

**HIS5B07 KERALA SOCIETY AND CULTURE: ANCIENT  
AND MEDIEVAL**


**MODULE - 3**


**TOPIC - FORMATION OF NADUS AND SWAROOPAMS**


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# FORMATION OF NADUS AND SWARUPAMS


- Centralised administration of Perumals came to an end in 12<sup>th</sup> C
- Political fragmentation – emergence of several swaroopams & Naduvazhis
- Kerala never become a unified political zone- till the formation of modern Kerala state
- Nadus & Naduvazhis – existed in Perumal period- but they became autonomous territories- post- Perumal period


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- Age of Swaroopams & Naduvazhis – longer period- brought fundamental changes in socio-economic & cultural realms of Kerala
  - Nadus- early stages of development, by the locality where their joint family originally situated- original location of joint family known as 'Swaroopam'
  - Locality where the swarupam existed was normally under its autonomous control
  - Numerous swarupams emerged throughout Kerala

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- Some of them later developed into Nadus
  - Example- Zamorin of Calicut- earlier known as 'Nediyirippu swarupam'
  - Perumpadappu swaroopam- Kochi
  - Kolathiri- Chirakkal
  - Porlathiri- Kadathanadu
  - Tarur- Palakkad
  - Arangodu, Trippapur, Puranattukara etc


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- Swaroopams – joint families- followed matrilineal system
  - Kuruvazhcha existed- Muthakur/ seniormost person become ruler
  - Others Ilamkur / junior members-senior most person among Ilamkur become the next ruler, when existing ruler deceased
  - Among Ilamkur there existed gradation- had their own rights & privileges in power structure of swarupams
  - According to this gradation ruling families divided into kovilakams- kizhake kovilakam, Pdinjare Kovilakam etc


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- Some swarupams developed into Nadus – vast areas of territories
  - Nadu- comprised of several Ur's/ villages
  - Naduvazhi- ruler of Nadu- authority to protect & punish the people
  - Naduvazhi- authority of power with the support of army, the resources & the traditional elites
  - Don't know about the exact period of the emergence of Naduvazhis in Kerala


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- Come in to being when they had managed to get the support of armed groups & acquire the power to control the sources of the Nadus at their choice, corresponding with the decline of centralized power
  - First inscriptional evidence- Tarisappalli copper plates, -mrefer to Ayyan Adikal Tiruvatikal, regional ruler of Venad
  - Mushakavamsa Kavya- existence of Naduvazhis even before Tarisappalli copper plates
  - Nadus developed in correspondence with spread of agriculture


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- Existed 11 Nadus in Perumal period-  
Kolathunadu, Puraikizhanadu, Valluvanadu,  
Kurumbranadu, Ramavalanadu, Eranadu,  
Nedumpurayurnadu, Venpolinadu,  
Nanruzhainadu, Venad
  - Naduvazhis – supervision of Cherikkal land-  
Perumal period
  - Also had their own landed property
  - Yearly revenue due to state was collected by  
Naduvazhis , on behalf of King



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- With disintegration of Perumal kingdom , Naduvazhis declared themselves as independent & in the course of time they strengthened their power
  - New Nadus also came up with the expansion of agriculture
  - Nadus were ruled over by Swarupams- ruling families which came up from joint families
  - In course of time all the powers of the Nadus were centralized in the Swarupams
  - Earlier Swarupams- Venad,, Perumpadappu, Nediyrippu, Porlathiri etc

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- Kolathunadu, Perumpadappu, Eralnadu & Valluvand – more important Swarupams
  - These Swarupams transformed into Kolathunadu, Kozhikode, Kochi & Venad
  - Later days Nadus came up from remains of the Chera country
  - Each Naduvazhi connects his ancestry with legendary partition of Kerala by last Perumal
  - Venad rulers- claimed their Kingdom was founded by the son of the Chera King Rama Kulasekhara

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- Rulers of Kochi- they were close relatives of Perumals
  - Zamorins- blessed by last Chera ruler to conquer & establish their Kingdom
  - Kolathiri- did not claim the ancestry of Cheras but accepted the administrative system of the Cheras as he found that it is the best model available for a better administrator
  - Small Nadus also existed
  - Political & economic power of both Brahmins & Naduvazhis expanded- maintained social supremacy also

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- Each Naduvazhi acquired power with the help & recognition of Brahmins
  - K.V.Krishna Ayyar- Zamorins had promised to protect cows & Brahmins at the time of their coronation ceremony- Zamorins of Calicut
  - Promise given as a pledge at the time of coronation itself explicitly shows the control of the brahmins over the local rulers
  - No concrete boundaries to separate one Nadu from the other
  - Continuous conflict b/w Naduvazhis, often changed the border