

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

**MODULE-2**

**TOPIC-BRAHMIN MIGRATION TO KERALA**

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**DEPT OF HISTORY**

**LITTLE FLOWER COLLEGE**

**GURUVAYOOR**

- K.P Padmanaba Menon- 3<sup>rd</sup> c BC
- William Logan-8<sup>th</sup> C AD
- But inscriptional evidences donot accept both these dates
- Brahmins were brought to Kerala by Mayuravarman, the Kadamba king of 4<sup>th</sup> cAD- ruler of north Karnataka
- Brahmins were brought to Kerala from Ahichatra –UP/ Karnataka

- Gramapadathi –Tulu literature-testifies brahmins had come to Kerala from Ahichitra in Karnataka i.e. Aihole
- Logan –it was Chandrangada, son of Mayuravarman, who had brought a group of brahmins to Tulu, Konkan & Kerala – inscriptional evidences
- Available inscriptional & literary evidences help one to formulate a reasonable assumption regarding Brahmin migration

- Kerala, when it was a part of ancient Tamizhakam had isolated settlements only
- Dense forest b/w high ranges & sea occupied the remaining areas
- In course of time several groups of migrants arrived Kerala – cleared forest & started agriculture & set up settlements
- Assumption is that Brahmins reached Kerala in small groups- in different intervals

- Had better iron equipments- clear forest & start cultivation
- Spread of agriculture led to settlements
- Brahmins-spreading to Tamizhakam from south-eastern side of Tamilnadu-with the encouragement of Pallava rulers b/b 4<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> C
- Migration was checked by western ghats- but reached Kerala through passes

- Ancient script of Kerala & Tamil Nadu is same Vattezhuthu
- Mainly migrated from southern side of Karnataka
- Arya- Brahmins groups migrated to Chalukya-Kadamba region of Karnataka from Deccan b/w 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> C AD & some of these group migrated to northern Kerala after 6<sup>th</sup> C
- These migration might have helped by Pallavas & Chalukyas

- Alupa dynasty of South Canara, vassal of Chalukyas had left some inscriptional evidences which help us to prove the brahmin migration to north Kerala
- Migration from Tamil Nadu also-but majority from south Canara-settlement pattern prove this
- 32 settlements from northern to southern-ancestry of namboothiri families relates to these settlements

- Traditional sources-not 32 but 64 settlements b/w Gokarnam & Kanyakumari- 32 in Tulu & 32 in Kerala
- 31 settlements identified
- Established in more fertile areas as their life depended on agriculture
- along settlements they started constructing temples- in course of time social life of Kerala was centered around temples



■ 32 settlements:

1. Payyanur
2. Perumchellur
3. Alathur
4. Karanthole
5. Chokiram
6. Panniyur
7. Karikad
8. Isanamangalam
9. Trissivaperur
10. Peruvanam
11. Chamunda
12. Irungadakuda
13. Avittaputhur
14. Pravur
15. Ayiranikulam
16. Muzhikulam
17. Kalavur
18. Atavur
19. Chengamanad
20. Ilibhyam
21. Uliyannur
22. Kazzhutanaadu
23. Ettumanur
24. Kumaranallur
25. Katamaruku
26. Aranmula
27. Tiruvalla
28. Kidangannur
29. Chengannur
30. Kaviyur
31. Venmani
32. Niramannu

- First 10 settlements b/w Perumpuzha & Karumpuzha
- Next 12 b/w Karumpuzha & Choorni
- Last 10 b/w Choorni & Kanyakumari
- All settlements except Kazhutanadu has been identified- with the help of temple inscriptions & literary sources
- Kazhutanadu- b/w Periyar & Kanyakumari
- Some argues that 32 has ritualistic importance & actual number should have been more
- Inscriptions of 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> c refer to so many settlements & so it is assumed that the number of earlier settlements might have been more

- Settlements started in b/w Bharathapuzha & Periyar – Periyar & Pampa
- Few settlements in northern Kerala
- Settlements in more fertile land fit for paddy cultivation
- Original settlement is associated with the spread of agriculture in Kerala- in course of time Brahmins become full time priests & a new class of agricultural workers emerged to work in the fields of Brahmins

- Local rulers extended support & help to the Brahmins-which help them to strengthen their position in society
- In course of time Brahmin settlements in Kerala were divided into 4 separate groups known as Kazhakam- Payyanur, Paravur, Panniyur, Chengannur
- Payyanur – settlements b/w river Chandragiri & Korapuzha

- Panniyur-b/w Korapuzha & Karuvannurpuzha
- Paravur- b/w Karuvannur & Kumaranellur
- Chengannur- b/w Kumaranllur & Kanyakumari
- Rise of temples invariably related to brahmin settlement
- With expansion of agriculture, Nambuthiri Brahmins gradually withdrew from agriculture & deputed other people in agricultural process

- Development of agricultural resulted in surplus production- Brahmins became landlords & lived on surplus
- Attained ritual & social supremacy in society
- Supported local rulers & provided legitimacy to state power & in turn guaranteed the patronage of the state
- It was in this background they began the construction of temples near their settlements - 6<sup>th</sup> c onwards-continuation of Pallava- Chalukya temple architectural style

- General continuation of south Indian architectural style
- Beginning temples existed as religious entity- later developed as a socio- economic entity rather than religious
- Instrument for the integration of emerging agrarian society
- Community centers of Kerala
- 9thc Brahmin trustees for the temples had attained considerable influence upon the state power of Perumals

- This is evident from the existence of Nalu Tali in the capital of Cheras- Meltali, Kizhtali, Nedyatali, Chingapuramtali.-4 chief Brahmin settlements in the capital- they were Muzhikulam, Airanikulam, Paravur, Irinjalakuda
- Managers of these 4 temples- Tali Adhikarikal-formed council of Perumal- helped in day –to-day administration