade taluk. 11 Poonjar Vadakkekara to Meenachil 12 Poonjar Nadubhagom to taluk 13 Poonjar Thekkekare to be taseed on to Meenachil taluk.

FORMATION OF NEW TALUKS

Even at time of the revenue settlement of 1886 Government were of the view that it would never be possible to reduce the number of taluk. A revision of taluk boundaries was alone contemplated. But this reform does not appear to have been carried out in the spirit in which it was announced. However, since the Settlement, three taluk viz., Peernade, Devicolam and Pathanamthitta were newly formed. In 1922 the number of taluks was reduced by four, on the ground that the work of the Revenue Department has been lightened consequent on the separation of the Devaswoma from the general revenues of the State.^{xvii} The rapid increase in population, the opening of large areas from the Forest reserves for purposes of cultivation, the hunger for more land, or land for habitation, the incumbent popular demand for more taluks, on the ground of accessibility and convenience and the peculiar geographical features of particular localities - all these point to the need for carving out more taluks than the necessity to revise their boundaries.

The pressure and has assumed serious proportions. Unauthorized occupation of Government lands is on the increase.^{xviii} The revenue Officers are unable to cope with the work of land conservancy owing to the vastness of the areas in their charge. There is need for tapping the potential wealth of some of the puduval villages and attending to the needs of large scale cultivation. The Committee has received several representations

from the public for the formation of as many as 25 Taluks viz., Alwaye, Angamali, Aranhula, Aiyroor, Chalakudi, Chengannur, Colachel, Eraniel, Erumeli, Eerattupettah, Ettumanoor, kanjirapalli Kayencolam, kuravilangad, koni, koothattukulam, Kothamangalam, kozhencherry, Kuitanad, kundara, Ponkunom, Poonjar, Piravam, Ranni and Vamanapuram taluks. The Committee has considered the case of each taluk on its merits. They would make the following recommendations for the formation of 7 Taluks. The important taluks were

(1) KUTTANAD TALUK.

The agitation for a Kuttanad taluk is rather old. Kuttanad, comprising primarily of portions of Ambalapuzha and Changanacherry and the kayal areas in those taluks and the kayal reclamation areas lying contiguous to the Kottayam taluk, is a compact block with peculiar geographical features. It is completely water-logged. Means of communication in the area are inadequate. Canoes and boats constitute the chief method of transport. Pumping out of water from the inundated fields and the putting up of *Olay* bunds at big cost are the special. Features of the *punja* cultivation carried on in this area.^{xix} There are vast stretches of paddy lands interspersed with coconut cultivation and a net work of rivers and canals passing through. About 1, 21,630 acres are under paddy cultivation. The area is subject to monsoon floods and total influx during the crop season. Government have already embarked upon big 19 developmental schemes in this area costing about hundred lakhs of rupees. The Thottappally spill-way scheme for flood discharge by the shortest route to the sea has been completed.^{xx} The construction of a barrier across the Vembanad Lake to prevent tidal inflow of saltiest water into Kuttanad is under consideration. There is a *Punja* Special officer in charge of the cultivation facilities accorded to the area.^{xxi} Kuttanad has already a National Extension Service Block; and a strenuous programme of developmental activities has been launched in the interests of the people of the locality. With the completion of the Changanacherry-Alleppey Road Kuttanad is bound to attain rapid progress in economic and social development.

There have been persistent demands for a separate Kuttanad taluk.^{xxii} The Collectors of Quilon and Kottayam are agreed that the formation of Kuttanad taluk would facilitate revenue administration, and the progressive development of the taluk, besides serving a long-felt local need. It would also give relief to the Changanacherry taluk which is, at present, rather unwieldy. The Committee has discussed details with the District Collectors of Quilon and Kottayam.^{xxiii} It recommends the formation of a Kuttanad taluk with five villages taken out of Changanacherry taluk and seven from Ambalapuzha taluk. The new taluk would also contain the backwater reclamation areas of Nattakan, Kumerakam and Thiruvappu villages in the Kottayam taluk. The Committee suggests the location of the Headquarters of the new taluk at a place east of Onnankaravalevu by the side of the newly constructed Alleppey - Changanacherry road. The Committee also suggests that the Tahsilder of the new Taluk will perform the duties and functions assigned to the *Punja* Special Officer. The villages that will comprise the Kuttanad taluk are:

1. Ramankari from Changanacherry taluk. 2. Mutter 3. Veliyanad 4. Chennamkari 5. Neelamperur 6. Thalavadi 7. Koshimukku 8. Thakazhi 9. Nedumudy from Ambalapuzha taluk. 10. Champakulam 11. Pulinkunnu A 12. Pulincunnu B 13. Kainakari.^{xxiv}

The features of taluk would have an area of 102.94 Sq.Miles and the *kayal* reclamation areas of 116.67 Sq.Miles in all, a population of 1, 33,038 and a basic tax demand of Rs. 90,736.

2. CHENGANNUR TALUK.

Till 1922, when the Devaswoms were separated from the general revenues of the State, Chengannur was a separate taluk with 15 villages and an extent of 208.50 Sq.Miles. This taluk, along with three others, was abolished as per G.o. No.1039/22/Judl., dated 21-5-1922. The dissolution brought about distribution of its Jurisdiction between Thiruvella and Pathanamthitta taluk.^{xxv} Several representations have been received from the public for revival of this old taluk. The Thiruvalla taluk into which portion of the Chengannur was merged at present, 26 villages, an area of 181.16 Sq.Miles, about 4 lakhs of population, 13, 1344 thandaper numbers and a basic tax demand of Rs.1,64,436.^{xxvi} It has become very unwieldy. With the transfer of the *Edavagai* village of Kallooppare, 34.36 Sq.Miles in extent, which belonged to the Edapally Chief and which stands in need of development, the congestion in the Thiruvella taluk is bound to increase. Chengannur, the headquarters of the old Chengannur taluk, is also the sub divisional headquarters having several important offices and institutions. A sub Treasury and a Police Station which are the necessary adjuncts of a Taluk office exist at the place.^{xxvii} The only additional expenditure required will be for payment of the staff of the Taluk office and for accommodation.^{xxviii} These could be found at a small cost. It is also desirable that some relief is given to Thiruvella and at the same time satisfy a long-standing public demand to revive an old taluk. The Committee therefore suggests the formation of a Chengannur taluk with the following villages:^{xxix}

1. Aranmula. 2. Thiruvamwandoor. 3. Pandanad 4. Chengannur 5. Puliyoor 6. Cherianad 7. Ala 8. Vadakkekara (Puthencavu kara) 9. Puthencavu (Puthenoavu kara) 10. Venmony. 11. Pandalam Vadakkekara A & B. 12. Mannar 13. Kurattisseri. The new taluk will have an area of 77.6 Sq. Miles, a population of 1, 77,579 and a basic tax demand of Rs.72, 515. The Headquarters of the taluk will be at Chengannur, as in the past.

3. ERANIEL TALUK

This taluk too, like Chengannur, was in existence till 1922. There has been strong public demand for its revival all the representing the area and several members of the public have urged its re-formation.^{xxx} It would be a coastal taluk having, within its jurisdiction, Colachel the ancient sea port town. The development schemes of the future may in all probability, favour the expansion of the Port. Further, it is very necessary for the Kalkulam Tahsildar to concentrate his attention on *puduvai* work in the hilly areas of that taluk as the same is developing rapidly. The revival of this ancient taluk would give relief to the Kalkulam Tahsildar and also satisfy public demand. The Committee recommends its reconstitution with the following villages.^{xxxi}

1. Neendakara B. 2. Aloor. 3. Eraniel. 4. Thalakulam. 5. Kadiapattanam. 6. Manavalalcurichi. 7. Colachel A. 8. Colachel B. 9. Thiruvancode. 10. Keezhmidalam. 11. Midalam. 12. Killiyoor and 13. Keezhkulam. The new Eraniel taluk may, as before have its headquarters at Eraniel.^{xxxii} The taluk area is 81.92 Sq.Miles and Population of 204447 and the basic tax demand Rs 67,133.

4. KANJIRAPALLY TALUK.

In Kanjirapalli we have a vast area, rich in pepper and other cultivation and offering immense possibilities for development. Even now the Kanjirapalli North and South villages comprise an area of 106 Sq.Miles and bring in tax revenue of Rs.51, 378. Cheruvallai, Chirakadavu and Poonjar South villages which are undeveloped areas have been transferred to Government from the *Edavagai* Chiefs. A taluk with Manimals, Kanjirapally North and South villages and the *Edavagal* villages of Cheruvalli and Chirakadavu would be a good and feasible administrative unit.^{xxxiii} There is need to reduce the side and consequently the work in the Changanacherry taluk in which Kanjirapally is a village. There is good demand from the public too for the constitution of this taluk.

Conclusion

Travancore located the southernmost tip of India. The Geographical position helped the kingdom to keep a distinct identity. The division of village and taluk is a difficult problem to the merging stage of Travancore with Cochin. But the spirit of unification helped the country solve the problem easily. Later the division emerged as a crucial problem for the formation of Kerala state. The appointment of commissions to demarcate the geographical area of district and taluk was accepted by the people. Though some problems occurred in the border areas it rectified it through conversations and discussion. Thus the Southern state Kerala is formed by adding and mixing of taluks and villages.

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