

Theological Studies on Saint Chavara 12

**KURIAKOSE ELIAS
CHAVARA
AND THE EDUCATIONAL
RENAISSANCE**

Dharmaram Publications

No. 557

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Soja Maria CMC

2023

Chavara Central Secretariat

Kochi 682030 Kerala, India

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Dharmaram Publications

Bangalore 560029 India

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***KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA AND THE
EDUCATIONAL RENAISSANCE***

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© 2023 Chavara Central Secretariat, Kochi

Cover design: Sebeesh Jacob Vettiyadan CMI

Printing: Viani Printings, Kochi

ISBN: 978-93-92996-47-4

Price: Rs 240.00 ; US 15\$

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Post Box 3105, Kochi 682 030 Kerala, India

Tel: +91 484 2881802/3

Email: info@chavaralibrary.com

Web: <http://www.chavaralibrary.in/>

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Dharmaram Publications

Dharmaram College, Bangalore 560029, India

Tel: +91-8041116137; 6111

Email: dpoffice3@gmail.com

Web: www.dharmarampublications.com

CONTENTS

Theological Studies on Saint Chavara	9
Acknowledgement	13
Forward	15
Message	21
Preface	23
Introduction	25
Chapter I	27
Educational Heritage of India	
Chapter II	35
Education: A Historical Overview	
Chapter III	65
Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara (1805-1871): Pioneer in Social and Educational Reformation of Kerala	
Chapter IV	79
Studies Related to St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara	
Chapter V	95
The Vision and Mission of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara on Education	

Chapter VI	119
St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education for All	
Chapter VII	131
St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education for the Marginalized	
Chapter VIII	145
St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions towards Education of Women	
Chapter IX	163
St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education through Media	
Chapter X	177
St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Family Life Education	
Chapter XI	195
St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Vocational Education	
Chapter XII	203
St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Value Education	

Chapter XIII	217
St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Spiritual Education	
Chapter XIV	231
The Effects and Implications of the Contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the Educational Field of Kerala Society	
Chapter XV	235
The Relevance of Educational Contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the Emerging Society	
Conclusion	241
Bibliography	243
Appendix	265

THEOLOGICAL STUDIES ON SAINT CHAVARA

Kuriakose Elias Chavara (1805-1871)—a Carmelite religious priest and professor of theology (*Malpan*), who pioneered consecrated life in the Syro-Malabar Church by founding the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI in collaboration with Thomas Palackal and Thomas Porukara, in 1831, the first indigenous religious congregation for men, and the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC in collaboration with Leopold Beccaro OCD in 1866)—is widely recognized for his pioneering efforts to reform the Catholic Church in Kerala and broader nineteenth-century society. His credible Christian witness, along with the leadership he offered to the St Thomas Christians, at a time when they were undergoing multiple jurisdictional crises, a spiritual and disciplined growth in the Kerala Church.

Canonised on 23 November 2014, Chavara's personal sanctity and Christian wisdom have been identified as unique. While secular society admires his contributions to uplifting those existing on the margins and who were socially ostracised through educational and social initiatives, the fundamental core of all his achievements is solidly established in his filial discipleship to Jesus Christ, whom he addressed '*ente nalla appa*' (my beloved father).

Chavara had a firm foundation in Christian faith, which is clearly visible throughout his life and is testified by those who knew him. He articulated his views and perspectives primarily based on his personal encounter with Jesus and only secondarily based on his readings and theological reflections. They are available to us through his extant writings, which are published in the four volumes of the *Complete Works of Kuriakose Elias Chavara*. Some of these works, recognized as

efforts hitherto unprecedented in Indian literature, offer us a goldmine of rich and sound theological insights. Although his access to scientific Christian literature was minimal (if not completely absent), his writings draw from the biblical as well as other Christian traditions, which he had faithfully and creatively interpreted for the enhancement of the faith of the Christian community that he had catered to throughout his life.

Theological Studies on Saint Chavara, a joint effort of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) and Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC), attempts to promote and publish the fruits of scientific investigation into the unique and varied theological insights of Chavara in the form of monographs. These theological investigations will be instrumental in appreciating and popularising the sound and solid theological contributions he made toward enhancing Catholic faith in the nineteenth century, which, in turn, indicate that he deserves titles such as 'Father of the Syro-Malabar Church' and 'Doctor of the Church.' As the publication of this series is undertaken with the blessings of the Synod of the Syro-Malabar Archiepiscopal Church, which has also benefitted from the eminent theological acumen, pastoral insights, and ecclesiastical leadership of Chavara, these studies will hopefully bring to light the multifarious theological heritage that he had bequeathed to the Church and the subsequent generations of faithful in India.

The present number in the *Theological Studies on Saint Chavara* titled, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara and the Educational Renaissance* by Soja Maria CMC unveils the educational vision of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara with clarity and depth. Soja Maria, an educationist and a teacher, delves deep into the educational vision and mission of Chavara and propounds how he contributed to the society at large for its development and

inaugurated the educational renaissance in Kerala in the 19th century. Education is extremely important in the life of every human person, for it greatly influences in the social progress of the age. As “care for learning means loving” (Wisdom 6:17), Church has the concern for the whole dimensions of human life and she takes special attention in the education of all, with remarkable consideration to the weakest.

Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara’s fidelity to the Church and responsibility for the present and future prompted him to dedicate himself to the noble ministry of education and of schools (*Pallikkoodam*), persevered generously in it imbuing the students, irrespective of cast, colour, gender, with the spirit of Christ, and excel in the pursuit of knowledge. He prepared the men and women to live their life in mature and responsible manner and to assume responsibilities in the Church and the society and fostered the indispensable dimension of evangelization and complete formation. The present volume highlights Saint Chavara as a perfect model to be imitated in the ministry of education, and suggests the means and methods to face the challenges, overcome the struggles and solve the problems in providing value based quality education in the present-day context. Soja Maria’s work has a special merit of presenting the Saint as a pioneer in social and educational reformation highlighting elaborately his educational vision, mission, and contributions for all people in different strata of the society. It also envisages the vision of building up a well-knit society by imparting integral education to the children and to transform the persons.

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General Editor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I deem it a great blessing to write a book on St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. Now at the time of its publication, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all who lead me to St. Chavara, who is a great guru and a model for me. I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to all those who have contributed to the realization of this book, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara and the Educational Renaissance*.

I am thankful to my parents, Mrs. Baby Mathew and Mr. P.A. Mathew and my brother Mr. Roy Mathew and his family for the boundless support and encouragement given to me throughout my life.

I came to know more about St. Chavara after joining the CMC congregation which is my second family. I am extremely grateful to all the superiors, authorities, community members and all my sisters who gave me the opportunity to learn and grow in the knowledge of this great saint.

I wholeheartedly thank Fr. Josey Thamarassery CMI, the Vicar General and Secretary for the department of evangelization and pastoral Ministry, and Fr. Naiju Jose Kalambukattu CMI, the General Editor of the Theological Studies on Saint Chavara (TSSC) for their encouragement, support and suggestions to ensure the quality of the project. A word of appreciation to Fr. Sebeesh Jacob Vettiyadan CMI for designing the cover page.

I remember with gratitude, all my teachers, especially Dr. P.J. Jacob, my colleagues of St. Joseph College of Teacher Education for Women Ernakulam, friends and well-wishers for the unwavering support, encouragement, throughout this journey. Thank you for being a source of strength and inspiration.

I dedicate this book to the countless educators, students, and individuals whose lives have been touched and transformed by the educational contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. May his legacy continue to illuminate the path of knowledge and enlightenment for generations to come.

Sr. Soja Maria CMC
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FOREWORD

“Just as without eyes, one cannot see the material things of the world, so also without knowledge it will be impossible for us to see or understand the reality of the world that is above and the Lord that dwells therein. As those who have no eyes are called ‘blind’, so to those who have no learning (knowledge) should be called ‘spiritually blind’ or having ‘blindness of wisdom.’” These words of St Kuriakose Elias Chavara, a 19th-century spiritual leader, social reformist and educationalist of Kerala Society who is venerated in the Catholic Church as a Saint for his heroic Christian life, as an educationist, as a social reformer, spiritual leader, and as a defender of the Church. His vision of education aimed at the holistic development of the individuals and the society, irrespective of caste, creed, and colour. Education, as St Chavara viewed, is the liberator from all such social evils prevalent in the society and therefore, he did all what he could to impart education to the people of all strata of life.

The philosophy about Education views it not as a preparation for life; education is life itself. There is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of experience and education, and thus, education must be based on the actual life experiences of individuals. The Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen once remarked that education is a basic capability that enhances the freedom of a person to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value (Sen, A: *Development as Freedom*, 1999).

The Book *Kuriakose Elias Chavara and The Educational Renaissance* by Rev Sr Soja Maria CMC elaborately presents the Educational Contributions this great sage has made to the Society in Kerala irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Her research and investigation of the theme spread out over fifteen relatively small chapters interconnected and intertwined capable of expressing the mind of the author. Through her

descriptive approach the author could bring out the rich contents of the contributions of St Chavara for the education. The system of Education existed in India from the ancient time onwards was admirable but had many pitfalls as it was centred around the religious texts of that time and consisted mainly of memorizing or rote learning, gave little room for critical thinking or creativity. Moreover, it was primarily accessible only to the upper castes and elite groups in the society and there was clear discrimination against the lower caste people and women who faced denial of the right to education.

Therefore, education led to the creation of an elite upper class, depriving the powerless lower class who were marginalized and discriminated in the society. In this context, the social reformers of Kerala attempted to reform the society through education. They recognized the importance and pivotal role education can play in bringing social changes in the society. Social reformers like *Chattampi Swamikal*, *Sree Narayana Guru*, *Ayyankali*, *Mannathu Padmanabhan* and so on, were actively involved in campaigning against the social evils that existed in the society in Kerala. Along with the founding of different organizations to fight for legal reforms and to eradicate these practices, they promoted education for all, including the women of the society. The author, having analyzed the social situation of the time in the initial chapters, sets a background to present in detail the contributions of St Kuriakose Elias Chavara, who was the forerunner of all these reformers. In the final chapters, the author attempts to make an evaluation of the contribution of St Chavara on “education for all” in the society. Based on the survey analysis, the author tries to prove St Chavara’s educational vision, that laid the foundation for quality education and made him a pioneer in social reform in Kerala society.

Therefore, the effort of the author in this book is to introduce St Chavara as the one who envisioned making education accessible to people of every stratum of society, especially for the underprivileged and marginalized in the society. He was convinced of the fact that education liberates the intellect, unlocks the imagination, and is fundamental for self-respect. It is the key to prosperity and opens a world of opportunities, making it possible for everyone to contribute to a progressive, and healthy society. Learning benefits every human being and should be available to all. Therefore, the two indigenous congregations both for men and women, a pioneering step St Chavara and the co-founders made, continued the legacy of St Chavara in promoting education for holistic development, and aiming to empower the students, especially girl children through education. The founding of the religious congregation for women in 1866 along with Fr Leopold OCD at Koonammavu paved the way for women empowerment. Moreover, a boarding for girls at Koonammavu which was started by this Congregation catered to the education of girls including vocational training. Similarly, his starting a Sanskrit School and a press at Mannanam in 1846 was a major step towards accessing education for all, irrespective of caste and creed, and also to giving vocational training for the people of that time.

K C Chacko in his book, *'Lead Kindly Light-A Voyage into the saintly life and vision of Kuriakose Elias Chavara'* stated that a good number of educational and philanthropic institutions are adjuncts to houses of the religious and convents. They are scattered about the length and breadth of the country (Chacko 6). This in fact, expresses the educational vision of St Chavara. He wanted the integral education and consequent uplift of the society at spiritual, social and educational levels. He was an educated man according to the then-prevailing standards. Though he had only an elementary school education

traditionally, he obtained a good theological education and spiritual formation under one of the most reputed Malpans of his times. His vision was undoubtedly unique because it emerged from knowledge and wisdom. The education St Chavara obtained and his conviction regarding the significance of education enabled him to make one's life useful and thus he had an ardent desire to acquire knowledge and to learn new languages even in the advanced ages. St Kuriakose tried to gain his full quota of knowledge and learnt quite a good deal of Malayalam, Tamil and Sanskrit. The great difficulties he encountered in learning Latin and incidentally Portuguese, express his desire and love for other languages. Syriac, the language for liturgy was also his special field of study. Moreover, he gained some proficiency in Italian towards the end of his life. Thus, we find a versatile linguist in St Kuriakose Elias Chavara and who valued learning till the last moment of his life.

Being a truly educated person, St Chavara made an effort to emphasize the value of education in empowering individuals. Empowerment in the true sense comes when there is a rearrangement of power relations in such a way that an individual can control the decisions that affect life. He envisaged that through education a person belonging to a lower socio-economic stratum can act and make decisions for himself or herself despite resistance from others. Education enables a person to make informed choices and helps in better decision-making. An educated person is also empowered to question the status quo and conventional patterns of behaviour and practices which is key to social transformation. St Chavara is presented by the author in this book as the one who made education accessible to various sections of society and one who was guided by the thought of empowering them for a transformed society. St Chavara had a clear vision; namely,

education can ameliorate society by enlightening the minds of people and leading them to the light of knowledge so that the darkness of social evils such as, untouchability and segregation based on the caste system are cleared. He started schools in Sanskrit and Malayalam in Kerala for the free education of children irrespective of their caste, religion, gender or financial status. In the background of colonialism, an initiative of a Christian priest to start a Sanskrit school (in 1846) for the people of the lower caste and others was a challenge and was a true symbol of his reformative mind.

Therefore, this book is a sincere effort to present the vision of Education of St Chavara who truly dreamt of reforming the society and church in Kerala which he believed happens only through education. This book gives a rich and vivid picture of the contributions he has made in the field of education and the impact it has on the life of the society. This book does not confine itself to presenting a chronological analysis of the contributions St Chavara made in the field of education; rather, it describes the significance and the initiatives St Chavara to disseminate the conviction that education transforms society. The author has, therefore, succeeded in presenting St Chavara as a true educationalist, who propagated the Christian perspective that education is the right of every individual, and the proper means to uphold his or her dignity as a human person. Therefore, the book *Kuriakose Elias Chavara and The Educational Renaissance* by Sr Soja Maria CMC is a unique contribution to the field of education, truly presenting the Christian perspective of education and its transformative power. Moreover, it can be a source material for motivating and inspiring all educators of our time.

I do congratulate the Author for such an extensive and significant work focusing primarily on the educational contributions of St Chavara in view of bringing about a

transformation in the life of the society and wish that the book be of great inspiration and enlightenment for all those who read it.

Fr Josey Thamarassery CMI
Vicar General

MESSAGE

In the realm of education, there are a select few individuals whose names resonate through the corridors of time, leaving an indelible mark on the world. Among these luminaries, the name of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara shines with a brilliance that transcends the boundaries of geography and faith. Born in a small village in Kerala, India, in the early 19th century, St. Chavara dedicated his life to the pursuit of knowledge and the betterment of society. His tireless efforts, visionary thinking, and unwavering commitment to education has left an enduring legacy that continues to shape the educational landscape, not only in India but across geographies.

“Kuriakose Elias Chavara and the Educational Renaissance” is a journey into the life and work of this extraordinary man, a journey that explores the profound impact he had on education and his relentless pursuit of social progress through knowledge. Within these pages, we will delve into the life story of St. Chavara, tracing his humble beginnings, the trials and tribulations he faced, and the transformative experiences that led him to become a beacon of enlightenment in an age of darkness.

St. Chavara’s contributions to education extend far beyond the walls of contemporary history of his time. His belief in the power of education to uplift individuals and societies led to the establishment of a network of schools and educational institutions. His emphasis on moral values, character development, and the holistic growth of students laid the foundation for a unique educational philosophy that remains relevant in the modern world.

But this book is not merely a historical account of St. Chavara’s life and achievements; it is a testament to the

enduring relevance of his ideas and principles in today's educational landscape. In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and shifting paradigms of learning, St. Chavara's emphasis on ethics, values, and the holistic development of the individual serves as a guiding light, reminding us of the timeless importance of education that nurtures the mind, body, and soul.

I congratulate Sr. Soja Maria CMC for writing a wonderful book on the educational contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. Let these words help the readers to follow the philosophy and values of St. Chavara and to find inspiration in his unwavering dedication to the betterment of humanity through education.

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PREFACE

The educational vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is explained in a deep and elaborative manner in this book. It brings out different dimensions of educational vision and mission of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara which inspires even after two centuries of its actualization. The meaning and relevance of Education for All, Education for the Marginalized, Education for Women, Value Education, Spiritual Education, Family Life Education, Education through Media and Vocational Education etc., are pondered in detail, according to the concept of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. The book also gives historical evidence for the educational contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. The relevance of educational contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is analyzed and that gives a firm basis for the continuation of his vision and mission in the educational field of present-day Kerala society.

The result of the research study put forward the means and ways to overcome the problems and issues of providing a quality education in our society. The model of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara inspires us to be responsible for contextualized, skill based and value focused education. Still in this 21st century, the importance of Education for All without any discrimination of caste, religion and gender is very much needed. The importance of having indigenous and local resources for education, extra support for weaker sections and concern for quality in education is also described in this book, which is highly essential and significant even today. Women folk are strengthened through education especially in Kerala, but still their education should help them to be self-sufficient and self-reliant. The model for women education proposed by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is constructive for this purpose. The present society is thirsting for spiritual animation. The spiritual

formation of the generation and the society is portrayed by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara through education is well described in the following pages which could be meaningful and practicable even today. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was a great visionary who lived in the past and inspires the present for the future. His words and deeds have deep historical and transformational value in the evolution of modern Kerala society. The detailed study of the personality and contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara kindles the hearts and promotes to live for other human beings and work hard for the betterment of the society around us at large. The heroic history of educational revolution conveyed by the great guru St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is detailed in this book entitled “Kuriakose Elias Chavara and The Educational Renaissance”

INTRODUCTION

“Education imparted from the heart can bring revolution in the society”

*- Maulana
Abdul kalam Azad*

Revolutionizing society through education is a powerful concept that has been embraced by many social reformers and educators throughout history. The term “educational revolution” refers to a significant and transformative change in the way education is delivered, accessed, and experienced. This revolution, typically involves adopting innovative approaches, methodologies, and technologies to improve the overall quality of education and makes it more accessible to a broader population. Educational revolution aims to address the challenges and limitations of traditional education systems and creates new opportunities for learners and educators.

Education plays a crucial role in shaping individuals, communities, and ultimately, the entire society. Education empowers individuals by providing them with knowledge, critical thinking skills, and the ability to make informed decisions. Empowered individuals are more likely to challenge the status quo, stand up for their rights, and actively participate in the betterment of society. Access to quality education can bridge the gap between different groups of society. By providing equal opportunities for education to all members of society, regardless of their background, we can reduce disparities and promote a more inclusive society. Real education fosters empathy, tolerance, and understanding among individuals from diverse backgrounds. When people are exposed to different cultures, perspectives, and beliefs through education, it helps break down stereotypes and promotes social

harmony. A society that encourages and supports education is more likely to produce inventors, thinkers, and problem-solvers who can address the challenges in our existing world. Education can be a powerful tool to address social issues such as poverty, crime, and health problems. It equips individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to tackle these issues at their roots.

To bring about a revolution in society through education, it is essential to focus on making education accessible, inclusive, and of high quality. Here comes St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, a significant figure in the educational and social reform movements in 19th-century Kerala, India. He played a crucial role in bringing about an educational revolution that had a lasting impact on the region. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara recognized the importance of education for all, regardless of caste or creed. St. Chavara's educational initiatives were part of a broader social reform movements aimed at eradicating social evils like caste discrimination, untouchability, and other regressive practices. His efforts to promote education played a pivotal role in shaping a more inclusive and progressive society in Kerala.

Today, St. Chavara Kuriakose Elias is revered as a saint and a visionary educationist in Kerala. His contributions to the educational revolution have had a lasting impact, and the institutions he established continue to provide quality education to thousands of students, contributing to the development of the region and humankind.

CHAPTER I

EDUCATIONAL HERITAGE OF INDIA

Education is the most important and powerful instrument invented by humankind to shape and mould a person in a desirable manner. Any modification brought about in the behaviour of an individual, as a result of the interactions with the environment constitutes learning. The history of the world proves that education has been the root cause for many changes which took place in the social, cultural, spiritual, political and economic aspects of human life (Samuel, 2015). It is education which not only transforms humans into rational beings, but also prepares and develops the person to survive and adjust with the surroundings, so as to lead a successful personal and social life. Therefore, education is anything which an individual acquires through formal or non-formal organizations in the form of certifications or training by which the personality is developed to undertake any sort of task and adjust with varying environments in order to fulfill the basic necessities and objectives of life. It is discerned from this statement that education becomes one of the basic necessities of human life, like food, clothing and shelter. Today life is education and education are life (Chandra, 2004).

EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

Education in ancient India was mostly dominated by religious considerations. Ancient Indian civilization was impacted by the Aryan culture. Though it was spiritually oriented it was not devoid of social and individual aspects. Learning was considered as a means of salvation or self-realization, *Mukti* or emancipation was the highest end of life. There was no organized system of education in the beginning. Learned people used to take up the profession of teaching. Students

used to go in search of suitable teachers and join them till the end of their education. Prominent Vedic centers of learning existed in Taxila, Banaras and other centers. There was no state control over education although the kings and the rich helped the centers of learning through their benevolent donations.

Brahminical/Vedic Education

Vedic education was the system of education in ancient India. This system believed in mental discipline of its own kind. It involved control of mind in contrast to the training of mind as conceived by the westerners. The supreme methods were those of Yoga and penance. There were four ideas of life in ancient India called *Chathurvidha Purusharthas* - *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksha*. Education was focused on the achievement of the above ideals. The ultimate goal of life was attainment of *mukthi*. Education also aimed at training people to lead the four phases of life, namely *Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha* and *Sanyasa*. Children were trained in the vocations and trades of the family by the parents or other elders of the family. Education aimed at the development of physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual selves. In Vedic education the four *Vedas, Upanishadas*, military skills, trades and vocational pursuits were included in the content. The method of learning included imitation, recitation, memorization etc. The method of teaching included model reading and elucidation. The chief methods for learning were *sravana, manana* and *nidhidhyasana*. The gurus were themselves of the highest mental discipline. He was the man of self-experience, self-control and self-realization with kindness and compassion. The shishyas had to submit themselves to their teachers, whom they had chosen for themselves as the gurus.

Buddhist Education

Buddhism rose as a protest against the Hindus' rituals which were dominated with animal rituals. Non-violence was the chief tenet of Buddhism. Education was very prosperous during the Buddhist period. The following were some of the famous centers of Buddhist learning: Vallabhai (7th century), Vikramashila (8th century), Saranath (7th to 12th centuries), Nandhikonda (3rd century) and Nalanda (5th and 6th centuries). Buddhist universities offered two types of education: monastic education and general education. The ideals and aims of Buddhist education included development of personality, formation of character, infusion of piety and religiousness, preservation and transmission of essential culture, pursuit of freedom from the earthly desires and improvement of spirituality. The teacher-pupil relationships were dependent on mutual reverence, confidence and affection. Strict discipline was imposed for monks. Teachers were also of high character and models for students. The caste system did not influence the Buddhist educational centers and education was meant for all. The belief was that the actual merit of a person was not needed by birth or by family status but by real merit.

Education and Jainism

Jainism is as old as Buddhism. Jain tradition was preceded by 23 *thirthankaras*, who attained *nirvana*. Mahavira is the last *thirthankara* who is considered as the contemporary with Buddha. Jain means a 'conquer' leader of schools of thought. Jainism aimed in practice at the goal of liberation from the transmigration of the soul. Jainism does not support the existence of God, the ultimate power. Right philosophy, right knowledge and right conduct are needed for attaining total liberation called Nirvana which makes the individual total free from all bondages of life. Nonviolence and openness to truth

are the important virtues of Jainism. The instructions of Jainism include social dimensions as well as wellbeing of entire humanity. Jainism emphasizes in transmigration of souls. According to the teachings of Jainism the souls are tangled up with *karma* and it should get freedom from all such captivities. The purpose of life is to become a totally liberated person that is the perfection of the soul.

Education during the Moghul Period

Islamic education in India may be said to have commenced during 6th and 7th centuries. There were elementary schools as private institutions and high schools run in the mosques and also at the residence of tutors. Muslim system of education had a theological basis. The philosophy of Islamic education had its roots in Quran. The religious aim of education was to produce an individual, who was God-fearing, truthful and disciplined, and who cares for social welfare and social well-being. The teachings included ethics, a science of conduct, politics, a science of governing and economics, a science of budgeting and spending. The educational system trained the persons as the polished, matured, cultural individuals. The educational institutions of the time were elementary schools known as *Maktabs* and high schools known as *Madrassahs*. The *Maktabs* were located for a long time in mosques and out houses of mosques. The medium of instruction was Persian, Arabic and Urdu. The learning consists of Quran, agriculture, religious duties, prayers, stories of prophets, themes of good models etc. There was co-education in the schools. They were established to teach elements of knowledge, reading and writing. There was no duration for studentship. *Madrassahs* were meant for teaching higher knowledge. They were residential in nature and accommodation was only for boys. They continued the education given in elementary schools and taught theology too. Education was free for all, though it was not compulsory.

Financial source of education was the funds given by the Kings, collection of taxes, Zakat, private rich individual contributions and properties of the *jagirdhars* without children. There was neither State control nor State interference in educational affairs. Islamic education was primarily concerned with Muslims. There was no mass education. Later it was extended to Hindus too and it was sacred and democratic in nature.

Education in the Pre-British Period

Before the advent of British into the educational scene of India, there exists a fairly note-worthy system of indigenity in the country. The indigenous educational institutions were of two types, the elementary schools and schools for higher learning. They existed independent of each other. Those who aspired higher education did not usually attend the elementary school education but were educated at home only either by the parents or by private tutors.

During the regime of East India Company some surveys were carried out in certain parts of the country which casts light into the indigenous educational system. According to Adam's report there existed about 1, 00,000 schools in Bengal and Bihar. Schools for girls were non-existent. Children in the age group of 5-14 who attending the schools were roughly about 7%. It was also admitted that domestic or private instruction also existed at that time. However, the true nature of domestic instruction was not appreciated by the reporters. But domestic instruction was an important aspect of the educational system of those days. Generally rich families could afford such instructions because of involvement of their dignity. According to Adam about 1,500 families were giving domestic instruction in Rajasthani district alone. The Indian villages at that time were self- sufficient and most of the villages had their own schools. The old village system contributed a great deal towards

maintenance of primary schools alive in the country. Every village had its own teacher. The village priest also had to work as teachers in many villages where there were no separate teachers. Due to non-availability of books and printed matter, the requirements of literacy were very much limited. The schools of higher learning consist of *Pathasalas* of Hindus and *Madrassahs* for Muslims. Elementary schools also existed as two types: Persian schools and Vernacular schools. Due to the indifference of East India Company and its policies they disappeared in the end of 19th century.

EDUCATION AS THE TOOL FOR RENAISSANCE

Renaissance literally means rebirth and contemporaries, beginning in the early fourteenth century, constantly referred to a rebirth of culture. Since the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries most historians and scholars had agreed that this era marked a decisive watershed in the transition from medieval to modern world. The first signs of renaissance emerged in the late medieval Italy (Black, 2006). The enlightenment in the eighteenth-century renaissance is considered as the first step towards a modern, rational and secular developed world. Nineteenth century historians built on the heritage of enlightened historiography, often regarding the renaissance as the source of modern individualism, secularism and democratic egalitarianism (Najemy, 2001). Both champions and denigrators of the renaissance, from the beginning of the 19th to mid twentieth century, agreed that the renaissance touched diverse aspects of the society, including politics, religion, economy, diplomacy, social behaviour, art, cultural heritage, educational system, literature and thought. Thus, Renaissance contributed a new and distinct period in the history of the culture (Burckhardt, 1992). Education with the liberal attitude and modern concepts of development opened new doors for renaissance and people accepted the changes wholeheartedly.

Almost all the leaders of renaissance are educationalists and promoted education directly or indirectly. The cultural shift brought out a new understanding about life and in that, education became an essential need of the civilized human.

International Commission (Delors Commission) on Education for 21st Century in its report "Learning: A Treasure Within" UNESCO has identified various tensions and crisis of the modern society and suggested four pillars to be constructed for strengthening the education system. These pillars are: Learning to know, Learning to do, Learning to live together, and Learning to be. These pillars have to be strengthened by improving the quality of education in the present century. We are living in a dynamic and fast changing world. Every person has to be educated to adjust themselves with the tempo of the present-day civilized life of the society. Each person should be enabled to know their individual rights and duties, privileges and responsibilities, so that one can profit by the societal contributions on one hand and benefit the society by individual's unique abilities of productivity and creativity. For accomplishing this, the impression of education on modern man is profound and great (Murthy, 1976). For this it is useful to study about the educational contributions of great leaders of the time.

St. Chavara was a trendsetter, a man who made a difference in his time by taking bold and creative initiatives. An analysis of educational initiatives of St. Chavara brings to the fore that his focus was on the education of the common people with special attention to the weaker sections of the society (Narayan, 2015). He is considered the pioneer of social reformers of Kerala. Educational revolution in Kerala society is one of his major contributions for this country. He took courageous initiation for giving opportunities for education for the common people by fighting with a caste and religion-based system of social

culture. Education was an activity close to his heart. He lived nearly 150 years ago, but still he is greatly remembered as a prominent educationalist and social reformer of Kerala. He realized the ways and means to link India's past with her future destiny. He turned the spirit of ancient India in contemporary world with his activities and services. The revolutionary steps which had taken by St. Chavara had opened new horizons for the uplift of society towards modernization. But the contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara were not recognized by the Kerala society. There are no in-depth studies on his contributions. This book tries to bring out the importance and relevance of the contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the great educationalist. Though the path was opened, the new challenges came up in the field of education in various forms. Existence of generalized illiteracy, disaster in elementary education, poor conditions of schools, prevailing inequalities, differentiation between government and aided schools and socio-cultural changes are some of the challenges and problems of common education in Kerala. Hence, the content of these pages aims at analyzing the educational contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and its relevance in the emerging society.

CHAPTER II

EDUCATION: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

An understanding of the educational status of the country and the society of Kerala during 19th century is very essential to comprehend the contributions of St. Chavara. Therefore, this chapter includes the historical background, brief descriptions on the contributions of greater educationalists of the country and of the state of Kerala. The life sketch of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is also included in this chapter.

EDUCATION IN INDIA: 19th CENTURY

Education was one area of public life in which British officials worked during the time of their ruling in India. Schools had become a standard feature of mission work throughout the country. Plans for development of the indigenous school were prepared by many administrators like Adam, Munro, Elphinstone and others but they were neglected and the system was subjected to a slow death. The indigenous educational system of India had contributed to the monitorial system to England (Tirthankar, 2006). The indigenous system of education should have been the foundation of the modern educational structure. But these schools never received encouragement from the government. In the early nineteenth century, the western system of education gained ground in the country because many believed that education through English was the best, they were amazed by the western civilization and also due to the attraction of the government services. By the close of the nineteenth century, the indigenous system disappeared completely from the map of educational India and the new system of education imposed by the British gained firm grounds in the country (Murthy, 1976).

The year 1834, witnessed the forthcoming of many schools across the country with the basic curricula of western education. The Educational Despatch of 1854 from the East India Company's Board of Control created an educational system (Wood Despatch, 1854). It set up education departments under Directors of Public Instruction (DPI) in each of the provinces, envisioned a network of graded schools from universities down to primary schools and established a programme of government grants-in-aid to encourage private initiative in education. In 1860, Amritsar, Delhi and Lahore were the three cities which had both government and missionary schools in India. Throughout this period no other private bodies maintained aided schools, except for a brief duration in Lahore and Ludhiana. Thus, the aided or private education in fact meant for mission in education. The missionaries made an enormous investment in education. During 1879-80, the education department instituted a system of standardized class gradation with an external examination at the end of each stage (Syed and Naik, 1997).

The milestones in the British-Indian educational history are given below:

Official Efforts

During this period of 1813-1854, the East India Company was compelled to accept the responsibility of educating Indians. As the company was engaged in the establishment of its power, education was neglected. Education departments did not exist during this period and educational problems, were dealt by the military and civil officers. Prominent men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswara Chandra Vidhya Sagar, Jagannath Sanker etc. played a prominent role in building up the new system of education. The official efforts of this time include organizing a state system of education, appointment of a General Committee

of Public Instruction in Bengal, reorganization of Calcutta Madrassah and Banaras Sanskrit Colleges, establishment of Oriental colleges at Agra and Delhi, publication of Sanskrit and Arabic books on a large scale, and employment of Oriental scholars to translate useful books from English into the Oriental languages. In Madras, there was no encouragement to the indigenous schools. The district and *thahsildaree* schools were established by Minto. The famous Minute of Macaulay of March 7, 1835, had the main objective that the British Government of India should promote European literature and science among the people of India. They were discontinued from 1836. An English college at Madras and provincial schools at some important places were established. In 1841 a high school called "the University" was established and 1853 a collegiate department was organized in it (John, 2006).

Non-Official Efforts

The missionary educational enterprise is an important non-official effort in the educational history of India. Christians put enormous efforts in the field of education and they built numerous elementary, secondary and collegiate institutions all over the land. These missionary schools were the pioneers of the modern system of primary education in India. For decades, the education and uplift of the lower caste were in the hands of the Christians who took initiative in this area. The system of boarding schools was first started by the Jesuits in the country. The Christian missionaries had pioneered in teacher training, vocational education, industrial and agricultural training schools. The Scottish Mission had begun its operation in South Konkan in 1822, and they motivated the government to open free schools for children of all classes from that area. The attitude of Christian missionaries influenced the social leaders of the time and they too started to promote education for all. The education for women is one of the utmost significant

contributions of Christian missionaries because of its long lasting and far-reaching consequences on national life (Webster, 2007). The 19th century witnessed that the missionaries made an enormous investment in education. Every mission had at least one school. Their major purpose remained evangelistic and most of their students were Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs. Throughout this period the schools retained their own distinctive ethos, but they had to bring their own individual practices into conformity with the requirements of the education departments. Richter has described the quarter century, 1830-1857, as the 'age of the mission school'. During this period the missionary schools exercised a dominating influence over Indian thought. The missionary activities in education varied from province to province and were most remarkable in areas like Madras where the Company's initiatives in the field were negligible. By 1853 the missionary activity in education was almost equal to official enterprises which had 1,474 institutions with 67,569 pupils (Mayhew, 1926). However, there were opposing factors about English education because most of the parents were afraid of that English education would Anglicize them and make them lose faith in the religious beliefs and practices of their forefathers. They were also afraid of the spread of western ideas through vernaculars. Therefore, few Indians who wanted to set up schools for imparting new education for the children of the country were apprehensive with this approach. The Hindu School model came up with religious neutrality and kept the emphasis on studying English literature. Hindu school model become convenient for Indians because a policy of secular education involved, no administrative problems and a subordination of scientific studies made the functioning of the institutions less costly and difficult (Datta, 1975).

The age of Dalhousie (1848-1854) is the most significant one in the history of education in modern India. The foundation of

modern system of education was actually laid during the administration of Dalhousie as the Governor General of India. The Wood Despatch of 1854 became a milestone in the educational history of the country (Ghosh, 1971). By the end of 19th century, the established schools and colleges became the centers of education and government, religious communities and private sectors had enthusiastically involved in the process of education.

IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES OF EDUCATIONAL RENAISSANCE IN INDIA: 19th CENTURY

Education which is dynamic as well as a comprehensive concept has a very wide connotation. The concept of education is like a diamond, which appears to be of different colors when seen from different angles. Various people – a philosopher, sociologist, biologist, politician, priest, professor, teacher, educator, economist and others seem to have their own concept and meaning for education according to their own outlook and experiences. The term ‘education’ has been widely discussed and interpreted by different thinkers, philosophers, and educationists with reference to its aims, functions and implications. Hence, the divergent opinions and views expressed by the educational thinkers in different ages with reference to their philosophies, become the needs and tempo of the social order (Bhatnagar and Saxena, 2004).

Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833)

The biography of Ram Mohan Roy is subtitled ‘The Father of Modern India’. Roy was unquestionably the first person on the subcontinent to engage seriously with the challenges proposed by modernity to traditional social structures and ways of being. He was also one of the first Indian whose thought and practice were not circumscribed by the constraints of kin,

caste and religion. On the other hand, he sought to reform his native faith. In 1816 Roy opened a school for boys where the medium of instruction was English. In December 1823, he made an urgent plea for the introduction of modern education in India. In this, he asked for more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy with other useful sciences. In 1821 he started a weekly newspaper in Bengali- *Sangbad Kaumudi* (Moon of Intelligence) one of the first weekly newspapers in any Indian language. Then he started a paper in Persian of which with its Bengali predecessor, he wrote all the contents. In 1828 he founded the *Brahmo Samaj* (the society of God) which preached the worship of One God based on what its founder claimed were the original teachings of the Vedas. The practice of Sati was legally abolished in 1829, and the credit was gone to the great Hindu Philosopher Ram Mohan Roy. Roy's great contribution towards this reform was to demonstrate that sati was not a religious duty sanctioned or upheld by Hindu scriptural tradition. In 1818 Ram Mohan Roy wrote a pamphlet in his native language - Bengali, opposing the practice of asking Hindu widows to immolate themselves on their husbands' funeral pyre. In the same year he published an English version entitled 'A conference between an Advocate for and an opponent of the practice of Burning Widows Alive'. By his social activities and initiatives Ram Mohan Roy set a tone for the reformers and activists who were to follow (Ramachandra, 2010).

Sayed Ahmad Khan (1817-1897)

Sayed Ahmad Khan is a social reformer who used his writings for the uplift of Indian society. He promoted education for his Muslim brethren and in 1864 he started a Scientific Society for Muslims, whose members should study modern works of history, science and political economy in English and in

translation. Two years later the society started a journal and largely written by Khan himself. In 1870 he started to collect fund for raising a college for modern education and it was realized in the year 1875 as Mohammedan Anglo- Oriental College (Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) in Aligarh. Syed Ahmed Khan was a person who modernized the Muslim society by providing the environment of Western education.

Jotirao Phule (1827-1890)

Jotirao Phule was born in 1827, and belonged to the Malis caste who had traditionally cultivated fruits and vegetables. As a young man, he visited and was powerfully impressed by a school for girls run by American Missionaries and in his twenties, he started a school for girls of low castes. He also opened several other schools which admitted children from the untouchable caste of Mangs and Mahars. In 1855 he wrote a play about inequities of the caste system. 1860s Phule's interest shifted from managing his schools to wider programmes of social reform such as widow remarriage. The money he made from his business of selling hardware to the factories and working as a contractor for road works and bridges were used for his social activities. His profile was enhanced by a series of powerful tracts that he published which spoke out against the stronghold of Brahmins over the social, economic, political and spiritual life of Western India. In 1873 Phule found the Sathyashodak Samaj, the society of truth seekers. The Samaj promoted 'no to alcoholism', education for women and low caste and marriages that would take place without the involvement of Brahmin Priests. Phule's status and achievements were recognized by his nomination to the Municipal council of Poona in 1876. The British believed Phule, had a historic mission 'to liberate the disabled Shudras from the slavery of the crafty Aryas'. He was a remarkable social activist as well as a gifted writer. By the time of his death in

1890, he had published polemics, plays, songs and ballads (Deshpande, 2002).

Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915)

Gokhale was born in 1866 in a village in coastal Maharashtra. He learnt his letters in a rural school and finished his schooling at Kolhapur. After completing his BA, he started to teach students. In 1885, he joined in Deccan Education Society for teaching. In 1889, he was appointed as the editor of the quarterly journal of the Poona Sarvajank Sabha and he joined the faculty of Fergusson College in Poona, where he worked for the next two decades teaching English literature, Mathematics and Political Economy. By this time, he became an active member of Indian National Congress (Nanda, 1997). In 1890 he spoke on the inequities of the salt tax and he testified to a Royal commission in London on poverty and famines in his home land. He was elected to the Bombay Legislative Council in 1899. Between 1902 - 1906 he served as the president of the Poona municipality. In 1905 Gokhale founded the Servants of India Society, whose members are dedicated themselves to serving the nation-in-making (Gokhale, 1998). The Servants of India were pledged to work for the advancement of all Indians regardless of caste and creed. His vision was the classical liberal dilemma- too moderate for the radicals, yet too extreme for the Establishment. He was considered as one of the most dangerous enemies of British rule in this country. He wanted this country to shake off social and economic backwardness as well as political subjection. He wanted to have an opportunity for building a secular, modern and democratic country (Govind, 2006).

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920)

Tilak was born in 1856, the son of a school teacher and a petty landowner. He completed his high school and graduated from

Deccan College with first class honours. Apart from his native Marathi, he was formidably fluent in Sanskrit and English. In 1880, he started teaching in a school. The following year he published two newspapers with his friend Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, one in English and other in Marathi. The polemical tone of their articles attracted much comment as well as several libel suits. They founded the Deccan Education Society in 1884. He was more conservative in his thoughts. Tilak's first major work was an attempt to establish the antiquity of the Rig Veda, to demonstrate that the Indians were civilized centuries ago. By the effort of Tilak, the festival of Ganapathy and Shivaji become more popular in western India. In 1897, Tilak was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment for preaching disaffection against Raj. After his release he travelled through south India, Ceylon and Burma. Tilak put forward the motto '*Swaraj* is my birthright and I shall have it'. Tilak was militant populist leader, who did a great deal to young Indians to join the national movement. For much of his career he insisted that political freedom must take precedence over all else, including or even social reform. He expressed this idea in his words: if there is no *Swarajya*, there is no use of labouring for the spread of female education, there is no use of trying to secure industrial development and social reform also can avail but little. Power is the primary necessity and where there is power there alone resides wisdom; wisdom never resides apart from power. Bal Gangadhar Thilak died in August in 1920 ((Dehpande, 2002).

Tarabhai Shinde (1830 - 1910)

Tarabai Shinde lived into the early years of the twentieth century. She is known principally through a tract she published in 1882 named *Stri Purusha Tulna* (A Comparison between Men and Women) comparing the situation of men and women in Maharashtra and India of her time. Social inequality of caste and the patriarchal attitude of men are questioned and

criticized in her easy. With no girls' schools in the area, Tarabai would have learnt her letters at home. She read and wrote in Marathi, but also knew English. What Tarabai Shinde called for, was altogether different and more radical for equality and parity between men and women. Shinde was an active social worker and was a founder member of *Satyashodak Samaj* organization. No one before her had so directly challenged the social arrangements and cultural prejudices which underpinned patriarchy and male domination. Tarabai was a brilliant stylist in Marathi, using sarcasm and satire to puncture the pretensions of the powerful. Her book is completely readable in English and much better in its original (Meera, 2007).

SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF KERALA: 19th CENTURY

The 19th and 20th centuries witnessed the emergence of progressive changes in all aspects of Kerala life. It had its impact on the political, social, economic and cultural life of the people. It was the time for change by which the old order started to disappear and a new order of the life started to grow. The beginning of the 19th century witnessed the establishment of British power in India. Malabar came directly under British rule and the rulers of the Travancore and Cochin accepted British supremacy. Kerala society till late 19th century was not based on the social freedom and equality. Its chief characteristics were the deep chasm which separated the high castes from the low castes. The Brahmins, Kshatryas and Nairs gradually started to lose their special rights and privileges. They constituted the land-owning class and they freely oppressed the tenant class (Kusuman, 1972). There were a series of taxes and cess, which imposed a heavy burden on the under privileged sections of the society. Untouchability and unapproachability and practice of pollution made their life

miserable. The Western system of education kindled the spirit of nationalism and the quest for independence.

The social environment of Kerala society has undergone a radical reformation during 19th century onwards. The abolition of slavery was one of the revolutionary steps taken in Malabar, Travancore and Cochin to establish a new social order. Similarly, the abolition of compulsory labour such as *Uzhiyam* and *Viruthi* also liberated the lower strata of the society from the harassment of their masters, temple authorities and government officers. Owing to the mounting pressure of Christian missionaries the *Channars* and *Ezhavas* has got freedom of dress. The upper cloth agitation of the *Channars* in south Travancore compelled the government of Travancore to issue the proclamation of 1859 which granted permission to the women of the lower castes to wear clothes to hide their body. The restrictions regarding the use of conveyances, ornaments and dress were gradually removed (Ramakrishnan, 1964).

Dalits of Kerala in 19th century

The Kerala society of and 19th century was darkened with all the practices and customs of caste system. The society was very orthodox and strict in its rituals which divided them on the basis of castes. The people belong to Brahmin were considered as the highest caste. Ezhava, Araya, Pulaya, Paraya, Ulladan and Nayadi etc. considered as low caste and they were leading a life of slavery and untouchability. Even the very sight of an *Avaranna* person could destroy the limpidness of a *Savarnna* Hindu. Therefore, they were not allowed to walk or travel through the public roads or not allowed to come for public functions. There exists a measurable distance which was determined by the high-class people for the low caste in order to keep them away. And it was explained by Willam Logan in

his Malabar Manual says about this distance as: for *Nayady* – 72 feet, *Pulaya* – 64 feet, *Kanishan* – 36 feet and *Mukkuva*– 26 feet. They used the word *theenduka* to denote the custom of keeping distance with low caste and *thoduka* to imply the contact with these people. If somebody from *Savarnna* caste touched the *Avaranna*, they have to go through some procedures and should have bath to regain their cleanliness. All the benefits and luxuries of the society were enjoyed by the *Savarnnas* while the *Avarnnas* suffered slavery and abject poverty. The low caste were not even allowed to fetch water from public wells and ponds. For example, an *Avaranna* cannot enter into a pond, if a *Svaranna* takes bath in that pond, even if it is a public pond. Further, low caste were not allowed to use the public boat service. There were special signals for the presence of *Avarnnas* to keep the *theendal* distance. If the *Namboothiries* are travelling through the roads, the Nairs make a noise ‘HO’ and run in front of them. By hearing this sound, the low caste should go away. They are deprived of the basic human rights such as walking through public roads, adoring in the temples, entering to the common places, schools, postal servicing centers and shelters etc. The cruelty of this customs even denied the right of covering their body with clothes. The low caste were not allowed to cover their upper part of the body. Even the women should not cover their breasts in front of the high-caste. There were severe punishments given to the low caste if they did anything against the rules set by the upper caste. The punishments for criminal offences were also based on which caste the person belonged to. K.P. Padmanabha Menon elucidates this very clearly: there was no punishment for Brahmins even they had done a murder, imprisonment, payment and making out from the caste were the punishments for them. That was also given rarely. Chopping the head, dipping the hand in boiled water or ghee, putting hands in the pot in which the poisoned snake was kept etc. were the punishments given to the low caste to prove their innocence.

They were considered only as slaves of the higher-caste and there were no human rights given for them. Even the food they consumed was influenced by the caste system. The Savarnna eat the '*pakka*' food which is cooked in ghee and then the Avarnna had only the '*Kacha*' food. The houses, utensils, wells used by the low caste were caused the untouchability for the upper caste. There were different special preparations of food items for the different castes. There existed slavery system in Kerala society. The famous traveler Bookkanaan talks about slavery in Kerala. He visited the place in 1800. According to him, the one fifth of the population in Palakkadu and Wayandu were slaves. They were commonly known as *Cherumar* which includes the *Parayar*, *Kanikkar* and *Irular*. The wage was given for them in the form of measured grains. 200- 300 *Panam* was fixed as the cost for a young slave in the market. There was importing system of slaves at first which later changed to export them from Malabar. Kochi also was a place for slavery. In *Thiruvithamcore* the children were brought and sold for the purpose of daily work and slavery. Wisner, a priest writes in 1725 that, a *Pulaya* could sell the children and grandchildren for the money. The first born of a *Pulaya*, becomes the right of his owner Janmi, even if the child is a boy or a girl. The Britisher promulgated a law that made Slavery a punishable offence in the year 1862. But its remnants continued to exist in the form of untouchability and disrespect towards the low caste.

The caste system divided the society of Kerala into different sections. The Brahmins and Kshatriyas who were less in population controlled the other sections of the society by the rules of caste system. The food, dressing pattern, right for using public places, entry for adoration in the temples, wage for the work, choice and selection of works, ownership of land and houses etc., were controlled by the system of caste. By the end of 19th century there were changes upstretched in the socio-

cultural background of the Kerala society. It was mainly due to the awakening spirit of renaissance brought out by the great leaders of Kerala society.

Women in Kerala: 19th century

The history of women education in India before 200 B.C. was quite satisfactory. Women were eligible for the study of sacred scriptures and the performance of sacrifices. There were women scholars who remained unmarried for a long time devoting themselves to higher studies. Several ladies in Buddhist families used to lead a life of celibacy in pursuit of religion and philosophy. In the higher sections of the society the sacred initiation (*Upanayana*) of girls was common and they used to go through a regular course of education. Some attained distinction in the realm of theology and philosophy and a considerable number of women used to follow the teaching career. When it comes to the period of 1200 AD the female education received a great set back due to the deterioration of the religious status of women and the lowering of the marriage age. Percentage of literacy among women went down very rapidly during the Muslim rule in India. Society as a whole became prejudiced against female education. When it comes to 19th century touched by the missionaries and philanthropic Englishmen, several great Indians lent their support to the opening of girl's schools and breaking down the traditional popular resistance against women education. Among them Ram Mohan Roy and Pandit Ishwara Chandra Vidyasagar played an important role. By 1850, the stage was set for a change in the State policy and the state started to promote the education of female children. With the Despatch of 1854, the State promised financial assistance and even direct action regarding the women education. Unfortunately, the disturbance of 1857 followed by the declaration of the policy of social and religious neutrality slowed down the official effort.

There were several primary schools and girl schools came up during the period of 1870 to 1882. By 1882, there were 2, 600 primary schools, 81 secondary schools, 15 training institutions and one college for the education of women and girls in India. The first decades of 20th century witnessed the drastic progress in women education compared to the previous century.

A look into the socio-religious and educational background of women in Kerala in the 19th century would be appropriate to understand the importance of St. Chavara's interventions. In Kerala, the position of women was not low as it was found in some other parts of India. Here, women had enjoyed a high social status in *Sangam age*. In this period, women enjoyed complete freedom of movement as well as the right to education. In subsequent period the society was transformed and the status of women took a down turn. In the course of time, due to Brahmin domination, the *sambandha* system, child marriage, ban of widow marriage and the denial of education to women were thrust upon the society, pushing women to a lower status. Life in Kerala society until the late 19th century was not based on the principles of social freedom and equality. Its chief characteristic feature was a deep chasm which separated the people who belonged to the high castes enjoyed all the privileges and a high social status. In this period, untouchability, unapproachability and unsociability were at their peak. Several of European travelers and Christian missionaries who visited Kerala during the time of 16th to 19th century described the condition of women as instruments for the happiness of men. The level of education literacy among women was very deplorable. The condition of women of backward communities and outcastes was miserable and nobody showed any interest in their education. The caste system, *janmi* system, *sambandham*, *devadasi* system, *marumakkathayam* etc. were some important social institutions of that time which affected the life of women. The women of

19th century in Kerala had to pay breast tax to be allowed to cover their bosom. Termed as one of the worst taxes ever existed in the world, breast tax, *mulakkaram* in Malayalam was imposed on the lower caste women of Kerala by the erstwhile Travancore kingdom in the beginning of the 19th century. Women, especially of the lower caste suffered abuses and violence at the hands of the mighty. They were treated as mere sexual objects and denied education. Having no role in the family or social affairs, they contributed little towards societal growth. Even worse were the inhuman social customs that enslaved women, such as *pulappedi*, *sati* and *smarthavicharam*. *Smarthavicharam*, the trail of Brahmin women charged with infidelity and adultery did not try to punish the men involved while the women were excommunicated or ostracized. *Pulappedi* was another brutal custom which allowed men of lower caste to defile upper class Nair women who were found alone outside their house or were left unprotected at home, by touching them. Once defiled she could only either run away from home, let herself adopted by the defiler or become a beggar. Otherwise, she was liable to be killed by her own people or sold off. The pathetic and tragic conditions of women troubled St. Chavara, because he considered them equal to men. The life of St. Chavara is a witness to the freedom struggle of women in the form of *Kallumalasangamam* (strike for getting the right to wear ornaments) and strike for stopping the breast tax. The social awakening among women were started to appear for their existence and worth to live their life. By understanding this conditions St. Chavara turn his attention towards the uplift of the women in the society. He acknowledges women as the ever-flaming lamp of the family.

EDUCATIONAL HERITAGE OF KERALA

The history of education in Kerala goes back to very ancient days. There was a high level of literacy during the *Sangam* Age.

The *Sangam* works make clear that all people irrespective of sectarian and sex considerations were entitled to get the benefits of full education. Such communities as the *Kuravas*, the *Parayyas*, the *Panas*, the *Vetas* and others were superior to Brahmins of the day in their cultural and intellectual accomplishments. Even female education was not neglected. Thus, education was popular and universal in ancient Kerala. The progress of Aryanisation and the increasing hold of caste system brought about the decline in the standard of education and literacy (Sundharalingam, 1974). Women as well as the low castes were deprived of the right of education. Then the ideal of universal education got discarded under the impact of the caste system and the education became the monopoly of the higher castes in the Hindu society.

During this era, the following educational systems existed in different parts of India like *Salas*, *Sabha Mutts*, *Gurukulam* and *Kalaries* etc.

· *Salas*

The age of Kulasekharas (800-1102) witnessed remarkable progress in the field of education and learning. The rules of the Kulasekhara Empire and the Kings made their contributions to education during the period. A number of Vedic schools and colleges sprang up in the different parts of the Kerala. These institutions called *Salas* were attached to temple and were residential in nature. The most important *Salas* were those of Kanthalur, Parthivapuram, Thiruvalla and Muzhukulam. Though the *Salas* were Vedic institutions for the study of Grammar, Theology, Philosophy, Law etc. Their scope was limited as the admission was restricted to Brahmin children only. The common people were not allowed to make use of them. Most of the *Salas* were converted to missionary academics during the Chera- Chola war of the nineteenth century.

· ***Sabha Mutts***

In north and central Kerala *Sabha Mutts* were the centers for education. It was intended for *Nambuthiri* youth and mainly focused on Vedic studies. They were residential schools where the students were lived and studied under the supervision of great scholars. Vedas, Sanskrit, and sciences were the subjects of the study. The teachers were learned *Nambuthiries* who resided in the Mutts and received no remuneration for their services except free boarding and lodging facilities. As the members of the other castes were not admitted in these institutions, higher education was monopolized by the Brahmins. The period of Chera-Chola war witnessed the decline of these institutions (Baskarannuni, 2012).

· ***Village Schools: Patasalas and Ezhuthupallis***

In addition to the *Sabha Mutts* for Brahmin students there were also other institutions like *Ezhuthupallis* for the non-Brahmin children. Each village had its *Patasala* or *Ezhuthupalli* under *Ezhuthachan* or *Asan* (Village School Master). The *Asan* initiated the children into the world of three R's at a very early age. After the formal initiation ceremony, the pupil was taught reading, writing, arithmetic, the *Kavyas*, Astronomy and Astrology (Baskarannuni, 2012). The lessons were written by pupils on palmyra leaf with an iron style. The oral method was the chief instructional method and *Asan* enforced strict discipline in his school. Parents used to pay fees for the education of their children. On festive occasions special present were given to the teacher. Backward classes were not admitted in the schools at that time.

· ***Kalaries***

The *Kalaries* also had a place of importance in the system of education prevailed in ancient Kerala. The *Kalari* was an

indigenous institution peculiar to Kerala and was a gymnasium where instruction in physical training and warfare was given. Each village had its *Kalari* where the young men underwent a rigorous course of training. It was customary for children who had their primary education in the village schools, to proceed to *Kalari*, for getting the training in the offensive and defensive system of warfare (Mundadan, 2008). *Kalari* was presided over by the *Paniker* or *Kurup* who gave instruction not only in the use of arms, but also in physical feats such as fencing, boxing and wrestling. It braced up the material spirit of the people. The *Kalari* functioned vigorously till as late as the 19th century when like the *Ezhuthupalli*, it declined in the wake of the disintegration caused by the British conquest. Later a system was formed for providing basic education through *Kalaries* by the village teachers called *Asan* and the duration of this course was five years. But most of the children would discontinue after one or two years of learning. The teaching included Malayalam alphabet, to read and write and some elementary lessons in Arithmetic. Capable children were taught Tamil and Sanskrit too.

· *Gurukulam*

In addition to the above-mentioned agencies of general, religious and physical education, there were also other facilities of specialization in higher branches of learning. Young men who were anxious to get instruction for higher education attached themselves to the individual scholars, physicians, astrologers, of distinction who had the kindness and generosity to help the aspirant of knowledge. It was really a system of *Gurukula* education. The students were learnt by the association with the Guru and in the light of his example from regular teaching or pedagogical discourse. But it was available only for very limited people.

The introduction of western education marks a great epoch in the history of education in Kerala. The credit for taking the first tangible step towards the introduction and diffusion of western education goes to the Christian missionaries. The Catholic missionaries who first landed in Kerala were more interested in the propagation of their faith. But the Protestant missionaries who followed them took keen interest in the spread of western education. The Portuguese and Dutch had contributed to the cause of education and learning in Kerala, in the 16th century the Jesuit missionaries had established a college at Quilon to promote study of Christian Theology and learning. In 1545, a Franciscan friar Father Vincent founded a college at Cranganore for the education of Syrian youth. But that also not lasted because the Syrian priests refused to send their youth to this institution. The Jesuits established a college at Vypinkotta in 1587. The Portuguese also founded some educational institutions in Cochin and Angamaly in the 17th century. Varappuzha became the seat of seminary founded by Carmelite missionaries. The Dutch who came after the Portuguese were not very interested in establishing of seminaries and colleges, but they continued the educational institutions which already existed there. The educational services done by Portuguese and Dutch were available only for a very few people of the society.

Educational leaders and social reformers of Kerala: 19th century

The nineteenth century was a remarkable age which brought the reformation of the society through great reformers. It was a worldwide movement resulted in the uplift and progress of the nations. This social and cultural awakening simultaneously happened also in India and it reflected in almost all walks of Indian life. An in-depth analysis of history reveals that it was indeed a need of the times and that had given a strong basis

for the modern India. The spirit of social reformation modified the Kerala society to a great extent and that was brought about by the great personalities in the history of that time. They analyzed and reflected on the situation in which they lived and tried to fight against the evils and problems of the time in their own unique way. Thus, a new path was formed towards renaissance and reformation of the Kerala society. The important reformers in the Kerala society from 19th century are discussed below:

Vaikunda Swamikal (1809- 1851)

Ayya Vaikunda Swamikal was born in Vilayil, Poovnadenthope, Kanyakumari district in the year 1809. He had special devotion towards Lord Vishnu and later he was considered by his devotees as the incarnation of Vishnu. He was from a Channar family and at that time they were compelled to do Uzhiyavela. He started to organize the low caste people and tried to enter in the temple. He preached and worked to demolish the evils of the society like untouchability, upper cloth agitation, temple entry etc. He started a movement to make wells for all the people to drink water irrespective of castes. As a protest against the meaningless practices of that time, he started *Panthibhojanam* - eating together, with the people of all castes. He raised the motto that everybody should get proper salary for their work. It was one of the crucial steps against the supremacy of higher caste. He promoted to live self-reliability and worked against the social injustice of the society. He founded the *Sathwa Samajam*, the first socio-cultural reform organization in India in the year 1836. He discouraged ideal worship and established the first *Kannadi Prathishtta* - Mirror for worshiping, in Kerala. He was imprisoned for some months in the year 1838, after released from there he came back to *Singarathoppu*, and continued his work against the

social divisions. The book *Ayya Vazhi* includes his spiritual thoughts and philosophies (Gopakumar, 2002).

Brahmanada Sivayogi (1852- 1929)

Karattu Govinda Menon, known as Brahmanda Sivayogi was born in 1852 at Kollamkodu, Palakkadu. He was in the world of thoughts and meditation from childhood onwards and he studied Sanskrit, English and science. Later he became a Sanskrit teacher in a village school at Kozhikodu. The spirit of social reformation affected Govinda Menon and he became an active member in the reforming activities of Malabar. He is the founder of *Anadamatham* and that was deeply rooted in meditation and learning experiences. He established his ashram namely *Sidhasram* in 1893 at Alathoor. The development of the society as well as the person was the aim of his activities.

Chattampi Swamikal (1854 - 1924)

Chattampi Swamikal was one of the Hindu reformists who worked hard for the spiritual and social uplift of the Nair community. His life and work in fact provided a strong foundation for the social and political struggle of Nairs. He was born in Kannammoola in Thiruvananthapuram district in 1854. His real name was Kunjan Pillai. As a child he was not able to attend school due to extreme poverty. He worked as a garland maker for a temple to earn his daily bread. At the age of 14 he learnt Malayalam alphabet from his father and a village master taught him Sanskrit. Another *Asan* Raman Pillai admitted him in his school and appointed him as the leader or *Chattampi*. Thus, he was called *Chattampi* then onwards. He also learned Tamil and Yoga. Chattampi Swamikal was a celebrated mystic and great scholar. He made a deep study of Hindu literature and won great reputation for his profound scholarship. He was popularly known as *Vidhyadhi Raja*- King

of knowledge. Most of his principles were based on his independent interpretation of the Vedas and Hindu Scripture. He sowed the seeds of social revolution at the time when Brahmins were dominated in the social, religious and economic life of Kerala. *Pracheena Malayalam, Vedaddikara Nirupanam, Advaita Chinta Paddhathi, Vedanta Saram* etc. are his famous works. He was against untouchability, sub caste barriers and against the observances of practices as *Talikettu Kalyanam, Tirandukuli* etc. He worked in close co-operation with Sri Narayana Guru in the common cause of Hindu social and religious regeneration. He condemned animal sacrifice in the temples. He attained Samadhi at Panmana in Kollam district. Chattampi Swami Memorial is situated at Panmana (Bhaskarapilla, 1960).

Sree Narayana Guru (1856 - 1928)

Sree Narayana Guru was a great saint and social reformer of Kerala. He was born at Chempazhanthy in Trivandrum district on 20 August 1856 (Vayalvarathu Veedu). He is known as the Father of Kerala Renaissance. His parents were Madanasan and Kuttியamma. He learned Malayalam and Sanskrit from his father and uncle. He also had advanced studies in Sanskrit. Then he travelled through the length and breadth of South India, practicing Yoga and meditation. At the age of 30 he became a Yogi. Social justice and brotherhood of man were the cardinal principles of his teachings. He questioned the Brahmin supremacy over the Hindu society and opposed the outdated customs and superstitions which stood in the way of social progress. Sree Narayana Guru conducted an uncompromising crusade against the caste system. He himself consecrated a number of temples for the worship of the Ezhavas and other lower castes. He ordained even the so-called low caste as priests and sanyasis. He also forbids animal sacrifices in the temples. As a zealous social reformer, he advocated inter

caste marriages between the various castes as the best means for evolving a casteless society. He advised to give up some of the meaningless customs followed by his people. He opposed child marriage and encouraged the remarriage of widows. He met Chattampi Swamikal at the Aniyur temple near Chempazhanthy. His famous Aruvippuram Consecration (Siva) was in the year 1888. S.N.D.P Yogam was founded in 1903 and Guru became the life time President and Kumaranasan as Secretary. The *Vavoothu yogam* started at Aruvippuram is considered as the predecessor of S.N.D.P. Yogam. Guru founded the Sarada temple at Varkala in 1915 and the Advaitasrama at Aluva on the banks of Periyar. He gave the message "One caste, One Religion, One God for Man" at a conference held at the Advaitasrama. *Atmopadesha Satakam, Nirvriti Panchakam, Darsanamala, Jatimeemamsa, Ardhanareeswara Sthothram* etc., are the major works of Guru. He prescribed education as the only remedy for all the ills of the depressed class. According to him education would pave the way for their social and economic advancement. He promoted Sanskrit education and worship in temples. He taught his followers self- help and self -respect. Dr. Palpu was responsible for the connection between Guru and Swami Vivekananda. The famous Sivagiri pilgrim festival conducted on December 30, 31 and January 1 was started by Guru. Tagore visited Guru in 1922. Gandhiji visited Guru at Sivagiri in 1925. His active efforts and exhortations resulted in the erection of temples, schools, mutts and dispensaries in the different parts of the country. Sree Narayana Guru died on 20th September 1928 at Sivagiri (Daniel, 1965).

Ayyankali (1865-1941)

Ayyankali was a great Harijan leader and social reformer of modern times. He worked hard for the uplift of the Harijans and to remove the system of untouchability in Travancore. He

gave great leadership to the movement started by the Pulayas and other depressed classes for their social advancement and educational progress. Ayyankali was born in 1865 at Venganoor in Trivandrum district. Though he never got a chance to have education, he was extremely conscious of the social and economic condition of the Pulayas and other depressed classes of Kerala. The evils of untouchability, unapproachability, caste system, social degradation, denial of education, compulsory labour and the bondage enforced upon his community by the higher castes wounded the feelings of Ayyakali. He dedicated his life for the emancipation of his people and their social and educational progress. He organized the Pulayas and led many revolts against their traditional masters. He used the bullocart and oxen for travelling through public roads which were prohibited for the low castes. In order to attain education for them he started a school at Venganoor in 1904. But the school did not last long. So, he tried to get admission for Pulayas in Government schools and that also was discouraged by the higher classes. As a result of all these efforts, in 1905, government established 20 schools exclusively for Harijan children. In 1907 he founded the *Sadhujana Paripalana Sangham*, which later became *Pulaya Mahasabha*. He was nominated to the Sreemoolam Prajasabha in 1910 and remained in office for 25 years. He died at the Age of 77 on 18 June 1941. Gandhiji visited Ayyankali in 1934 and called him 'Pulaya Raja'. The remarkable progress Harijans have achieved in recent decades in Kerala, is to a great extent due to the earnest and enthusiastic efforts of Ayyanakali (Chentharassery, 2005).

Vakkam Abdul Khadhir Maulavi (1873-1932)

One of the most remarkable Muslim reformers who awakened the members of his community with progressive ideas was Vakkam Abdul Khadhir Maulavi. He was born at Vakkam in

Chirayinkal near Trivandrum in 1873. Owing to his hard work he became a scholar in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, English, Sanskrit, Malayalam and Tamil. He worked hard for the social uplift and moral regeneration of his community. He exhorted the members of his community to give up all unislamic practices and take to western education. He wanted them to play an important part in all progressive social movements. He edited the periodicals like *Muslim* and *Deepika*. He was also the owner of *Swadeshabhimani* edited by K. Ramakrishnapillai. He also published Arabic-Malayalam monthly called *Al-Islam*. He also founded the *Travancore Muslim Majena Sabha* and *Chirayinkal Thaluk Muslim Sangam*. In recognition of his remarkable service for the social and educational progress of the Muslims, the Travancore government nominated him as the chairman of the Arabic Board (Ibrahimkunju, 1989).

Mannathu Padmanabhan (1878-1970)

Mannathu Padmanabhan was a proud son of Kerala. He was a great social reformer and founder of many educational institutions. He was born in Nair family at Perunna near Changanacherry on 2nd January 1878. After completing his school course, he worked as a teacher and then as pleader to earn his living. Caste-subdivisions, superstitions, expensive socio-religious practices, spirit of litigation, laziness, and social inequalities stood in the way of the progress of the society. In order to serve the community and to work for the social educational and economic advancement, Mannam resigned the pleader ship. The Nair Service Society founded (1914) by him strengthened and developed the spirit of unity among the members of the Nair society and assisted their educational and social progress. The NSS has branches called *Karayogams-village societies* spread all over Kerala. The eradication of sub caste system and the abolition of outdated practices like *Thalickettu Kalyanam*, *Thirantukuli* etc. were some of the social

changes took place in the Nair society. The mitigation of the evils of joint family system among Nairs, the elimination of the evils of untouchability and removal of disruptive tendencies were some of the other fields in which the society worked effectively. In order to promote communal harmony Mannam and his followers dropped the caste names after their real names. He also organized Hindu Mandalam to promote cooperation among Hindus. The NSS started network of schools and colleges in order to promote education irrespective of caste and religion. Dispensaries, technical institutions, agriculture and industrial departments etc. also were served the society for their uplift. He took part in the *Vaikom Sathygraha* and led the *Savarna Jatha* to Trivandrum. He gave leadership to the *Vimochana Samaram* of 1959. Mannathu Padmanabhan was a gifted orator, great organizer and eminent social reformer and founder of many educational institutions in Kerala.

Swadeshabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai (1878 -1916)

He was born at Neyyattinkara in Thiruvananthapuram. He was the editor of *Malayali* published from Kollam. In 1906 he became the editor of *Swadeshabhimani*. He was deported from Kerala for criticising the government in 1910. Karl Marx, Kerala Bhasholpathy, Benjamin Franklin, Mohandas Gandhi, Socrates, Dharmaraja Nirupanam are his famous works. *Ente Nadukadathal* is his autobiography. He died on 28 March 1916 at Kannur. His memorial is situated at Payyampalam in Kannur (Kunjanpillai, 1970).

Pandit Karuppan (1885 - 1938)

Pandit Karuppan was the great leader of fishermen of Kerala. Though he was born in low caste family of Dheevera, Aryan, he became a Sanskrit scholar, poet and dramatist. His famous work *Jathikummi* is the first Malayalam work which criticized

the caste system of the society. He was professionally a Sanskrit teacher and later he was nominated as a member of Cochin Legislative Council as a representative of marginalized people. He forced Government to have a separate department for the protection of the oppressed people and he started many schools and colonies for them. He wrote *Acharabhooshanam* in which he tried to abolish the superstitions practiced by his people as customs and traditions. *Balakalesam* and *Udyanavirunnu* are some of his famous works (Kenneth, 1994).

Vagbhatanada (1885- 1939)

Kunjikkannan who was born in 1885 in Patyam, Kannur, the north region of Kerala, became famous with the name *Vagbhatanada* later on. He was educated in gurukula system and had a great knowledge on Vedhanda and Sanskrit. He became the disciple of *Alathoor Brahmanada Sivayogi* and he gave the name *Vakbhadanada* because of his excellent oratorical ability. The Sanskrit educational center known as *Thathwaprakashika Asram* was founded by him and he started the magazine *Sivayogavilasam*. The organization *Athmavidhyasangam*, the newspapers *Athmavidhyakahalam* and *Abhinava Keralam* was started by him. All these initiatives speeded the social reformation of Kerala. He declared that the essence of all religion is the same and there is no meaning in violence between the religions. He had clear vision about economic progress of lower castes and he stood up for all the social injustice mainly caused by the subdivisions of caste system (Thomas, 1997).

Sahodaran Ayyappan (1889-1968)

K. Ayyappan was a well-known thinker, journalist and a social reformer of Kerala. He gave the revolutionary message - 'No Caste, No Religion, No God for Man'. He was born in Cherayi

near Cochin. He founded the *Vidhya Poshini Sabha*. In 1917, he started the movement for inter-dining and founded the *Sahodarasangham*. *Sahodaran* was a paper started by Sahodaran Ayyappan. He became the leader of socialist party in Cochi (Gopakuamar, 2002).

CHAPTER III

SAINT KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA (1805-1871): PIONEER IN SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL REFORMATION OF KERALA

Kuriakose Elias Chavara was a great idealistic visionary who predicted and initiated the development and growth of Kerala society in the 19th century. He is considered the pioneer of the social reformation and renaissance of Kerala society. Being a Christian priest and a *sanyasi*, he proclaimed the liberation of all and had a unique way of social activities which is based on his personal God experience. St. Chavara was instrumental in pioneering a number of initiative practices to empower the people and to set right the misconception of social structures and religious perception, is well known for his ground-breaking involvement in the educational ministry of the Catholic Church in India (Chakkalakkal, 2013).

St. Chavara lived during the middle of the 19th century, a crucial phase in Indian history, a crisis period. The liberation struggle in India took some concrete shape for the first time in the half of nineteenth century. The period also witnessed the emergence of societal reformation based on some movements such as *Brahmo Samaj* and *Arya Samaj*. The southern part of India was also witnessed the fruitful effect of renaissance and it was started with the great visionary St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in Kerala. He is the precursor of reformist movement in Kerala (Narayanan, 2015). During his time the education in Kerala was oriented towards the *Kalari* system and it was not accessible for all. At the beginning of 19th century, the Anglican and the German Basel Evangelical Missionaries started English education in Kerala. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara belongs to Syrian Catholic community and at that time they were educationally backward than other Christian communities. In

this background St. Chavara initiated to promote education among Syrian Christians. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was a frontiersman in many respects. His was a catalytic role in the spiritual and social milieu of the times in which he lived- a decadent 19th century Kerala, riven with caste hierarchies.

The important biographies of saint Chavara were written by

Fr. Kurikose Porukkara (successor of St. Chavara as Prior 1864-1871), Fr. Leopold Beccaro OCD (spiritual father of St. Chavara from 1864 to 1871), Fr. Philip Koyipallil (1929), Fr. Valerian (1938), K.C. Chako (1958) and Prof. M.K. Sanu (2000). All these books are taken as the main reference for this chapter. Printed biographies began to appear from 1936 onwards. Some other primary sources to understand the life and works of St Chavara are Chronicle of Mannanam Monastery Vol. III, of the years 1846-1891, Chronicle of Vazhakkulam (1859-1891) and Elthuruthu (1856 -1866) Monasteries, the diary of Parappuram Varkyachan, The Chronicle of Koonammavu Convent (1866-1871), Letters and Circulars and the Literature works of St. Chavara. Original manuscript of some of the above are available in the archives of CMI (Carmelites of Mary Immaculate) and CMC (Congregation of the Mother of Carmel) congregations and also in Mannanam Historical archives and research Centre. The printed biographies and its English translations are also available now.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara: Life at a Glance

The life sketch of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara with the year and the significant events are given below.

Birth and Childhood

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was born on 10th February 1805, as the youngest son of Kuriakose and Mariyam in Chavara family, in the village of Kainakari, Chennankari in the most scenic region of Kerala, Kuttanadu. The Chavara family is a scion of a large family transplanted to this area from elsewhere. The Chavara family could trace its ancestry to the celebrated line of Pakalomattam, in Palayoor one of the foremost Christian families of Kerala that received the faith from the apostle St. Thomas himself. Later, it is believed the members of Pakalomattam family, together with other three families, namely Sankuri, Kali, and Kalikav migrated via Angamaly and South Pallippuram to Ettumanoor near Kottayam and from there to Kuravilangadu. They are said to have settled in Kuravilangdu around 337 AD for the purpose of agriculture. It was a unit of Pakalomattam that was brought to Kainakary by the owners of that land strip, the Mukkatt Matt. That was happened around 1700 (Kurukur, 2000). In the course of time the Mukkatt family branched off into two units: Meenapilly and Kalaserry. The Meenapilly family gave rise to four other families: Mampra, Chavara, Kaliparambu and Vallonthra. Ultimately Chavara was derived from Pakalomattam of Kuravilanagdu. Today the house, where St. Kuraikose Elias was born, is a shrine established by the CMI congregation. St. Chavara himself writes about his family in his letter to his parishioners dated 13 February 1868: "In the order of flesh I am the son of Kuriakose Chavara of the parish of Chennankari" (CWC IV, 1982).

From his young days he showed great concern in perfecting his character and developing those virtues which marked him out for recognition in his later career. Most of this training was imparted to him by his own mother. She was a pious and deeply religious woman, who by her many acts of

devotion impressed her son the significance of such things. Even as she fed him, she recited to him various prayers which she made him committed to memory. Later in life he recalled memories of his mother getting up regularly at night to say rosary. Spurred on by her example, he developed a keen desire to devote himself completely to the service of God and to the humanity. Later in his poem he describes about his childhood:

*A mother to feed me while yet a feeble babe
To shield me from pain and sorrow and tend me soft
When the boy was able to grasp things the mother
taught him to lisp holy names and to pray
And when reason grew strong, my little mind
Patiently informed, to lips holy names...
As the boy grew in age, she taught him
the elements of the holy faith (Athmanuthapam I: 71)*

He gives a clear picture of his mother's training, and it is a perfect model of child-mother relationship, which has tremendous power in disciplining and integrated upbringing of child Kuriakose. He gives the description of how gently his mother disciplined him as follows:

*When she was not pleased with me
She would correct me by her eyes
But that fiery stare I dreaded so to see
I feared that loveless gaze!
Never once did she use the rod to chastise
Nor with a harsh touch did she smite me
Her, Eyes, they wielded the mighty power to hit me
Or needs me, to fondle me in approval (Athmanuthapam I:
78-84)*

The mother provided the boy with a correct perspective on life and faith. The family atmosphere gave him a strong foundation based on values and principles (Mundadan, 2008).

Schooling and Education

Those were days when educational activities had not spread. In those days, education was imparted mostly by village school known as *Kalari*, conducted by teachers who were called *Asans*. Kuriakose studied in such a village school for five years mastering the mother tongue Malayalam and Tamil and also some Sanskrit. He writes about this experience in his poem *Athmanuthapam I: 87-92*.

*While being nurtured in body and mind
Was I beloved too of God, my father
Fast sped five years of my life
And I was made to learn of a Hindu Guru
He sat by my side and with my finger bade me
Write on grains of rice spread a floor
Made me repeat every object by name
And I with humble accord obey him*

After the *Kalari* education Kuriakose went to Seminary for the study and preparation for priesthood at the age of 13.

Priesthood: A Life Chosen for God and Humanity

It was customary for Kuriakose to be the assistant at the Holy Mass at St. Joseph's Church Chennankari and soon he started to live in the rectory along with the parish priest in preparation of joining in the seminary at Pallippuram. He joined in the seminary 1818 at the age of 13. Kuriakose was conscientious in carrying out the task assigned to him, and also displayed a rare sense of maturity of his age.

A few years after he joined in the Pallippuram seminary, a small pox epidemic in his village claimed the lives of his father, mother and his elder brother Joseph Kunju. The news was conveyed to him by his uncles only three weeks after the incident, as the village had been quarantined following the epidemic. He had not been able to attend the funeral of his parents and brother, and this departure troubled him a lot. Since he was the only male member in the family, he was advised by all to discontinue his study at the seminary and take up the responsibility of the family. After much prayer and reflection, he decided to hear the call of his heart that is to continue in the seminary and become a priest. He informed his sister who got married, about his decision, putting her and her husband in charge of entire family property till the time his niece Mariyakkutty came of age. Then completing his responsibility at home, he returned to the seminary for further formation (Jacob, 2015).

Fr. Thomas Palakkal was his trainer, known as *Malpan*, meaning teacher, in the seminary and the institution was known as *Malpanate*. Fr. Palakkal recognized the genius and visionary in the young boy and provided him with every opportunity for learning. Kuriakose was keen to imbibe knowledge. During his seminary years, he learnt Latin, Portuguese and Syriac. According to the order of his teacher Fr. Palakkal, he compiled the routine canonical prayers from various Syriac books and it was used by all the catholic priest for decades, till its Malayalam version was published.

Kuriakose was ordained as a priest at the young age of 24, by Bishop Stabilini, the interim Vicar Apostolic of Varappuzha, on Saturday, November 29, 1829 at St. Andrew's Parish Church Arthunkal. He became Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara from then onwards, and people called him as *Chavarayachan*. The next day he offered his first Holy Mass at Chennakari Church. He was an excellent preacher and his

sermons enthralled the devotees. He was appointed in the Pallippuram Seminary to help Fr. Palakkal and to conduct the retreats in the neighbouring parish churches. Gradually the very name of Fr. Chavara became a crowd puller. This signaled the rejuvenation of Syrian Christians of Kerala.

St. Chavara: Social Reformer of Kerala

“St. Chavara is the pride not only of Kerala, but also of entire humanity. It is rare indeed where so many authentic qualities have blended so perfectly in one person. Chavara was born as mortal, but the good he did over a span of sixty-five years caste him in the mould of eternal treasures of mankind. Yesterday, today and forever to the last syllable of recorded time this God-realized soul will remain among mankind’s most treasured assets” (P. Ramachandran, Former Governor of Kerala). St Kuriakose Elias Chavara’s life is an inspiring and edifying saga. From the day he was ordained as a priest he dedicated himself wholly to God and worked piously for the social, cultural, educational and moral uplift of his fellow men. St. Chavara was a man of deep vision who thought and acted far ahead of his time. He had a very keen sense of history and ability to record with great accuracy. This is portrayed in the Chronicles which he had recorded and the letters written by him. These portions of literature illustrate the socio-political life of Kerala and the history of the Church of his time. These writing reveal his historical consciousness, foresight, sense of justice and equality, desire to serve the society. He became a social leader of the Kerala society by providing opportunities for the common people to attain the goals of a refined and cultured life. He set stage for the modern Kerala which is built on education and social openness. He brought ordinary people to a common platform for the betterment of society and that was helpful for them to march towards progress and freedom which was lacking in past centuries.

St. Chavara was a pace-setter for the society of Kerala. He was an innovator who introduced a new perception of humanity into reality something better than ever before. The introduction of this new perception opened the doors for all to reach towards the developments of life. He was able to provide accurate response to the issues that he confronted in the society and provoked the members of his society to dare to dream and achieve it. St. Chavara was a great funder to the cultural treasures of society in his unique and pioneering ways to foster the means of higher standards of living. With dogged persistence he worked in pursuit of that which he saw in the eye of his mind. He was successful in all his endeavors and he showed how the energy inherent in people could be motivated and channelized for new or better uses in order to expand opportunities for or enrich the current stages of the society.

A trend-setter is an early adopter of visions who actualizes it into existence, and further into use, a trend before most other people began to think of it. Subsequently society started to follow his steps. St. Chavara was a great leader who brought out the border cultural shift which was exemplified by the effective means of public education for all. He was so versatile that he offered enough flexibility to suit the needs of the times. This flexibility helped him for a cushion between two generations whose merge is often uneasy and jolting. He worked and accomplished missions faster than his historical average. He is considered as the pioneer of the modernized Kerala because he started a fundamental revolution which uplifted the society, and shared the vision of the future with courage. He took charge of the situations of Kerala of the nineteenth century with high self-esteem and paved the basis for its future progress. He was a leader of change and donor of new ideas to society. His vision in conceiving a moment, courage in pushing it to the limits to get it off the ground and persistence in keeping its momentum, left a trail for others in

this field. Therefore St. Chavara is considered as a developer and designer of society.

The history of the formation of indigenous order in India is inextricably bound up with the names of three holy priests of outstanding personal integrity, worth and organizational talents. The founders of religious congregation were Fr. Thomas Palakkal, Fr. Thomas Porookara and Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. The youngest of the trio, Fr. Kuriakose about twenty years junior to Fr. Palakkal and five years junior to Fr. Porookara. Fr. Palakkal, teacher of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, influenced him for creating an ascetic, unselfish, disciplined, poor, contemplative, priestly congregation that would ferment the leaven of the land. Even during his ordination service, while co-operating with the ordaining bishop as co-celebrant of Holy Mass, he had prayed specially for the favour of the establishment and growth of a religious congregation of priest in this land. Because of much efforts and hard work Fr. Poorookara laid the foundation stone for the first Indian indigenous religious congregation for men on '*Beth Rowma*' which today is hailed as Mannanam on 11th May 1831. Later it became St. Joseph's Monastery. Besides directing the seminary at Mannanam, St. Chavara also continued to help Fr. Palakkal at Pallippiram. Fr. Palakkal was called for his eternal reward in the year 1841 and Fr. Porokkara in the year 1846. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara continued his journey to fulfill the dream of a religious congregation and on December 8th 1855, with 12 other priests, he had taken the vows as a religious priest and the monastic community later grew as the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI). His visions about the humanity were being fulfilled by his followers of the congregation. Till his death at the age of sixty-six, his work and vision churned out an unending procession of regeneration and rejuvenation of the Catholic Church and for Kerala Society (Govindapillai, 2017).

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara tried to gain his full quota of knowledge. He learnt quite a good deal of Malayalam, Tamil and Sanskrit. He had a working knowledge of Latin, and Portuguese. Syriac the language for his Liturgy was also his special field of study. He gained some proficiency in Italian also towards the end of his life. He wanted to share this possessed knowledge with people through his writings. He was a facile writer, both in prose and verse. St. Chavara seems to have written from an inner spiritual urge to build up the Malabar Church in general and his spiritual children in particular. He wanted to leave for posterity an accurate account of what he saw and heard in those critical years, to give the description of his spiritual-mystical journey, to seek guidance from his ecclesiastical superiors, to give guidance to his spiritual children and to reform and renew the liturgy of the church.

St. Chavara was an accurate historian. The diary he kept in his own handwriting for over a period of 41 years (from 1829 to 1870) is an authoritative historical record of the church in Malabar. These pages are a treasure for historians of Kerala, both secular and ecclesiastical. As the stalwart champion of the cause of the faith, he recorded the history of the Rocos Schism for posterity to be proud of the resistance and loyalty that preserved the faith intact. In this Chronicles he gave facts and figures accurately. The short biographies of his colleagues Fr. Palakkal and Fr. Porookara reveal his appreciation of his elders and also the history of the church in 18th century. The Chronicles disclose the thoroughness, honesty, humility and simplicity that St. Chavara possessed in great measure. By writing the Chronicles, he become a model for monks and nuns and also inspired his contemporaries and succeeding generation to record the events of social and ecclesiastical importance and preserve the documents. The letters he wrote exhibit his commanding qualities of warmth, humanity, sincerity and concern for the wellbeing of others. All the letters were in one

way or other expressions of his pastoral leadership. He gave great importance to obedience and communion with Rome. That is very well enunciated in his letters to the Holy See.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is an admirable poet. His literature works include *Athmanuthapam* (Repentance of a soul), *Maranaveettil Padunnathinulla Pana*, the first Malayalam narrative poem - *Anasthasiyayude Rakthasakshithwam* (Martyrdom of Anastasia) and Eclogue which are the first written dramas in India and of course in Malayalam. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara represented the spirit of Indian Christianity at its best and the Malabar Church at its most resplendent. He led a life of allegory, and his writings are a commentary on it.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is also the innovator of the technology of printing and publishing in the Kerala Catholic Church. The press becomes a vehicle for social engineering. With the convergence of literacy initiative and spiritual orientation, he ensured that there would be sustained demand for printed material. St. Chavara's effort to start the printing press was indigenous in his own way which had so far been a European monopoly. The efforts were fruit in the form of the Mannanam Press. That was the beginning of Kerala's tradition in printing and this made St. Chavara one of the initiators of the process of modernization of Kerala. The first newspaper in Malayalam *Nasrani Deepika*, which is *Deepika* today, printed and published from this press.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was an apostle of charity and care specially the poor. He inspired people to open their hearts for the proclamation of humanity and selfless love for other. It was practiced by the Catholic Church in Kerala ever since in the form of home for destitute and shelters for orphans. Thus, he gave a strong and evident basis for the social work activities of the Church.

St. Chavara's acceptability transcended religions. The reason was that he had an open approach to all religions. He was helped by Hindus and Muslims in his search for a suitable location for a monastery. The place he identified for the monastery at Pullarikkunnu, near Athirampuzha, was not purchased because he realized that the land was consecrated to the goddess of Kumaranellur and that the locals were not keen on being a church set up there. He had a strong vision that anything hindering the religious harmony would not be in the spirit of brotherhood. He had high reverence for the officials and the rulers of the country. St. Chavara brought seminarians and the musical band from Mannanam to the venue of the royal visit of the King of Travancore to Ettumannur in order to pay obeisance to him. All these incidents show that St. Chavara was a person of religious harmony and respectful for others.

Final Stage of a Glorious Life

In the last months of his life, he tried to keep away from the external world and sought the consummation of his love in union with God. At this time, he had lost his eyesight and that promoted him to be with the Divine always. In this mystic experience he addressed God as Father, my dear Father- *Appaa, ente priya Appa*. He recognized and experienced the presence of God in his heart as well as in his brothers and sisters. He was a mystic monk who had the real vision of God's thoughts and planning for the mankind.

The hard work and the responsible life made him ill and he lived only for 65 years. He was diagnosed with filariasis, when he was a seminarian at Pallippuram. In 1866, rheumatic fever crippled him to such an extent that he was almost in a coma for two days. He spent his last days at Koonammavu monastery. From 1868 onwards he had presentiments of his

own last days. In 1870 his sufferings become excruciating, and he had a severe attack of fever and was under treatment till his death. On January 3rd, 1871 St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara passed away at St. Philomina's Monastery, Koonammavu. He was 65 years, 01 months and 29 days old. Fr. Porookkara, the successor of St. Chavara described that day as follows: *On January 3rd 1871, at 7.30 p.m. passed away our father Kuriakose Elias Chavara of the Holy Family the founder and the first Prior of the Order of Discalced Carmelites, newly established in Kerala, the Malpan and Vicar General of St. Thomas Christians. The father of ours was a spiritual sun. He passed away like the sun rising in the east, making its day-long procession over the horizon, and setting in the west, removing in its course the darkness over the world and illuminating it with golden rays, enabling the process the earth to yield rare metals like gold, silver etc. the mountains, precious stones like diamond, rubies etc. the sea, pearls, gems etc. bestowing on all the living beings, growth and advancement.*

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was laid to rest at Koonammavu where he had spent his last 7 years of life. Since his death St. Philomena's Church Koonammavu becomes a pilgrimage center for those who know him as a saint. After 18 years, his mortal remains were transferred to St. Joseph Monastery, Mannanam on May 24, 1899, it had already become another spiritual destination. St. Chavara's spiritual mentor, Fr. Leopold Beccaro OCD, Italian Carmelite Missionary, wrote a shot biography on him in 1871 itself.

Pope John Paul II beatified Chavara on February 8, 1986, at a ceremony in Kottayam, Kerala. In recognition to St. Chavara's contribution to the Kerala society as a profound scholar and educationalist, master builder of educational institutions, social reformer and forerunner of establishments of the poor and the marginalized, a commemorative stamp was released by late Dr. Venkataraman, former President of

India, on 20th December 1987. The governor of Kerala unveiled a large painting of St. Chavara in the Sahithya Academy Hall in Trissur, on 4th May 2006, in recognition to his contribution to Malayalam literature. On 23rd November 2014, Pope Francis declared Kuriakose Elias Chavara of Holy Family as the saint of the Catholic Church.

The members of CMI and CMC, the two congregations established by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara follow his vision and mission according to the needs and signs of time. Several educational institutions, technological centers, vocational training institutions, caring homes, medical institutions, cultural centers, publishing institutions, newspapers and magazines, social work centers, self-help groups, de-addiction centers, libraries and community halls, ecological centers, media centers etc., are holding up and marching forward in his great vision for the uplift of the society around. The followers of St. Chavara try to actualize the true spirit of social renaissance through their life. This is evidence of a great leader who walked ahead of his times, with the real spirit of God and love for society.

CHAPTER IV

STUDIES RELATED TO ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

There are many articles, books, journal publications and research studies on the life, contributions, personality, literature and vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. However, the most important and selected studies are described briefly in this chapter. These references give clarity in thoughts and profundity in interpretation of further reading on the life and works of this great personality.

Research Studies related to St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara

Baby (2019) made a study on The Vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara on Family Wellbeing and its Actualization in the Family Apostolate of Congregation of the Mother of Carmel. This is exploratory research which brings out the holistic vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara regarding families and its influence on the family apostolate of CMC congregation at present. The objectives of the study include exploration of the holistic vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara regarding family wellbeing from his life and writings and analysis of the contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara influenced the Family Apostolate of CMC. The study illustrates in detail the ways and means by which St. Chavara's vision has been updated and implemented by the Family Apostolate of CMC in modern times. This is an attempt to find out which aspects or areas of St. Chavara's vision have permanent nature and which aspects are contextual, by analyzing various experiences of families with regard to family wellbeing and finally the study tried to investigate how far St. Chavara's vision of family wellbeing is relevant in the context of modern family of Kerala. The literary works of St. Chavara was analyzed along with

the works of his contemporaries. The study also evaluated the actualization of his insights in the family apostolate of CMC and its functioning. St. Chavara believed that education is the shortest way to knowledge and knowledge opens the way to awareness about God and self. It imparts the knowledge about fellow being by knowing self. The analysis reveals that the life experiences shared by the families strongly supports the view of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. It shows that in this post-modern era St. Chavara's insights remain valuable directives for the wellbeing of the families. The families are not very familiar with the Testament of St. Chavara written in the 19th century but some of them have heard a little about it. But their experiences point out to the fact that still his views are relevant and occupy an important position in the present era. The researcher has found that fathers of the families interviewed, share an optimistic outlook about education and its advantages; but mothers especially from high and middle income hold a different opinion. According to women they desire a deeper relationship and a secure life. They fear that when the qualification increases each one will concentrate more on their own world and may affect the depth of relationship. A mother from a middle-income family shared that education is an important factor of family wellbeing. It gives self-esteem when we are in the society but sometimes those having higher education may be work-oriented and never be bothered about the family. Also, some of the findings divulge that some of his concepts which were once applicable in the past era are not applicable in this modern era. The study underlines the fact that the living experiences shared by the families point out to the relevance of his testament.

A study on the topic Actualization of Educational Vision of Chavara by Principles of Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC) Schools as perceived by Teachers in relation to the Transformational Leadership, Organizational Socialization

and Organizational Learning was done by **Mathew (2018)**. The study identifies the core factors of educational vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara as social reformation, self-enlightenment of future generation, communication and education for all. The investigation was mainly focused on the actualization of educational vision of St. Chavara by the principals of CMC Schools, and to find out the relationship and significance between the actualization of educational vision of St. Chavara, Transformational Leadership, Organizational Socialization and Organizational Learning of the Principals of CMC schools. The study also tries to identify the differences across demographics and actualization of educational vision of St. Chavara, Transformational Leadership, Organizational Socialization and Organizational Learning with respect to age, gender, types of schools, school zones and levels of CMC schools. According to St. Chavara education is not only a teaching of some lessons, but it is a divine activity, which includes many aspects of empowering the individual in the whole realm of his life. Today the government insists that educational institutions provide quality education and value education. St. Chavara used education as an instrument of social mobility, not merely for his community but also for the marginalized groups, which were till then denied any access to the tools of social mobility. The source of initiatives St. Chavara took in the field of education originated from his mind was his extraordinary personal charisma. The seed has grown over the years and has transformed the very social and economic face of the society of Kerala. St. Chavara, a pioneering educationalist and social crusader of the 19th century perceived the relevance of education in the development of a society and so he introduced different educational and reformation programs, which put the foundation for a just and equitable society in Kerala at that time. Many of his steps were original and innovative as he was a man of method and mission. As a transformational leader, he farsighted the future of the society

and created his endeavors with great vision. He is remembered for his various contributions to the religious and socio-cultural development of Kerala. He was endowed with exceptional creative and leadership qualities. The two congregations founded by him, namely CMI and CMC, follow the educational vision envisaged from their founder and have proven to excel in the field of education through qualitative innovation. The major findings of the study are:

- The correlation results of the study show a positive and significant relationship between Actualization of Educational Vision of St. Chavara and Transformational Leadership, Organizational Socialization.
- The results of the regression show that Transformational Leadership and Organizational Socialization are the significant predictors of Chavara Educational Vision Actualization.
- There is a significant difference between male and female teachers about the Actualization of Educational Vision of St. Chavara. Male teachers are less oriented towards Actualization of Educational Vision of St. Chavara in CMC schools than the female teachers.
- The assessment by the principals shows that the rating of the male teachers in actualizing the Educational Vision of St. Chavara is weaker to that of the female rating.
- There is a significant difference in Actualization of the educational Vision of St. Chavara among the types of schools (aided, unaided). The study proves that the aided schools are forward than the unaided schools in actualizing the educational Vision of St. Chavara in their schools.

- In the case of zones of the school, the results show a great difference in the Actualization of St. Chavara Vision. The principals of South zone are very ardent in fulfilling the Vision in their schools than the other zones (North, West & East).
- There is a significant difference in the Actualization of the Vision of St. Chavara among the Levels of the Schools too. (Primary, High School, Higher Secondary Schools). Primary school principals are low in fulfilling the Chavara Vision in the CMC schools. Higher secondary school principals are more concerned in this case.
- There is a significant effect of Organizational Socialization on the Actualization of Educational Vision of St. Chavara. It proves that the role of the Socialization skills of the principal is very much relevant in the effective Actualization of the Educational Vision of St. Chavara.

From this study, it is clear that CMC educational departments should be alert in actualizing the Vision of St. Chavara in the schools. CMC schools must fulfill the Vision of St. Chavara by integrating this Vision with the needs of the modern world.

Kokkatt (2016) conducted a study on Contributions of Carmelites of Mary Immaculate Congregation to Education in Kerala 1831-2008 and describes St. Chavara as a great educationalist. The study illustrates the educational vision of CMI- religious congregation founded by St. Chavara and the significant value of their education throughout the past 150 years. The vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara on education was evolved from the socio-cultural-political background of the 19th century. The evolution of the educational vision of CMI is described elaborately in the study and analyses its impact in

the society of Kerala. The study analyses the history of how the CMI become the most protuberant educational agency of Kerala society by faithfully following the footsteps of the great educationalist St. Chavara. The education perceived by St. Chavara was inclusive and progressive in nature. His vision grows to the fullness through the higher educational institutions which provide the quality education by CMI congregation. Based on the educational vision of St. Chavara the CMI educational agency formed their policy and renewed at times for the welfare of the society according to the needs aroused. The study underlines the high significance of the educational vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara.

Mollykutty (2016) conducted a scientific study on Education Envisaged by Kuriakose Elias Chavara and its fulfillment in CMI-CMC Schools. The objectives of the study include finding the concepts of education envisaged by St. Chavara, through an intense study of primary and secondary sources, discovering the similarities and differences of schools run by CMI and CMC congregation regarding implementation of educational vision of St. Chavara. The study developed a theory and model of education as per the vision of St. Chavara for all CMI and CMC schools for the accomplishment of a broad vision of integral- holistic-inclusive quality education which is capable of facing the challenges. It is an inductive study which has blended ground theory approach and a case study in the same layout. The study explains the educational vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara as inclusive, holistic, value based and student centered. St. Chavara was concerned about the overall development of the children and this was promoted by his educational leadership. St. Chavara had a transformational leadership which formed from his prophetic vision and social commitment. The role of educationalists in today's world is to bear up the truncheon of that charismatic leadership for the betterment of the society. The research study implicate that a

resilient Chavara culture is essentially needed in the schools and presents a guideline to formulate a theory with regard to the actualization of the educational vision of St. Chavara in CMI-CMC schools and it is named as Chavara Education Vision Actualization Theory (CEVA). This theory promotes the transformational leadership which accelerates the process of actualization of educational vision of St. Chavara by setting directions, developing people and redesigning the schools. Communication and collaboration among school community, professionalism of faculty, and family- school collaboration is essential for the actualization of CEVA model in educational institutions. The visible signs of CEVA model education are inclusiveness, equity, holistic approach towards education, value orientation in all school endeavors, timely enhancement and student centeredness. According to this study the educational vision of St. Chavara pre-supposes the ethical finance management and catholic identity in the schools. The study suggests bench marking and timely evaluation for the encouraged actualization of educational vision of St. Chavara.

Veliyen (2014) had done a historic-theological study on the Identity of the Founder of the Third Order Carmelites of Discalced – the first Indigenous Religious Institute for Women in Kerala. The study substantiates the fact that St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is the founder of the first women indigenous congregation, women TOCD with historical evidences and support. The investigator aimed at collecting and listing the ecclesiastical norms to designate the charismatic founders of religious institutions based on the practice and documents of the church and the reflections of the theologians. This work makes a historical and theological study of the foundation of the women TOCD in Kerala and analyses the roles and contributions of all the persons involved in the foundation of the institute, the formation of sisters, and the evolution of their religious lifestyle. This is followed by critically analyzing

different opinions on the identity of the founder in the light of the original documents of the foundation period, 1886-1887. The foundation of the women TOCD is studied in its concrete historical context of the Kerala Church of the nineteenth century, which explains the reasons for differing opinions regarding the founder. The study highlights the contributions of St. Chavara for the women empowerment and the wide spreading of convent schools in Kerala. Providing education for girls was a clear motive of St. Chavara for establishing the religious institute for women at Koonammavu; the building has been planned and constructed accordingly, namely the boarding house, school for girls, and convent as one single unit. The investigation clearly illustrates the role of St. Chavara as the bearer of inspiration of establishing the convent for women, the longing of St. Chavara for a religious congregation for women from his writings and poems, his sense of fulfillment at the foundation of the congregation, the purpose and intentions evolved from the vision of St. Chavara for the convents and his commitment for the institution he founded. The study presenting St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara as a great humanitarian who worked hard for the empowerment of women and an advocate for women education from 19th century.

Maria (2014) conducted a study titled *Empowered Womanhood: Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Socio-Pastoral Vision for Women and Legacy of the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel*. The study is an attempt to trace the historical development of empowerment of women in Indian context and evaluate the influence of women religious congregation, namely CMC, in formation of an egalitarian society in Kerala. This study is interpretive in nature by indicating new realms for the vision of St. Chavara in the changing context to provide practical guidance to the women of present day to attain empowerment. In order to understand St. Chavara's

empowerment programme for women, the researcher has gone into an in-depth study of the situation of women of Kerala in the 19th century and analyzed the contemporary situation with challenges that the women in India faced. The study put forward the creative responses to the challenges which are being inspired by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and the CMC heritage. It is a theological study but have the traces of women's studies, ecclesiology, pastoral theology, Chavara studies, historical documents and church doctrines. It focuses on the pioneering and untiring work of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara towards the renewal of the church and society through women's empowerment. According to the vision of St. Chavara, the convents are the garden for practicing the virtues and school for learning *Vedakaryangal* (sacred wisdom). St. Chavara along with the co-founder Fr. Leopold worked to shape and mould the newborn community of sisters and the inmates of boarding house which is adjacent with the convent. In his vision the boarding houses are for spiritual as well as intellectual development of the girl children as good, holy and educated members of the society. St. Chavara encouraged the vocational training of women and he wanted them to grow into the fulfillment of life in every aspect. The investigation reveals the routes of growth by which the small sprouting of a women religious congregation to a large influencing energy of women in Kerala society. The vision of St. Chavara actualized by the sisters of CMC congregation by practicing the spirit which he had lighted. Investigator explains the different modes of women empowerment rooted in St. Chavara's vision by the virtues and *Vedas*- practicing through education, imparting in the families, sharing with the sick and downtrodden, transmitting through media, propagating beyond the boundaries of the county, living through the social welfare services.

Errorickal (2009) explored the depth of Mystic and Missionary Spirituality of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara by integrating the principles of contemplation and action. The study says that the personality of St. Chavara was a blend of transcendental prayer and dedicated actions. This bondage made him the man of society and man of God. The educational contributions of St. Chavara originated from his great concern for the humanity. Education in its wide perceptive is an effective means to live and learn faith of the individual. The real faith includes the whole humanity. Therefore St. Chavara encompassed all the people of the society through his social activities especially by the educational initiations. His heart had its greatness to embrace all without any discrimination and that quality he acquired from his contemplative prayer. The schools and institutions which follow St. Chavara's vision continued to live the spirit of inclusiveness and thus contributed much for the development of the society.

Molly (2004) analyzed the Religious Philosophy of Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara and brought out the philosophical value of his teachings and writings. His philosophical visions include all the aspects of individual, different dimensions of life and every session of society. St. Chavara's philosophy is rooted in his personal experiences and sedimented from the social context in which he lived. The concept of Christian religious life is originated from the meditative experience of St. Chavara and other founders. He had a very candid perception about the formation of candidates of religious life, the lifestyle of the members of the congregation and their relation with others and the world outside the monastery, the practicing of virtues and leading a prayerful life etc. The educational contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara are also an outcome of his firm philosophical thoughts on humanity. The investigator succeeded in establishing the ever-lasting value of philosophical thoughts of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara through this study.

Mathukutty (2002) presented a study on CMI and Socio-Economic and Religious Transformation in Kerala in the 19th and 20th Centuries. The study elaborates the historical significance of Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, the men religious congregation founded by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. The investigation aims at the nature and nurturing of the congregation which was originated from the vision and mission of St. Chavara. The origin of St. Thomas Christians in Kerala, the establishment of religious congregation and its contextual importance, the role of St. Chavara in the foundation and growth of CMI congregation, the ancestries of St. Chavara and the spreading of the congregation, the different social and moral activities of the congregation for the prosperity of the humanity are discussed elaborately in the study. Among the multitude of dedicated services gifted by the CMI congregation, education is the most fruitful ministry. The educational contributions of the CMI varies from pre-school education to deemed university.

Mary (2002) investigated on The Evolution of the Congregation of Mother of Carmel and its impact on Society and Culture with special reference to Women 1866-1991. In this study the vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is referred and his role is emphasized as the founder of the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel. The vision of St. Chavara on the women empowerment and women education contributed towards the social and cultural development of the women of Kerala society. The education system is the only institution which can uproot the deep-rooted inequality between men and women which has become stratified through the process of socialization. The women congregation started by St. Chavara carried out his vision for the uplift of women and that is realized in the educational and social activities of the congregation. Women are the powerful agents of values and culture. Education brings awareness and implications to the cultural practices. Therefore,

the educated women promote the meaningful cultural practices for the goodness of the society.

Kanjiramattam (1984) conducted the first scientific study on St Chavara and it is titled as Pastoral vision of Kuriakose Elias Chavara (The founder of CMI Congregation). The study explores the effectiveness of the pastoral vision and mission of St. Chavara in the Kerala society. It analyses the social initiatives of St. Chavara with its significance in pastoral dimension. The educational contributions are considered as one of the powerful and productive inventiveness done by St. Chavara as a responsible pastor of his community. But his contributions included all the people of the society. The investigation gives light to the personality of St. Chavara and describes him as a model of committed person for the mankind. His pastoral vision touches all the strata of the society and he brought renewal in all those dimensions effectively. Through his various pastoral activities, he renewed the lives of the priests as well as that of the faithful and laid a strong foundation of spiritual and cultural progress of the society. The important pastoral activities done by St. Chavara includes the establishment of religious congregation for the service of the society, welfare activities of the poor and destitute and contributions in the field of education. St. Chavara realized that the society without education would remain undeveloped and progress was almost impossible for it. St. Chavara had understood that the school is an effective means for the good upbringing of the children in sound knowledge. He laid the foundation of both secular and religious formation of the Catholic community in Kerala. He had considered school and education as one of the essential means for the uplift of the community. Therefore, he gave a very important place to education in the apostolic activities of the religious congregations which he started.

Articles Related to St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara

Scaria and Joseph (2015) illustrated the role of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the social renaissance of Kerala society in the article titled as *The Legacy of Kuriakose Elias Chavara as a Social Reformer*. It is St. Chavara who brought the society into a common platform of education and that was the beginning of a public community in Kerala without any discrimination of castes. He had special care and concern for poor and under privileged sessions of the society like Dalits and women. The empowerment through education was the effective method to remove the barriers of divisions.

An Integral Educational Vision: Chavara and the present Educational Scenario is an article presented by **Maria and Thomas (2015)**. The study elaborates the educational vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and its nature of inclusiveness and quality. St. Chavara realized that education is the powerful tool for the transformation of minds and building of the society. He initiated to modernization of Kerala society by forming a public society through education from 19th century itself.

Rosetta (2015) explained systematically the educational contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the article *Chavara- a champion of Education*. The social changes and transformation of individual is the aim of St. Chavara, which he actualized through education. This paper emphasizes the fact that St. Chavara is a great educationalist who ignited the spirit of liberation of souls and society by means of education.

Mollykkutty and Thomas (2014) described the educational initiatives of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara with the highlight of public education. The importance of the circular of 'A School for A Church' is explained with its details and historical significance. The article presents a preview of educational

contribution of St. Chavara on marginalized and for women. The value-oriented education based on the vision of St. Chavara was also explained in the study.

Kureethara (2014) presented the education which is perceived by St. Chavara as inclusive in nature. The study underlines the fact that the root cause for the tremendous growth of education and hundred percent literacy in Kerala can be traced back to a historical circular of Archbishop Bernadinose that St. Kuriakose got issued. Schools attached to the churches thus became the live wire and symbols of educational activities in Kerala. Forty years after this monumental circular, there were around 1000 schools in the entire Kerala managed by the Catholic Church.

The personality of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was analyzed in detail by **Panthamplackal (2014)** in an article Life and Mission of St. Chavara. The article discusses analytically about the life history and the contributions of St. Chavara. The paper highlights the educational invitations of St. Chavara and its importance in the socio- cultural background of the 19th century.

Chathamparambil and Kureethara (2005) published an article titled Unique Contributions of Blessed Chavara in Educating Kerala Society. The study gives an overview of educational scenario of Kerala society in 19th century. St. Chavara realized the vast potentialities of education and his works has played a unique role in the building of modern Kerala. He made a great opening for the overall progress of the community by establishing the Sanskrit school and printing press to facilitate its all-round development.

Peenickaparambil (2004) presented the Educational Vision of St. Chavara with the reference of the present challenges and its responses. The researcher identifies the specific

challenges in education are existence of generalized illiteracy, disaster in primary and elementary education, poor schooling conditions, massive inequalities, disparity among government and private schools and insufficient budget for education. The vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is described as the remedy for the issues of educational field.

Kochumuttom (2001) described St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara as the man of contemplation in action. The article is an in-depth narrative of the prayer life and services of St. Chavara with its significance and importance in the modern society. From the analysis of the writings of St. Chavara the investigator formed Chavara spirituality which is rooted in *Bhakti-Karma yoga*.

Nedumpuram (1992) described St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara as the great pioneer and champion of the great value oriented educational efforts he set in motion. What is significant about him, is that, he was far sighted enough to start a Sanskrit school, and to admit *Harijans* for whom learning Sanskrit was a taboo at that time.

The outstanding services of St Chavara in the field of literature and education helped the community of Kerala to reach a distinguished position in India. His pioneership was highlighted in the article named Personality and mission of Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara by **Vadaketh (1992)**. The progress of the common people achieved through education, owes to a great extent to the profound vision of St. Chavara.

DISCUSSION

The studies conducted on the life and contributions of St. Chavara is helpful for a reader, who intend to comprehend the contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in detail. The

study reviews present St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara as a social and educational leader. Majority of the referred materials give an overview of all contributions of St. Chavara and some of them are focused only on educational contributions with highlights of theological and ecclesiastical value. The vision and mission of St. Chavara on education is discussed in the studies with its different dimensions, but from a generic perspective. The society of Kerala is obliged to St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara for its modernization and congruence. Many of the social evils which divided the society are removed and the Kerala society to a great extent is a renovated community today, thanks to the public education system initiated by St. Chavara. Very few studies evaluated the effectiveness and sustainability of the educational contributions of St. Chavara throughout these past 200 years. The reference studies confirms that there is no in-depth investigation on the meaning and implications of educational vision and mission of St. Chavara. There are no studies which analyses the significant value of the educational contributions of St. Chavara in relationship to the present educational system. A few studies analyze the actualization of educational vision of St. Chavara through CMI and CMC schools today. Most of the studies are focused on the inclusiveness and holistic approach as the special features of educational vision of St. Chavara.

CHAPTER V

THE VISION AND MISSION OF

ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON EDUCATION

The Vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara on Education

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was an educational visionary who realized the true meaning of education. He wrote down his concept on education very clearly in one of his circulars, which is considered as the Public Circular, numbered as IX/2 in the book of 'The Letters', Volume II, Complete Works of St. Chavara. This circular soliciting financial contributions for the Seminary at Mannanam and has not mentioned about any specific address. Presumably this circular is addressed to the parish churches and sends through personal messengers. It is written in 1850 March 25, and the date is given in the circular itself. His concept on education is as follows:

St. Ephrem, a doctor of the Church, teaches that the second source of enlightenment is learning (acquire knowledge). Just as without eyes one cannot see the material things of the world, so also without knowledge it will be impossible for us to see or understand the reality of the world that is above and the Lord that dwell therein. As those who have no eyes are called 'blind', so to those who have no learning (knowledge) should be called 'spiritually blind' or having 'blindness of wisdom'. Consequently, although we the Nazarenes claim to be Christians of ancient origin, we do not have the vitality or the wisdom of the sages because of this spiritual blindness. Our Lord Jesus himself has taught if the blind leads the blind both will fall into the pit.

From the above statements the vision of St. Chavara on Education or acquisition of knowledge is very clear. That could be explained as below:

Education is Spiritual Enlightenment

According to St. Chavara, education is the spiritual enlightenment. He says that if we do not acquire knowledge, we become spiritually blind. Therefore, we can understand that education can remove spiritual blindness which binds us and thus we can reach real freedom. The prayer of ancient India for the real knowledge is the same. The Upanishad (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 1.3.28.) says 'Asathoma Sadgamaya, *Thamasoma Jyothirgamaya*', which means lead us from ignorance to the truth and from darkness to light. The goal of human life is to know the ultimate reality that is God. In the ancient Indian tradition, the purpose of education was to achieve self-realization, this is otherwise called self-enlightenment - *Nirvana*.

The fusion of spirit of piety and religiousness, formation of character, development of personality and inculcation of civic and social duties were the chief aim of education in ancient India. Indian education in its wider perceptive is more inclined towards spiritual development, gaining knowledge and disciplined mind. Being an Indian Catholic priest who appreciated the culture and tradition of this country very much, St. Chavara definitely shared the spiritual aim of education or learning. According to Mahatma Gandhi the aim of education is all-round drawing out of the best in child and man- body, mind and soul. Education is a process leading to enlightenment of mankind. It includes not merely intellectual growth but also emotional maturity and ethical awareness.

St. Chavara had the concept of education as the light of inner soul or internal self, which makes a person to live in vitality. According to him the real knowledge makes us to know the God that dwells within and in heaven. This should be the purpose of education. He does not use the word education but

the word learning which is more comprehensive and wider in meaning. He considers learning also as a *process* which everyone should go through for acquiring *inner light*. He quotes St. Ephrem a great Father of the Church and says that the source of enlightenment is learning. In order to explain this concept, he uses the metaphor of blind people. Thus, he makes it clear that without learning there is no enlightenment. So, according to St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara the aim of the education or learning is the enlightenment of the soul.

Education leads to Understand the Realities of the World

St. Chavara says very clearly that ‘without knowledge it will be impossible for us to see or understand the reality of the world that is above, and the Lord who dwells therein’. Therefore, education helps us to understand the realities of this world and for Him the existing reality is only one that is the God himself. The process of learning should make us to extricate between what is real and unreal. One could do this only by having the inner light. The capacity to understand the reality and distinguish the reality from the unreal is the wisdom. Education helps an individual by bringing knowledge from external world, teaching to reason and acquainting with past history, so that the individual may be better judge of the present. The word reality has another meaning that which exists eternally. In other words which is perishable is not real. God is the eternal and knowing this reality is real knowledge. According to St. Chavara, education should prepare a person to recognize the realities which lead an individual to eternity.

Education Removes the ‘Blindness’ of a Person, Family and the Society

Education ought to transform the personality of the learner. Real knowledge makes us more dynamic and fascinating.

Education helps each individual to radiate the zest and yearning for truth. According to Indian culture, the real liberating force is *Vidya* or education. '*Sa Vidyaya Vimuktye*', which means, education which liberates us from the bondage of *agyan* and *avidya*. Thus, only when one is liberated can be called educated and only through education one could be liberated.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara had the educational vision of the Church and that is to enhance the becoming of the person into the fullness of the human nature. The educational vision of St. Chavara was rooted in divine revelation which is moulded from the Bible and the Church. It underlines the basic dignity and freedom of the human as a person. Each individual is a precious creation by God, in His image and likeness. This Biblical vision was absorbed by St. Chavara and thus he considered it is his duty to help each person in their growth towards life fulfillment. For that everyone should be free from their inner blindness and receive the eternal light to illuminate themselves. The main path to remove this blindness is to get education and thus through education a person can become enlightened human.

The spiritual blindness of a person could be removed by education and that will lead to personal enlightenment. The enlightened persons transform their families which will be built on values and ethics. That again reforms the society which will be filled with peace and prosperity. In order to build up a cultured society there should be responsible citizens. Education is the important and effective tool for refining the personalities of the citizens. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara had a clear vision about this transforming power of education and thus he promoted public education and aimed the renovation and rejuvenation of families as well as the entire society. He realized that the spiritual blindness or the absence of wisdom is the

core problem of all the issues and injustice of the society. For him it was education through which the society could be rebuilt based on equality and justice. So, he opened the public schools without any restriction of caste or religion.



Educational Vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara

Important features of Educational Vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara

The best means of making one's life useful and thus fulfilling one's mission is by educating oneself. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara tried to gain his full quota of knowledge. During his time, government was coming forward to establish schools and Protestant Missionaries had started pioneering enterprises in spreading English education. He also went all out to establish and develop as many centers of education as possible. St. Chavara is considered as an eminent educationist by all of his biographers and experts who wrote about him. The educational revolution brought by St. Chavara had some significant features

which are very unique and recognized as the essential features of an effective educational system. This identified specific features of the educational vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara are integrated, holistic, socially related, value based, empowering, inclusive, problem solving, reforming, indigenous and need based.



Important features of Educational Vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara

Integrated: St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara had an educational vision which is integral in nature. The whole education process should be revolving around the integral growth of learner. For that education should be authentic and transforming. It became trustworthy when it imparts an accurate vision of life in the recipients. Effective education ensures goodness of individuals and of human society as a whole. Such an education should address all the dimensions of the human person namely, body, heart and soul. The educational vision of St. Chavara contains the development of physical, mental, cognitive, moral, religious,

vocational and spiritual realms of the person. Also, the education accepts everybody from the society without any distinctions or discriminations. Thus, in every meaning the educational vision of St. Chavara could be interpreted as integral in nature. Today, the institutions which follow St. Chavara's spirit, share his vision and confirm that the education which they practice in those institutions are integral in nature in its all meanings.

Holistic: Education aims to help students not just be learners but gain wisdom to live their lives meaningfully, not only for themselves but for everybody around them. Holistic education is concerned with the development of a person's intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative and spiritual potential. All dimensions of personality like personal, interpersonal and societal should be conjointly developed through education. The holistic education equips the individual to become sensible, responsible, contented and successful in the vulnerable and critical phase of life. For the great philosopher J Krishnamurthy education is all about developing the whole child, a whole adult whose respect for the world is demonstrated through compassion, tolerance and environmental responsibility. In holistic education the development of skills for employment is not enough but nurturing of the right attitudes towards life is also needed. Holistic education is humanistic and progressive which include the spiritual dimension of the person. Its focus is on wholeness, and it attempts to avoid excluding any significant aspect of human experiences. According to the study conducted by Molikkutty P.V. (2016) St. Chavara had a vision of holistic education. The overall development of children was his primary motive.

Socially Related: Education aims at forming responsible citizens who are committed to the well-being of the society.

Educational system of a society evolving from the needs and values of that particular society and determine the future of that society. An educational institution is an instrument of cultural progress for the individual as well as the progress of the society. The individual is depended upon the society, the society, too, is an organic union of individuals. The individuals born in a society, grow in a society and live in a society. The development of the person happens only with the nurturing of the society. Also, the educational system exists in a society is the responsibility of that particular society. The issues and needs of the society determine the nature of the education provided for the learners. Education becomes powerful only when it acts as an instrument for socio-economic-cultural transformation necessary for the realization of the goals of that society or nation. St. Chavara visualized the education in such a way that it transforms the existing society to a better world. The evils and issues of 19th century Kerala had been devastated mainly through education. It was realized by St. Chavara and he took the initiation to overcome the difficulties for opening a common pathway for all to sit together and learn together. It was the answer for the time and basis for the modern Kerala.

Value Based: The true education is helpful for a person to adopt a personal value system. Through education each one should be able to build a life founded on values thus able to lead a life of happiness, guilt free, peacefulness and effectiveness. The school is an institution which promotes growth and well-being, positive outlooks and sustainable development. In India, because of its ancient heritage and traditions, great emphasis was placed on values. It is the responsibility of the society to communicate, inculcate and rejuvenate the values among the members through education. The ethical and religious principles which have eternal value give meaning to human life. Therefore, value education brings dynamism of creation and redemption to bear on reality and

on the correct solution to the problems of life. In education development of positive self- image, self- appreciation, self- understanding, self- forgiveness and acceptance are core values that aid character formation. The educative process should include providing students with skills to adjust with all situations and make worthwhile decisions even while respecting the right of others. It seeks to develop a life of faith in God and respect for the dignity of all human beings. Education should nurture thinking and reflections, promote loving services, helpful to select the real values and ensure maximum development of each individual. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was a man of values. He observed the value devastation of the society very closely and tried to give an effective answer to that problem through the various ingenuities. The establishment of public educational system was the major initiative he had taken for the building up of a value-based society in Kerala. Till that time the divisions based on caste, gender and employment were considered as values. St. Chavara brought a paradigm shift in this attitude of the society and he made the low caste people to sit with higher class which was not imaginable at that time. He tried to construct a culture of equality, justice and humanity through the educational initiatives. The religious congregations started by St. Chavara follow this culture and give prime importance for value education in their institutions.

Empowering: The word empowerment has different meanings in different socio-cultural backgrounds and political contexts. Self- strength, control, self- power, self- reliance, own choice, life of dignity in accordance with one's values, capable of fighting for one's rights, independence, own decision making, being free, awakening and capability are synonymous used for empowerment in different cultures. In its broad sense, empowerment is the expansion of freedom of choice and action. It means increase in one's authority and control over the

resources and decisions that effects one's life. Empowerment is the ability to make decision making in matters that effect one's life. It is about people pursuing their own goals, living according to their own values, developing self-reliance and being able to make choices and influence both individually and collectively, the decisions that affect their lives. Empowerment as a concept has been associated with anybody who has been deprived or marginalized. Marginalized people's choices are extremely limited, both by their lack of assets and by their powerlessness to negotiate better terms for themselves with a range of institutions, both formal and informal. Empowerment for deprived or marginalized people means to assert their control over the factors which affect their lives. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara had a special concern for the weak sections of the society. He took immense effort to empower them by providing educational facilities and guiding them to lead a self-reliant life. His initiatives enabled the marginalized and the women folk of Kerala to come up to the mainstream.

Inclusive: The dictionary definition of the term 'Inclusion' is in its verbal form and defined as 'to have as a part; contain in addition to other parts or put in with something or someone else; take in or consider as part of a group'. In education, the word inclusion implies that all children can learn and belong to the mainstream of school and community life. Inclusion is a basic value that extends to all children. Inclusion gives a message: Everyone belongs to the school; Everyone is welcome to the school. Today the word inclusion has got a different meaning that the placement and education of children with disabilities in regular education classrooms with children of same age who do not have disabilities. Inclusiveness means meeting the needs of all children with and without disabilities for a free and quality public education in the least restrictive and more effective environment of the neighborhood schools.

On the basis of this, one could undoubtedly say that the educational vision of St. Chavara was inclusive in nature.

The educational efforts made by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara were for all the people of the society. There was no distinction of caste, creed, religion or economic status. His vision included everyone in society. He believed that each person has the right to grow up to the fullness. He opened schools with this vision and admitted all the students. He started separate formation system for girls and that shows his great concern for the empowerment of women folk. He preached and written about values which should be practiced within the families. Thus, he confirmed that the adults should be examples for the younger generation. It was an informal way of adult education and St. Chavara was very much concerned about the value-based lifestyle of families. The vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara encompasses all the sections and categories of the existing society of the time. Even he was compassionated towards the dying and orphans, he educated his own parish people to protect them and provide a better atmosphere to die with peace of mind and dignity. His educational vision was not merely to transmit any bookish knowledge, instead it was covered all the life situations with practical applications. St. Chavara merged the contribution of the society for giving education for the children by making them to provide food, clothes and resources for their education. The educational institutions which follow St. Chavara's spirit still keep this vision on inclusiveness and serve the society for progressed furtherance. These schools stress on equal opportunity of quality education for all children embracing the value of inclusivity. St. Chavara saw every person, young or old, man or women as a human being, born in the world as a child of God. As a human being the individual must live the life according to that dignity inherently bestowed by God, and must live it to the fullness. Hence St. Chavara eradicated every possible block that

prevented the person from becoming what God wanted him or her to be. This approach to the human being was an integrated entity and is an important characteristic of the schools St. Chavara had set up.

Today the meaning of inclusiveness in education has become wider and it is considered as the educational system which welcomes all children irrespective of disability, community background, sexuality, ethnic background etc. The inclusive education provides the learners an experience of equality, remove the barriers, improve outcomes, and remove discrimination. Inclusive education is clearly community-based education.

Problem solving: The 19th century Kerala had several social problems which grilled the justice and equality of the society. It was molded by centuries and sedimented in the form of caste system. The education envisaged by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was a solution for the problems existed in that time. The 19th century witnessed the emergence of progressive changes in all aspects of social life in Kerala society. This happened as the reaction and response to the existing problems. It had an impact on political, social, economic and cultural life of the people. St. Chavara broke through the dark practices and removed the oppressive elements, overall, building a strong institution to practice the spiritual art of enlightening, evolving with time. Education is the strongest instrument for the reformation of the society. Through education St. Chavara opened the school for all and tried to solve the problem of injustice. The problem of scarcity of food and clothes for children were corrected by the system of *pidiyari* and free distribution of books and cloths to the children. The liberation of women was another need of that time. St. Chavara tried his level best to empower women by establishing the first indigenous religious congregation and also starting a boarding school for girls attached with the

convent. All the initiatives started by St. Chavara were a solution for the need of the time and it is still relevant in this century.

Reforming: Education has, from time immemorial been accepted as a life transforming process. A process that helped an individual be in tune with his/her inner most being as well as in sync with the world around. Education is a service to liberate people from ignorance and help them to be the most they could be. Education always aims at reforming society indirectly through the formation of persons. In quest for material gain and the importance given to the humanism, humans have damaged his holistic nature especially in the spiritual emotional and social aspects. Education reforms this ruptured conditions of the person and leads them to integration. Thus, education rebuilds the society in its strong basis of true values and ethics. This is a continuous process. In order to actualize this responsibility, the vices and evils of the society has to be eradicated and the virtues and values should be imbibed through education. The time in which St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara lived, was waiting for a call to be awakened. It was the time for renaissance all over the world and the Kerala society also had a glimpse of this great experience through the leaders of social changes. St. Chavara was the pioneer among them. He established a system of education which could transform society towards progress. Proper education has the power for transforming the existing system and safeguards the goodness of society. St. Chavara reformed society into a new era of castles through education.

Indigenous: One of the unique characteristics of the schools started by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was that it was totally indigenous in nature. The school instituted by St. Chavara was based on the need of the society of Kerala and it was a Sanskrit School. The language taught there was Indian, though it was

the time of establishment of English medium schools. The management and administration of the school was also local. Mid- day- meals, books and clothes distributed through these schools. The income for this was generated from the contributions of benefactors and through another system started by St. Chavara known as *pidiyari* and *kettuthengu*. This was another reform movement for the income generation and that made the society to make aware of their responsibility to provide education as well as share the food and wealth with the poor. People were asked to set aside a handful from the rice measured out for the daily consumption of the family in a special vessel kept in each house. This was collected at fixed intervals and used for making food for the students as well as other charitable purpose. This system is known as *pidiyari* means handful of rice. Another system was selecting a coconut tree from the farm of each house and marks it with a knot of coir. The coconuts of this selected tree were collected and used for common purpose. Thus, the expense for the running of schools was collected from native people. This was a social movement which made the people to be responsible and empathetic. The language, teacher, sources and content of teaching etc. were local and thus it is said that the educational system started by St. Chavara is completely indigenous.

Need based: The education envisaged by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was 'Need Based' education. The term 'Need' has been variously defined by different educationalists and psychologists. It also implies 'the lack of something which, if present, would tend to further the welfare of the organism or of the species, or to facilitate its usual behaviour. In the words of Good (1959), 'Need' means 'a requirement of the organism for survival, growth, reproduction, health and social acceptance'. Dixit (1975) defined an educational need "as a deficiency in the ability or capacity of a person which may be met by means of learning experience in order to achieve more

satisfactory conditions of well-being". North Eastern Hill University Centre for continuing education, Shillong (1977) defined need as 'the demand that is made for acquiring more knowledge or information by people in various conditions and professions or a desire for acquiring better skills and the identification of certain activities that can be bring about the general enrichment in the lives of individuals. Needs imply conditions including necessity, requirement, urgency, scarcity, vacancy, and so on. In short, the gap between the situations and the objectives is the area of the need. The report of the International Commission on Development of Education (UNESCO, 1972) revealed 'education although based on an objective knowledge of the world drawn from the latest scientific data is no longer focused on the learner, or anyone, or anything else. It must necessarily proceed from the learner. Every single institution will have to change in order to respond more effectively to man's new needs and the tomorrow's education will be total and creative and consequently individualized and self- directed".

The education should be need based at any time of the history. It should arise from the needs of the society, answer to the needs of that particular community and the education system should be re-formulated on the basis of identified needs of the time. Then only it becomes meaningful and effective. The educational vision of St. Chavara was need based. A common platform for all the people of the society could sit together and learn together was the greatest need of the 19th century of Kerala. St. Chavara realized the signs of the time and he made it actualized the need of education for all of the society. The disparity and distinctions exist still in today's society. The education which addresses the needs of the time has always been relevant. St. Chavara made education relevant of the time by making it based on the need of the time.

The Mission of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara on Education for the Kerala society

The practical measures taken by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, to actualize his vision on education are considered the mission. Those efforts could be identified in the following headlines.

Education through Seminary

A systematic seminary education for priestly formation in Syro Malabar Catholics was started by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara together with the other two founder fathers of CMI congregation namely Fr. Thomas Palakkal and Fr. Thomas Porukkara. The Seminary which was started in 1833, primarily aimed to form well educated, trained priests for the Catholic Church in Kerala. But St. Chavara had a broad vision behind this initiative. He realized that the educated and well proficient priests could influence the whole parish or the village and thus the development or the prosperity of the society is possible. The priest is considered as a guru, guide and leader at the time of 19th century. Through preaching and value-based activities they lead the society to achieve its progress. This possibility was very well understood by St. Chavara and he made use of it very effectively. He brought out a curriculum in the Seminary in such a way that it will ensure the all-round development of the members. The content of the seminary learning contains Theology, Spirituality, Psychology, Sociology, and basics of Literature, Mathematics, basic skills for Administration, Community life etc. Various languages like Malayalam, Tamil, Sanskrit, Latin, and Syriac were taught in the seminary. St. Chavara was a man of true Indian spirit. Therefore, he introduced the catholic liturgical prayers with Indian spirit and indigenous customs for Malabar Christians.

The initial inspiration to establish a monastery at Mannanam was to build up a *Dharshanaveedu* (the house of vision) for the

priests. They named the monastery at Mannanam hill as *Besrouma*, which means 'house at higher place'. This itself shows the purposes of the establishment of religious congregation. The name denotes that the monasteries are the place for prayer and union with God.

The lifestyle of community of priests and students at Mannanam was included the day long studies were interspersed with pious practices. The training in the seminary was aimed at the personality development of the inmates. Praying, drawing, writing, singing, playing the instruments, discussions were included in the seminary formation. All the clerical students irrespective of whether they wanted to join the monastery or not, followed this schedule. In 1844 along with Fr. Porukkara St. Chavara was also appointed as Malpan, the official teacher for seminarians. After the demise of Fr. Palakkal and Fr. Porukkara, St. Chavara continued the mission. He combined the visions of his great teachers and prepared the future priests according to the needs of the time. St. Chavara had a spiritual life and vision of his own and the different dimensions of that vision and style were: deep contemplative prayer, penance, study, teaching proclamation of gospel, preaching of retreats, celebration and administration of sacraments, and other socio-pastoral activities. He became a true model for seminarians by his exemplary life. He found that building at Mannanam was not sufficient to serve the needs of a growing community. Thus, he ambitiously planned to start a central seminary on a grand scale. He drew up a scheme for the purpose and sent around a public appeal seeking the co-operation of all the parish churches. In it he pointed out the necessity and responsibility of parents giving proper education to the children and suggested that two big establishments should be conducted in a central place. In one of the two, children were to be taught Tamil, English, Latin and Syriac. Of those who completed their course there, anybody wanted to continue their theological

studies, would be encouraged so and they will enter in to the special training for priests. The second establishment was intended for their study purpose (Chacko, 1958).

The education given through seminary was not only for an individual but for a society. The leaders and teachers of each parish and villages were formed there in the seminary, the basic training was for all and a special training programme was given for the candidates who aspired for the religious-priestly life. The training for priests was mostly centering on the Bible. St. Chavara's writings and sermons reveal the easy familiarity he developed with the sacred scripture. Based on this, he could expound his theology and morals, so perfectly as to be a challenging match to foreign missionaries who were much better instructed. St. Chavara had a great experience of reading. That also enriched him as a teacher. His writings are rich with the doctrines of the Church, examples from the life of saints and different moral stories. The monastic spirituality of St. Chavara and his community was a clear blending of the socio-religious concern and love for the people, that is *Karma*, learning and insight (*dharshana*), prayer and penance (*tapas*). This is described in the Indian spirituality as *Karma*, *Jnana*, *Bhakthi* (action, knowledge, and devotion). Fr. Kuriakose Porukkara summarizes the life of the first members of the congregation as follows: 'they were praying continually and meditating and keeping vigil for a long time and were offering Holy Mass such devotions as to cause tears in the participants. Through their sermons on Sundays and Feast days and through their continuous counselling they stirred the region and removing the spiritual darkness spread the divine light'.

The growth of the priestly community and seminary spread to Koonammavu by 1857. St. Chavara shifted his residence to Koonammavu from Mannanam. There also he continued as a teacher. New seminaries were started with monasteries at

Vazhakkulam (1866), Elthuruthu (1868) and Pulinkunnu (1872). Later they were linked together and formed the major seminary at Puthenpally for all Kerala, irrespective of rites, under the supervision of the Vicar Apostolic and administered by the missionary fathers. This seminary was elevated to Mangalappuzha Major Seminary, which is situated today at Aluva.

According to Achandy Paul, the Prior General of CMI congregation (2017), the members of the CMI congregation ever since its origin, had been engaged in preaching retreats, imparting seminary training, providing education and empowering the vulnerable sections of the society, especially orphans, the destitute and the old. Rooted in the vision inherited from the founder father, today the congregation renders the service to the humanity in educational, social, health care and other humanitarian activities aimed at the integral development of the societies in different parts of the world.

Sanskrit School at Mannanam

The Sanskrit School started at Mannanam in the year 1846. This was an unconventional and courageous move done by St. Chavara because the opportunity to learn Sanskrit, the language of elite, was offered to aspiring students of all castes. With this revolutionary step, St. Chavara demolished the walls of discrimination based on caste and religion which was rooted in practices of centuries. Students came together; sat together; learn together without any issues and problems. This opened a new horizon of equality and respectfulness in Kerala society. The Sanskrit school has become a microcosm of an idealistic pluralistic community whose members were brought together by a shared desire to learn. The Sanskrit school started by a catholic priest itself was an important historical event at that

time. It became a prophetic and a revolutionary initiative due to the societal conditions and circumstances. The Sanskrit language was considered divine, and it was not allowed to study by the low caste people among Hindu community. But the language is rich with the cultural and literature value. St. Chavara by starting a Sanskrit school, aimed at the provision of quality of education even at the middle of 19th century. This is one of his unique and specific contributions to society. He thought about the society around him, he analyzed the situation, found out the best solution with high quality for the issues of the society and took the initiation for the betterment of the common people. The model of the front portion of the Sanskrit school is preserved in the Museum at Mannanam, as the monuments of this great contribution for the society. St. Chavara initiated the public education system which survives in Kerala society even today as the effective and strong base for the communal development. This public education without any discrimination of religion, castes, creed, gender and economy made possible to progress the society towards development. This was an inspiration and model for other social leaders who came after St. Chavara to this soil.

Pallikkoru Pallikkoodam (A School for a Church)

The year 1864 witnessed an educational revolution in Kerala with the slogan '*Pallikkoru Pallikkoodam*', that is 'A School for A Church'. As the Vicar General of Syrians St. Chavara took bold step and issued a mandate, calling on all parish churches under his jurisdiction to start schools attached to each of them. He even threatened to close down the churches that failed to comply with his orders. These schools admitted all kinds of students irrespective of caste, creed and religion. The society of Kerala started to relish the public education through this order. It was a historic event and that led to the high literacy rate of the state and the progress of the community. There were catechumenates for the study of catechism of newly

converted Christians attached with the parish churches at that time. This was primarily known as *pallikkoodam* - a place for coming together attached with church. The same structure is modified to schools and that became a center for education of each village and parishes. The students received basic education through these schools and later other organizations and religions also started schools in this model. According to the laws and regulations of the state, most of these schools are later converted to Upper Primary School, High school and Higher Secondary Schools.

Catechumenates: Schools for Low caste People

The converted Christians from low caste sections needed to study catechism and for this purpose catechumenates were started. It was following a schooling system by which they learned the basics of Christian faith and lifestyle. According to Mundadan (2008) individual initiatives started in certain places of Kerala to open schools for catechumenates in early 1860s. Anglicans, with their center at Mundakayam, had established missions among the low caste like *ezhavas*, *pulayas* etc., in the eastern regions of central Kerala. This becomes a challenge for Catholics to open schools for the catechism. In 1864, Mannanam monastery, as directed by prior St. Chavara started a catechumenate attached to the monastery. This was officially inaugurated on 9 October 1864. This is explained in Mannanam Chronicle Vol. III. Page 30:

On Sundays and feast days many boys came to study catechism and remained here till five o' clock in the evening. Some of them came from distant places and most of them are poor. In order to promote more effectively this so wholesome and fruitful work, they thought that it was necessary to feed the boys at noon with rice gruel. They were also given cloths and pious articles like rosaries and scapulars etc. to meet the expenses involved for this as well as

for the conversion of pulayas and for conducting catechetical school, the means decided was the collection of pidiayri (a handful of rice) every Sunday.

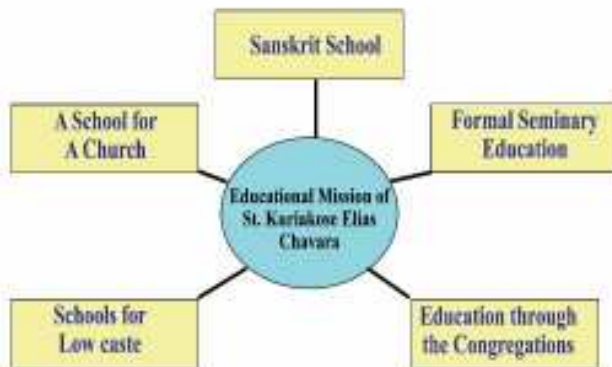
Almost all the monasteries and churches opened catechumenates attached to them in the model of Mannanam monastery. There the adults and children were taught biblical and moral concepts. They are educated with basic social skills. It was an opportunity for low caste people to get introduced to the main stream of the society. Valerian (1939), also talks about the school opened for Pulayas at Arpukara: *Chavara started a school at Mannanam hill. He fixed the hill of Thuruthumaly family at Arpukara as the place for a chapel with a school attached for the converts from pulayas. He collected funds from parishes and important persons and brought a plot of wet paddy field nearby and ordered that the monastery must run it.* Catechumenates were primarily for the teaching of newly converted Christians, but later these structures developed into schools for all students. Slowly these places became the centers for social gatherings, discussions and meetings of the villages and parishes.

Education through the Congregations Founded by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara

The initial endeavors of St. Chavara continue to inspire the educational activities of the two religious congregations founded by him namely, Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) and Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC). The CMI congregation has demonstrated itself creditable of the vision and love of its founder St. Chavara. Both congregations become the contributors of the most qualitative education of Kerala today. These congregations started schools and boarding houses attached with the monasteries and convents for educational and developmental purposes. Even in the rural and remote villages and top of the hills the dedicated religious people reached with education and knowledge. That made a

huge difference in the availability of the educational opportunities for the people of Kerala than other states of India. The centralized administrative system existed in the Church made the educational initiatives more effective and practical. The congregations also had same administrative structure; therefore, it was easy to work with effective strategies for the uplift of the society. The educational initiatives in the Catholic Church started by St. Chavara became a movement and also a model for other congregations, religions and organizations to come up with effective educational measures. This movement had played a crucial role in the achievement of full literacy of the state. The free and public provision for education changed the lifestyle of the people and thus the state has reached the living standard of developed countries in many aspects.

St. Chavara not only started the educational initiatives but also formed a group of followers to continue his mission. The congregations faithfully tracked his footsteps and imparted the real knowledge through the system of education. The CMI congregation has an array of varied educational institutions numbering 775 serving about 3 lakhs students every year (Panthaplackal, 2014). From the beginning itself the education has been chosen field of major apostolate for those two congregations. The constitution of CMC congregation underlines this factor as: we began our ministry of education imbibing the vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara who started schools attached to all Syrian churches. Schools and colleges are the most important platforms to mould the future of many generations. We should impart quality education to all especially to the poor and the marginalized to empower them. (Ref. CMC Constitution no: 81.2). CMC, the women religious congregation founded by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, also helps around 3.5 lakhs students to achieve quality education through their 1055 educational institutions. They promote the basic and quality education for all according to the vision of founder father St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara.



Educational Mission of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara

The vision and mission of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is that education is a process which removes spiritual blindness of the person. He transformed education into a social movement which uplifts the entire society. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara initiated to form the society of Kerala without any discrimination of caste and creed. He worked relentlessly to spread learning as much as possible for he knew that 'the great aim of education is not knowledge but action' as Herbert Spencer, the Philosopher put it (Jacob, 2015). He became a powerful influence for good in the cause of Catholic education in Kerala. Establishment of Seminary had also got the objective of forming educated priest who can become a catalyst in the society. He also encouraged the general education of the laity. He realized that the community would remain downtrodden, if they did not move with the times, and he decided that the religious congregations which he started should concentrate on the educational ministry.

CHAPTER VI

ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION FOR ALL

St. Chavara is one of the greatest social reformers and educationalists of Kerala. He brought the public education system in Kerala. The nineteenth century Kerala was divided by the caste system and religious differentiations. St. Chavara brought a radical change by starting a Sanskrit school at Mannanam in the year 1846. Education for All was his motto. Discrimination based on caste, religion, economic status etc., were not allowed in the school started by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. This vision he had put into practice later when he announced '*Pallikoru Pallikkoodam*' - Every church should have a school attached with. Thus, the vision of 'Education for All' is emancipated by St. Chavara in Kerala society.

Meaning of Education for All

Education for All is the slogan for the development of a country in this modern world. The progress of the country is depending up on the rate of education of that country. Education can solve the problem of poverty and uplift the socially victimized section. It can also eliminate all kinds of discrimination and ensure distributive justice in the society. The Right to Education is considered as one of the fundamental rights of every human being. It has been universally recognized since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and has since been enshrined in various international conventions, national constitutions and development plans. However, a vast majority of countries have signed up and ratified in the international conventions far fewer have integrated these rights into their

national constitutions or provided legislative and administrative back up to ensure that these rights are realized in practice. The lack of government support for the right to education hits hardly the poorest.

The right to education issue has been debated in India for more than a century. As substantial part of memorandum presented by Mahatma Jotirao Phule to the Indian Education Commission in 1882, dwelt up on how the British government's funding of education tended to benefit Brahmins and the higher classes while leaving "the masses wallowing in ignorance and poverty". Another attempt to get elementary education recognized as a right was made, though obliquely, way back in 1909 when G.K. Gokhale introduced a Bill under the Indian Council Act of 1909, to make primary education compulsory and deserving of State funding. However, the Bill was defeated by a large majority. But it was an attempt to bring up the concept of Education for All and it became a subject in the conventions and development discussions of the country. In 1917 Vallabhai Patel was responsible for getting the first Law on Compulsory Primary Education in India passed by the Bombay Legislative Council. By 1930, every province of British India had a law on primary education. It was then the Hartog Committee recommended the better quality hinders spread and development of primary education. After the independence the country was taken utmost care to provide education but the discrimination and ignorance of the people about the value of education cause the stoppage to implement the policy for education for all.

The Right of Children to free and compulsory Education Act has come into force from 1st April 2010, in India. From this day onwards the right to education will be accorded the same legal status as the right to life as provided by Article 21 A of the Indian Constitution. This Article has provided renewed

opportunity to reduce the increasing inequality in education at the elementary level and achieve the goals of justice- social, economic and political. Every child in the age group of 6-14 years will be provide 8 years of eliminatorary education in an age-appropriate classroom in the vicinity of his or her neighborhood. Any cost that prevents a child from accessing school will be borne by the state which shall have the responsibility of enrolling the child as well as ensuring attendance and completion of 8years of schooling. Right to Education Bill provides an opportunity for Scheduled castes, Scheduled Tribes, and weaker sections to develop their personalities through education. The importance of 'Education for All' is promulgated well but even today the right to education is denied to millions of people around the world.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education for All

The starting of a Sanskrit school at Mannanam is the most important revolutionary step initiated by St. Chavara for the education for all. Thus, he opened the doors of education for all the people of Kerala society irrespective of caste and religion. This was a historical event. The earliest reference about Sanskrit school at Mannanam is in the Diary of Parappuram Varkkyachan. It is quoted as follows: *At the same time a Sanskrit school was established at Mannanam, attached to the monastery. In it the priests and others in the monastery, as also the students from the neighboring places were studying. For the proper running of the school, they had brought from Trissur a teacher belonging to the Warriar caste. He was an expert in Sanskrit and Malayalam. His services were very useful for preparing books published from Mannanam in proper Malayalam idiom. Because of his expertise in Sanskrit Prior Chavara also started to learn Sanskrit from him. (Parappuram, 1846).*

St. Chavara instructed the priests of the parish that it is their duty to teach the laity and empower them. Through a circular he insists this idea to the parish priests: *Hence the responsibility of priests to teach the faithful and of parents to teach their children are not adequately fulfilled because of the shortage of good teachers and due to lack of financial resources* (Circular IX/2).

St. Chavara instructs the parents about the value of education through his letter titled Testament of a Good Father as follows: *As soon as the children came to the age of reason they must be send to school. Besides parents should be enquiring whether and how the children study and behave, and who their companions are. Their study should be tested and evaluated every Sunday.* (Chavarul II 6). This shows his interest for the education of children, and he considered it as the responsibility of parents and elders. He emphasizes three things about the education of the children through this and those are sending children into the school, make sure that they study there well, and evaluate their study every week. Also, he was very keen about the behaviour uplift of children and that is the reason why he advises parents to become companions or friends of their children and that they should make sure that the friends of their children are good people.

Establishing a formal system of seminary for the Catholic Church specially for the Syrian Catholic of Kerala church also helped to promote education for the common people. The seminary formation aimed to form well trained and educated priests who are dedicated to serve the society for the progress. Thus, he continued his vision and mission even after his death for serving the society through the congregation. The chronicle of Mannanam monastery says about the starting of seminary as follows:

Fr. Malpan felt that if the seminary is attached to monastery they could get their services in reading, praying, singing etc. and thus

make the church ceremonies attractive. They may also have good vocations from them to monastery. But Fr. Porukkara differed. He insisted that their main concern was to have a monastery which had been furthered so far mainly by their trust in God. Our concern for people and their ways should not be a hindrance for this. The seminaries being teaching place, is attached to monastery, the monastic objectives might not be fully realized. As I was not so shrewd both views seemed to be equally acceptable (CMM I, p. 28).

There are a number of writers who have the opinion that St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara had a vision of Education for All and he is the pioneer one who actualized the public education system in Kerala.

Chacko (1958) writes about the educational contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in his historical and biographical book, 'Father Kuriakose Elias Chavara' that St. Chavara went all out to establish and develop as many centers of education as possible. Valerian (1938) gives him the title 'Educationalist' because of his contributions to education. He says that the establishment and conduct of seminaries also could understand on the purpose of educating the people through trained priests. St. Chavara had great concern for the education of the laity. He realized that if the people are deprived of education, then they could not get progress in life. So, he decided to start schools and to make it main duty of the priest to provide education to the ordinary people.

A School for A Church was St. Chavara's great contribution for the Kerala society. He sends a circular stating that the priest would be denied of their payment (tith) if they did not start schools in their church compounds. This circular was considered very seriously by the Church committees and thus many schools were started and the untouchability that existed in the field of education came to an end (Vallappura, 2004).

Vasudevan Nair (2017) remarks St. Chavara as the solitary star of excellence and said that he was immensely prized learning and strived to promote education for all. Even the word *pallikkoodam* came into Malayalam, by the establishment of schools attached with the churches.

Narayan (2017) says that St. Chavara's intention of starting schools attached with churches is that the churches should be the platform for redeeming the downtrodden, for which primary education was a huge priority. Those days lower classes were excluded from education those days. The church schools facilitated opportunities for children from all sections of the society to sit together in one classroom irrespective of caste or creed to which they belonged.

Kadankavil (2014) writes that St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was a well-accepted leader who had influenced not only the people of his religion as many other leaders of the time but all the people of Kerala society. He continued the work of European missionaries who had opened the doors of education for all the sections of the society which included the low caste people.

St. Chavara was concerned about secular education and the establishment of Sanskrit school at Mannanam is the evidence for that. Also, he had given instructions to the parishes as Vicar General to establish a school with every church. Its result is powerfully present in all catholic communities all over India (Kaniarakath, 2018).

Omman Chandy (2017) the former Chief Minister of Kerala remarks that St. Chavara's tool of *Pallikkoodam* entered the social life of Kerala as a non- religious universal paradigm. It was a revolutionary move which brought St. Chavara as the flag bearer of Kerala's reawakening which paved the way for the expensive initiatives of Sree Narayana Guru, Chatambi Swamikal, Ayyankali, Vykundaswamikal and Vakkom Abdul KhadarMaulavi.

Zacharia (2017) observes, St. Chavara's educational initiatives were so radical for the society, and they become more universal in nature rather than strictly Christian. St. Chavara turned the perception of the society upside down through the opened doors of schools for all.

Paul (2017) notes that St. Chavara realized universal education as a mission to spread light and wisdom in the minds of the people and he committed his service towards it. Radhakrisnan (2017) writes that formation of a civil society started in Kerala with the educational reformation done by St. Chavara. It was through the concept of public education that the collective action plan and style of functioning originated in Kerala. St. Chavara formulated a plan of action for secular education and it transformed everyone into owners of power, wealth and position. He thus took us closer to the goal of building a civil society.

Raghaviah (2017) explains how education reaches the masses by St. Chavara and how he had taken the initiative at first. Also explain the role of St. Chavara as the pioneer of the public educational system of Kerala society.

Along with the schools, boarding house and training centers were also started by St. Chavara. The overall development of the person and society was the vision of St. Chavara. After starting a Sanskrit school at Mannanam in 1846, he sent letters to the parish churches to send the children for education. Every year two children from each parish should be sent to the school. The expenses should be met by the parish. In this way he made the school become established and progress (Noel, 2015).

St. Chavara focused on all sections of the society, specially the marginalized and weaker sections. His educational methods were followed by other religions and organizations of Kerala. Thus, the accessibility for education was increased. This

accessibility of education for all was a great contribution from St. Chavara for the Kerala society. He is the one who opened the public education system in Kerala, where the students without any discrimination or distinction came together for study purpose. This is a revolutionary step which he had contributed for the progress of the society. Before him there were schools but it was not accepting the students from every caste and religion. St. Chavara brought out a system in which all the students from different religions and different caste could sit together on same bench and learn together with unity. This paved the way for the modern Kerala society. Education brought a new culture in the society towards its development. Through the public education which is opened to all, individual persons know about the other and learn to respect each other. Due to the education the strong walls of caste system demolished and a new age of humanity raised here. Thus, beyond the boundaries of religion and castes, people extend themselves for the needy ones. St. Chavara is a great visionary who brought together the scattered society in the school premises for the learning purpose. The school became an essential and integral part of each society and it became the responsibility of elders to give education for the coming up generation. St. Chavara had an educational vision, which he had answered for all the issues and problems of the society of that time. He tried to remove the darkness of division among people which originated from the religion and caste system. This he had mainly done through the education.

For St. Chavara, seminary was the indirect way for education for all. Through the formation and training in the seminary he aimed to bring out leaders for the society and these educated priests will go and lead the people. Seminary was following the *Malpanate* system till at that time in Kerala Catholic Church. By establishing a formal seminary for the formation of young priests, St. Chavara started another revolution in the Church. The seminary he started aimed at the all-round development

of the members and that helped to give education for all. In an indirect way, a wide perceptive, St. Chavara established the seminary for the educational purpose.

According to him, the expense for educating a child is the responsibility of the society. Therefore, he invited public people to contribute their own portion in educating the children of the place. He wanted to pool the resources of the society to respond to the needs of the people of that time. It was observable in starting of the monastery, running of the school, establishment of the convent etc. He received help from the community and encouraged the contributing part, not about how much, but the participation was valued. Depending on the local resources he collected the money and started all the initiations. He appreciated the enthusiasm of people for a social change and treasured their intensions and involvement. This is another revolutionary step he had taken. This proves that he is a real leader, reformer and initiated fundamental changes within the society.



St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education for All

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is considered as the god-father of public education system in Kerala. He started the Sanskrit school at Mannanam in the year 1846 and it was a revolutionary step taken by the great social reformer. This initiation of education for all becomes a historical event, since it opened the doors of availability of education for all in Kerala society. He was a great visionary and missionary in the field of education and served the society with his enthusiastic zeal. It is evident from the primary sources that he is the one who started the Sanskrit school at Mannanam and he had special interest for providing education to the children and for all to remove the darkness of ignorance from them. He finds out best remedy of the issues of current society and it was discovered as the provision of quality education. He made it possible by the circular of 'A School for A Church'. The educational opportunity for all the people of the society become popularized and actualized by this circular and thus almost every church had educational institutions attached with them. This made possible of the wide acceptance of educational opportunities for all regardless of religion and caste. The secondary sources also support this concept that St. Chavara is the great leader who pioneered the public education system in Kerala. He brought together all the people of society for education in one school, and it became a starting of social change and social progress. There are numerous articles and books with this opinion, and it was proved from these writings that St. Chavara is the 'Man of Education for All' and it is one of his greatest contributions for the Kerala society. Education for All is the need of every time, and it should be ensured by the society and the authorities. The importance and significance of providing education for all never declined and there is always high demand for this. All the experts who were interviewed for their views on the educational contributions of St. Chavara stated that using education as a tool, St Chavara brought together

the broken Kerala society that was devided by caste and injustice. He innovated effective means and ways to provide aducation for all, and that brought out a historical change in the social life of the people of Kerala.

CHAPTER VII

ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO

EDUCATION FOR THE MARGINALIZED

Marginalized people are always present in the society as the weakest and under privileged section. St. Chavara had great compassion and consideration for them. He realized the development of a society becomes complete only when the weakest section of the community gets strengthened. Therefore, he worked for the uplift of the marginalized of the society of his time. He started a school especially for them at Mannanam and he had taken special care to provide midday meals, clothes and free education for them.

In order to understand the contributions of St. Chavara for the uplift of the Dalits or marginalized, we should analyze the meaning of 'Education for the Marginalized', conditions of Dalits or the low caste people of 19th century, the specific contributions for the education of Marginalized etc. These are explained below:

Meaning of Education for the Marginalized

In all societies, the weaker sections are considered as marginalized. They become marginalized due to the retrograde economic, educational, developmental, social status. The World Declaration on Education for All, Jomiten, Thailand, which has reaffirmed in the Dakar Framework for Action (2000), gives the message that 'in order to attract and retain children from marginalized and excluded groups, education systems should respond flexibly. Education system must be inclusive, actively seeking out children who are not enrolled,

and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners.’ This was the contribution of 21st century. But in 19th century itself the great sage of the Kerala history, St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara realized this vision and actualized the need of the learner of that time. He opened the school for all and made it sure that they are getting textbooks, foods and clothes in order to fulfill the basic needs of human beings.

In a country like India, the disparity among the people, due to education, economic status, gender, religion, language and caste still exist in its all forms. Illiteracy and poverty are the root cause of problems stagnating the development of the country and individuals of the society. Lack of education leads to ignorance and exploitation making vast masses poorer and poorer and poverty keeps them under constant stress in social, economic and cultural aspects. This situation could be eradicated mainly by educating the weaker or marginalized people with proper guidance. Therefore, the Constitution of India provides special consideration for the weakest sections of the society. The Article 46 of Indian Constitution relates to ‘Promotion of educational and economic interest of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections.’ It reads: “the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people. In particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation”. It is one of the Directive Principles of State Policy. It is evident that modernization has marginalized the poor people from the mainstream of development. The Human Development Report writes: ‘poor people and poor countries risks being used in the margin in the proprietary regime controlling the world’s knowledge’. Such a system has come because of the poor management of the education of that society. If the educational skills and its benefits are organized

with the perspective of social justice in view the benefits of developments would be tremendous, and it will reach to all. Unfortunately, the country like India isn't free from the bondage of divisions and disparities. It is the responsibility of a matured society to care for the weaker sections of the society. Indian Constitution had the far vision of this problem that the marginalized people were suffering because of the subjugation by the higher castes for ages. Thus, special consideration was reserved for the marginalized section of the society by the Constitution. The poor, the subaltern, people at the grass root level, the disadvantaged are the reality of the society. The literacy rate of the population and the elimination of poverty is directly related. Thus, the education of the illiterate becomes a means for the development of the country too. But the generous obtainability for having education within the reach of the weaker sections still remains as a dream. There arises the importance of the courageous step taken by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the middle of the 19th century itself. He identified the need of the society to provide education for the marginalized and he had taken the responsibility to take up that risk. The educational contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara for the Dalits or the marginalized has greatly impacted in the history of Kerala.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education for the Marginalized

The vision and mission of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara on 'Education for the Marginalized' involved the starting of schools for *Harijans* and initiating to form a caste-less society. He considered the fulfillment of the basic needs of the weakest session of the society as the responsibility of the fellow beings. Contributions to Education for Marginalized by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara could be analyzed in the following headings.

Parish Church and Schools for Dalits, Established by St. Chavara

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara had experienced and observed the bad and sad conditions of society which is divided on the basis of religion and caste. As a priest he was dedicated to his fellow human beings. His mind was pained about their wretched situation, and he wanted to change this forever in his own way. He started a church community for Dalits and later it became an established parish for Dalits, which still exists at Mannanam. Today the St. Joseph Monastery at Mannanam is also a parish church exclusively for Dalit Christians. He attended to all the spiritual needs of the Dalits and instructed his fellow priests to help them in their needs. In 1830, St. Chavara started two Malayalam schools in Mannanam and Arppookkara for the formal education especially for the Dalit communities. Apart from these two schools, he opened schools at Edathuva, Pulincunnu and Kainakary which were accessible for the marginalized communities (Chakkalakkal, 2013). He started a school for Harijans at *Thuruthumali* hill top. To meet the expense of the school he asked for contribution from those who had good will. It is a historical commencement for the Dalit people, and it was continued by other social leaders after words in different forms. The remarkable contribution of St. Chavara is very distinctive that he was not a victim of this communal obliteration. He was from a family of higher-class Christian and he considered and cared the low caste people. This shows the greatness of his personality which included all of his fellow human beings without any discrepancies and disproportions. It was a revolutionary step in Kerala history, because the Malayalam school has opened the doors for low caste people who were kept in a distance from social life. He welcomed the Dalit Christians in the church and thus unlocked the bondage of lack of adoration and helps them to grow towards absolute liberty.

A Casteless Society through Education initiated by St.Chavara

The monasteries and other institutions under each monastery opened the gates for all the people irrespective of caste and religion. This is one of the revolutions brought by St. Chavara at the dark age of 19th century. Being the Prior and the Vicar General of Syrian Catholics he had given the order to admit the students from low caste in the schools started with each parish. This caused a social change for the Dalits towards their progress. They started to send their children to the schools. The dissection based on the caste system was like a societal expletive at that time. Everything was determined on the faith and caste and it crossed all the humanitarian boundaries towards the low caste people. Being a leader and a committed priest, St. Chavara observed these consequences of caste system and tried in his own way to demolish the stout walls formed through centuries. This he accomplished mainly through providing the opportunities for education. He believed that all people irrespective of their caste, learning and riches were equals and children of the same Heavenly Father. This was his Dalit philosophy. This philosophy made him dream of the possibilities to lead the marginalized to the bright shore of learning. He realized the importance of education as it makes the human being fully and harmoniously developed. The main obstacle was the non-availability of educational opportunities and resistance from the higher caste people. St. Chavara took initiative to overcome this problem and it was not easy work for him. Still, he believed that it was God's will and he has to take up the responsibilities towards his fellow human beings. In 1846 he started a Sanskrit school at Mannanam and allowed the Dalits to sit with the high-class people of the society for learning. He started a Catholic Primary School at Mannanam in the year 1865 and gave admission to all the students

including the low caste. It was a challenging step he had taken for the advancement of the marginalized.

Education which ensured the fulfillment of Basic needs for the Marginalized

The Dalits were denied of their human rights during the 19th century. They did not have the rights like travel through the public roads, take water from public wells, to have proper clothing, enter the temples for adoration etc. They were not allowed to listen to divine language which is Sanskrit at that time. They were not allowed to use utensils or plates to take food. The fruit of their labour was taken by the landlords and there no wages were given to them. St. Chavara stepped in and requested the Dalits to send their children to the schools. But they preferred to send the children to the paddy fields rather than sending them to school, since they will get at least a meal once in a day. St. Chavara realized the poverty and starvation of the families of low caste and took initiative to give food for their children who came to the school. He used his contacts with other people of the society and found out benefactors for this. By this he proved that in order to receive education, firstly the comfortable circumstance for achieving education is needed and preparing that conditions are the responsibility of the society. The basic needs of human beings include food, clothing and shelter. Being a compassionate pastor, he realized the needs of the people around him and responded proactively to that.

St. Chavara is the Pioneer Leader for Dalits' Education in Kerala

The latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed social renaissance specially among the Hindu community of Kerala. The *gurus* and *sanyasis* led this movement. Prominent persons

of these social and educational reforms are Brahmanadha Sivayogi (1852-1929), Chattampi Swamikal (1853-1924), Sree Narayana Guru (1855-1928), and Vagbhatanandha (1885-1939). They tried to reconstruct the Kerala society with the spirit of equality and humanity. Education was the main means for them to help their people to come forward in the society. They all fought against the existing evils of the society and dedicated their life for the uplift of the low caste people. Brahmanadha Sivayogigave emphasis for the education for women. *Sthree Vidhya Poshini* (1899) is his work talks about education of women. Chattampi Swamikal was another reformer who tried to provide free education for the untouchable sections of the society. *Vedaadhikaarana Niroopanam* (1895) is his written work which provide insight in this direction. Sree Narayana Guru is one of the strongest social leaders and he wrestled with the caste based contaminated customs and traditions of this society. Through the *Ezhava Shiva Prathishtta*, he proclaimed that anyone who had experienced God could perform *Iswara Prathishtta* and thus he challenged the privileged high-class communities as well as the entire society. Vagbhatanandha also was a sanyasi who stood for the education of common people of the society. But the educational initiation started by St. Chavara was earlier than all these great efforts. St. Chavara opened the doors of school for Avarnnas years ago of their efforts. Though government schools did function in Travancore and Kochi during that time, but it was not available for Avarnna Hindu. The Travancore state declared the freedom of education for Avarnnas in the year 1909 that is several decades after the publication of the circular by St. Chavara - *As School for A Church* (1864). In Kochi the gates opened for the Avarnnas in the year 1915, even later than Travancore. But before that St. Albert's School and St. Teresa's Schools were established in Kochi and that was the only means for schooling of Avarnna Hindus.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education for the Marginalized - Evidence from Writings

There are traditions and writings about the contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara on Education of the Marginalized. He had great concern for them and dedicated for their progress. There was a school at Mannanam which was officially inaugurated on 9 October 1864. About this school explained in Mannanam Chronicle Vol. II. Page 30)

On Sundays and feast days many boys came to study catechism and remained here till five o' clock in the evening. Some of them came from distant places and most of them are poor. In order to promote more effectively this so wholesome and fruitful work, they thought that it was necessary to feed the boys at noon with rice gruel. They were also given cloths and pious articles like rosaries and scapulars etc. to meet the expenses involved for this as well as for the conversion of Pulayas and for conducting catechetical school, the means decided was the collection of pidiayri (a handful of rice) every Sunday.

The Chronicle written by Parappuram Varkeyachan (1846) clearly says that St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara started a school at Arppokkara especially for students of Dalit community. A place was found and decided to buy at the hill of Arppokkara, Thuruthimaliyel, in order to start a small church and a school exclusively for the converted low caste Christians. The money for this purpose was collected from some generous persons of the society and from different churches. By this collected money the building of church and school was started, also a paddy of 17 Acers also brought for them and St. Chavara gave an order that it should be run and managed by the Mannanam Monastery.

There are a number of articles and books which talks about the Contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara on Education

for Marginalized. Everything was mainly discussed on the establishment of schools especially for Dalits and providing them with the midday meals.

Valerian (1938) talks about the school opened for Pulayas at Arppookkara: *Chavara started a school at Mannanam hill. He fixed the hill of Thuruthumaly family at Arppookkara as the place for a chapel with a school attached for the converts from pulayas. He collected funds from parishes and important persons and brought a plot of wet paddy field nearby and ordered that the monastery must run it.*

Kokkat (1998) in his book 'The Dalit Vision of St. Chavara' establishes clearly that St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara had an authentic vision about the uplift of Dalit or the marginalized of Kerala society. St. Chavara strongly believed that the progress of Dalit can happen only through the means of education. Because of this strong conviction he opened a school at Mannanam and also at Arppookkara in the year 1830. This school was exclusively for Dalits.

Narayan (2005) notes that St. Chavara's schools took the society to a pioneering phase of inclusive education. A social and cultural awakening was triggered off as the result of his effort. St. Chavara's works brought out a new atmosphere of revival and rejuvenation among lower caste people. The initiations of St. Chavara gave a new direction for the uplift of low caste people through education.

The establishment of school for Dalits was a prophetic action done by St. Chavara, where they studied Sanskrit, the language of Gods, in an era when they are considered as untouchable by the whole society (Zacharia, 2017).

During the 19th century, the untouchables were not given admission even in the schools run by the Government. In that

context giving education to those people was a revolutionary act. In order to realize this desire, he decided to start schools for the Dalit's alone. It was really a difficult task to make his colleagues and others to convince this necessity. Facing all the oppositions, he started two schools for them, one at Mannanam and the other at Arppokkara. The rules made by the Indian Government for the uplift of the Dalits after the independence of the country, were anticipated by St. Chavara in the middle of the 19th century and his plans were materialized at Mannanam and Arppookkara, two small villages of Kerala (Vallappura, 2004).

Radhakrisnan (2015) clearly says that St. Chavara is the founder of modern civil society in Kerala from a chaotic crowd to the beginning of a society that co-existed in harmony. This he achieved with the help of initiatives like the social and economic empowerment of marginalized and by setting up the foundation of an inclusive knowledge society.

St. Chavara started schools at Mannanam, Arppookkara, Edathua, Pulinkunnu, Kanakary etc. for the backward communities. He arranged books, cloths, food at free of cost for them. The reform of the society should start by the strengthening of the weakest of the society. St. Chavara exactly had done this for the uplift of the Kerala society (Noel, 2015).

St. Chavara is not only the savior of the material life of Harijans but also their souls. He saw them as complete human phenomenon and hence wanted to save the whole man of the Harijan brethren. Elimination of untouchability was need of the time. St. Chavara tried to abolish these social evils through education. He helped the marginalized by giving them food, dress, and job in many of his monasteries (Plathottam, 1991).

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara had contributed well for the Education for Marginalized in his unique and special way. Starting of schools exclusively for the Harijans and Dalits by St. Chavara were concrete examples for this purpose. He provided not only the educational opportunities but also had the concern for the fulfillment of basic needs like food and clothe for them. Perumbadavam Sreedharan, a well-known writer in Malayalam, says that *St. Chavara is a saint who understood the hungry for the food of a poor and hungry for the knowledge of the ignorant. He tried to satisfy these starving stomachs and minds with his great initiatives of education and midday meal programme.* St. Chavara had great concern towards the poor and lower caste people of the society. It was natural for him because he was a Catholic priest who proclaimed the good news of the love of God. He observed the wretched conditions and lack of freedom of low caste from his childhood onwards. When he had the authority and power to make things happen, he did it with whole heartedly for the uplift of the poor and the needy ones of the society. He himself was not from the so-called lower caste, but the consideration for them was clear and manifested in his actions. St. Chavara brought a new culture of inclusiveness in Kerala society. Before him it was a society of divisions and separations based on caste, creed and religion. The uniqueness of the educational vision of St. Chavara is holistic, unique, multifaceted, and inclusive in approach. He had the vision of developing the society through education. Role of education for social transformation was clearly understood by St. Chavara. The end result of the educational revolution led to the formation of a society which is casteless. He was a son of the soil and recognized the true value of Indian culture. Therefore, his social activities were rooted in the culture of India. He set no limitation for education because total emancipation was his aim. He used all the measures which were available at that time for the availability

of Education. Recently the Kerala society is going back from the comprehensive unity to the exclusiveness of minds due to various political and religious reasons. It is a great challenge that St. Chavara place before the social community of Kerala to have a society which upholds the value of inclusiveness.



St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education for Marginalized

The 19th century Kerala was not a society based on the principles of social freedom and equality. The low caste were suffered due to the lack of freedom and disrepute. At that time St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara wanted to raise their status and bring them up to the common stream of the society. Education was his main remedy for this issue of the society. He wanted all the Harijans to go to school, get educated and equip themselves to have a better life with social equality. He started schools for marginalized at Mannanam and Arppookkara and later he ordered to the Churches to start 'A School for A Church'. The Dalit people get educated in these schools with the other upper caste and Christian students. St. Chavara initiated rigorous campaigns for the uplift of the Harijans. He tried to satisfy

their basic needs by making arrangements for food, clothing, shelter and job. He understood the need to augment the status of the marginalized. The definition of marginalized is changed for the low caste of 19th century to the under privileged and economically backward people of today. The educational opportunities and other basic facilities should be provided for them and it is the responsibility of any civilized society. Every society has marginalized communities or sections at any period of history. For St. Chavara, it was the lower caste in his time and he worked hard for their uplift, Identified the marginalized, fulfilled their basic needs and provided educational opportunities to them. The relevance of the contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara on Education for Marginalized exists as high in the emerging society.

CHAPTER VIII

ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA'S CONTRIBUTIONS

TOWARDS EDUCATION OF WOMEN

Even in the 21st century educational opportunities for girls and women remain distinctly below those given to boys and men in India. On 7 November 1967 the United Nations adopted the Declaration of the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Article 3 stipulates: 'All appropriate measures shall be taken to educate public opinion and to direct national aspirations towards the eradication of prejudice and the abolition of customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women.' Everywhere in the world they are under educated in comparison to men, and over vast areas of the globe, a majority of illiterates are women. Education contributes in large measures not only to the elimination of the idea that women are inferior but also to the elimination of the inferiority of their actual status. Among the rights of women, education is considered as the prime right, because that would enable women to develop their individual, intellectual and moral qualities. Women do not enjoy all the educational opportunities they should have. Thus, the contribution of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara for the Education for Women fasteners great importance, since he was a visionary from 19th century.

Meaning of Education for Women

The university Education Commission 1948-49 and national Policy on Education 1968 emphasized on women education in the independent India. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in 1967 took

note of the great contribution made by women to social, political, economic and cultural life and the part they play in the family and particularly in the rearing of children and recommended the following in the Article 9 of the Declaration: All appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure to girls and women, married or unmarried, equal rights with men in education at all levels. Kothari Commission (1964-66) has rightly remarked, 'For full development of human resources, the improvement of human beings and moulding the character of children during the most impressionable years of infancy, the education of women is of great importance'. In other words, the education of women is more important for the development of human resources, improvement of homes and character development in the vulnerable years of childhood. This was realized by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the middle of the 19th century.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education for Women

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is a great visionary for women empowerment. He visualized his mother as the basic instrument for his vocation and he realized the women flock is the strength of the family and society. So, he took initiatives for women education and disciplined boarding life for girls for a better future. He actualized this through the establishment of a religious congregation for Women, that is Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC) and it is the first indigenous attempt in this nature. St. Chavara aspired to mould the nuns as spiritual leaders of women in the church and in the society. He wanted to make women realize the dignity of labour. The nuns were to teach the young girls prayer and catechism and train them in virtues and in handicrafts. He realized that the religious awareness and prayers of women would influence their children, family and the community. So, St. Kuriakose

Elias Chavara entrusted the nuns with the noble duty of young girls of Kerala. Chavara's dream was fulfilled through thousands of schools, boarding houses and hundreds of vocational training centers run by the religious nuns of the congregation established by him.

In order to bring out the importance of St. Chavara's Contribution on Women Education we have to understand the state and condition of women at the time of 19th century. On the background of a historical perspective only one could highlight the educational empowerment of women hood.

Vision on Women Empowerment by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara

The great vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was that women themselves should become agents of their progress. He was convinced of the fact that the family is the ideal source of education. Education and proper training for the women would ensure proper formation of children in the families. The starting of Boarding schools and the vocational training given for the girls were the important attempts to actualize the vision of St. Chavara for the empowerment of women.

Establishing Religious Congregation for the Empowerment of Women

Women of 19th century considered as the shadow of men and their role was solely to serve men and raise their children. They were deprived of their basic right of education, property, inheritance, and even proper clothing. Women were grossly under privileged: religiously, socially, economically and educationally. The farsightedness of St. Chavara with regard to women's emancipation is evident in the setting up of a monastic congregation for women. St. Chavara who had

moved to Koonammavu, a place near Kochi, Varappuzha, Kerala in 1864, proposed the idea of setting up convents. He had generous support of Fr. Leopold Beccaro OCD, an Italian missionary. The first convent came into reality on February 13, 1866. The structure of the convent was made up of coconut timber and thatched coconut palm leaves and hence it is known as *panambumadam*. It was a historical event. Women, who wanted to live a life of celibacy and prayer, got the opportunity to join the convent. Four members joined in the convent as the pioneer members of the women religious congregation. Among the four, two were widows and that was also a social challenge of that time. The lifestyle and the prayer life of the nuns were defined with rules and regulations in the model of a cloistered convent which was established in European countries. The convent life was new to the society of Kerala. After this initiation, several religious congregations were started in different parts of India and the services of nuns became a vital part of the uplift of women in the country. The convent, which was started at Koonammavu, was meant for enabling the sisters to devote themselves to prayer and meditation to provide education and social service to women in the locality. They were taught handicrafts like embroidery, tailoring, flower making, and rosary making. They were taught different languages such as, Malayalam, Tamil, Latin and English. Later in 1868, the first stone was laid for a girl's school in Koonammavu. The school started functioning in the year 1873. By establishing convents, his aim was not just to ensure protection to women and freedom to choose a celibate life. Rather, he chose to focus on social reformation and considered this option viable as it encouraged women, not only to share a respectable status, but also to extent the network of their service to people outside their convent. As an initial step, he launched education facilities for women as one of the most important service schemes. St. Chavara strengthened the women folk through the establishment of women religious congregation.

He expected the nuns to experience their relationship with God in their own feminine way. He encouraged sisters to read the biographies of those women saints who are the model of prayer as well as gave courageous witness in their life. His concept about the convent was the place where their feminine qualities were protected and promoted based on the spiritual experiences. His idea was that the sisters have to get acquainted with the feminine way of thinking, meditating and experiencing God in their day- to -day life which will enable them to meet the challenges of life with feminine grace and courage.

Boarding Schools with Convents for the Empowerment of Womanhood

Immediately after the opening of the convent St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara came forward to establish the boarding house named as *Educumdath* for girls on 1868 January 2nd, for giving them wholesome training to become good housewives and to build their families in its strong base. The primary means of giving behavioural formation to the girls by the nuns was through the *Educumdath*. The members of the boarding house had the opportunity to learn from the nuns of that convent. The idea of a boarding house for girls seems to be same as that which St. Chavara expressed in the circular letter on 25 March 1850, which was meant to open a study center for boys. He speaks of two stages of study: in the first stage the boys learn different languages such as Syriac, Latin, and Tamil, etc., and in the second stage those who have the bend of mind for priesthood to learn theology and other matters connected with priestly life. This seems to be the system of formation envisioned for and practiced in the boarding house for girls at Koonammavu. St. Chavara had a special interest to teach the girls of boarding house Latin and Tamil. St. Chavara gave the sisters and the children in the boarding house lessons in Tamil

and Latin and gave them exhortations. St. Chavara had sent special books and gifts for sisters as well as for the children of the boarding house. The *Educumdath* aimed at the spiritual as well as intellectual development of the girls as good, holy and educated members of the society. Many girls from different parts of Kerala were admitted at the boarding house of Koonammavu. In the *Educumdath*, attention was given to the intellectual, mental, social and spiritual development of the girls. They were disciplined and taught to pray and practice the virtues. The main topics which they taught in the *Educumdath* were languages, crafts, cooking, music, catechism. St. Chavara was keenly interested in giving a holistic education. During that time the girls and women were not allowed to attend catechism classes and no provision of education for them. It was in that situation St. Chavara envisaged convent as the place for girls to learn the sacred scriptures and matters of their religion. He states this as the house for learning *Vedakaryangal* that is basic catechism. This is the reason for teaching them different languages and he was very keen on improving their knowledge in matters related with teachings and doctrines of religion and Bible.

The women religious congregation spread in the land and most of the convents followed the tradition of having a boarding school for the girl children. It became a system in Kerala and these boarding schools developed as the training centers for young girls spiritually, socially and cognitively. The dedicated nuns became the mentor and animators for the formation of coming generation. Most of the boarding girls joined in the religious life to serve the humanity. During the first five years, running the boarding school was the main work for the nuns in the convent. They gave informal education for the girls to get practice to become good mothers and wives in their future. Actually, through empowering women St. Chavara was aiming at buliding the society through healthy families. This was the

starting of the culture of convent schools and boarding houses in Kerala.

Education: For Enlightening the Women

Women's education becomes very essential when we accept that the mother is the first teacher of her children. In fact, a good mother is better than many teachers. But there is a wide gap between the education of men and women in our country. This is because of illiteracy, child marriage, *pardah* system, economic backwardness, traditional outlook and ignorance of parents. These factors discriminate in the provision of education to the boy and the girl. St. Chavara was a man who understood the importance of women's education for the uplift of the society. He envisaged the education of girls should help them to lead a successful life in the family and in the society. They should grow with high self-esteem and build a society which is based on values. Educating women is equal to educating the society. The spiritual empowerment is important for their formation and thus he prepared a training life attached with the convent in the form of boarding house.

Giving education for girls was a clear motive of establishing the religious institute for women at Koonammavu. The building was planned and constructed accordingly, the boarding house, school for girls and convent as a single unit. The boarding house opened on January 2, 1868, met the purpose of a school until the girls from outside were added 1872, although the school building was ready in 1867.

Vocational Training: A Firm step towards Independence

When St. Chavara and Fr. Leopold Beccaro envisioned the activities of the convent, they included the training in handy crafts for girls. The 19th century women of Kerala were economically dependent. Syrian Catholic women had no right

of property, no right to inherit, and they were not allowed to earn money. Economic freedom remained as a dream for them. This situation of poor income and fewer numbers of working days in the agriculture fields of women inspired St. Chavara to initiate the women to some handicrafts, so that the women of the locality could earning something for their families. The chronicles of Koonamavu Convent show evidence of vocational training and craft work provided in the convent as well as in the boarding house. This is another important step for the growth towards self- sufficiency of the womanhood. St. Chavara firmly believed that the training of sisters in art and crafts would be a help for women in general to be self- reliant. The farsightedness of St. Chavara is a remarkable step during that time in the history of Kerala. When the first members of the convent at Koonammavu were given training, he made it sure that they were able to become leaders in the society and earning members in the family. For all the training St. Chavara had the great support and guidance from Fr. Leopold Beccaro O.C.D. The nuns were given special training in handworks and crafts in the convent. Later, these services of the nuns were made available to house wives. They also had got practical training in various aspects of life and to develop life skills. He had taken initiative to find special tutors for training the nuns in various crafts. Among the various ministries of the convent, the training in the handy crafts started first. The sisters were given training first in the view of training girls in the boarding house and later to the women of the locality. Even before the concrete steps were taken for the construction of the bamboo - mat convent, the materials needed for handicrafts were collected for the sisters by St. Chavara and Fr. Beccaro. Many bundles of needles, and a variety of threads which the fathers had collected for the convent is described in the Chronicles of Koonammavu Convent. St. Chavara had taken the initiation to find experts to give training to sisters in handy crafts. They

arranged the materials for handicrafts in each nun's room and searched for a trainer.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education for Women from the Writings

The aim and starting process of first indigenous convent is described in detail in the Chronicles of Koonammavu Convent. This was considered as the primary source. The first 16 pages of the chronicle were written by St. Chavara himself. He describes the aim of starting the convent as:

The building of a convent, boarding house and school were established by St. Chavara and his coworker Fr. Leopold Beccaro OCD. It is described as below: *with this amount on Saturday 13 June, the foundation was laid for a single storied building which was narrow as they (St. Chavara and Beccaro) thought it was enough. Again, after some days.... delayed. Thus, after 8 September, the feast of the Nativity of our Holy Mother, seeing that God had directing and, blessing them abundantly through all the ways and means that the fathers adopted and through all whom they approached, they decided to make the convent a storey building. Again, since our delegate was not quite satisfied and felt that the foundation laid for the school and boarding house was not strong enough, he made them erect some pillars, for all the three buildings together as one single unit (CKC I, pp.46-47)* This text clearly shows that the idea of having a school and a boarding house attached to the convent was there from the initial plan itself. But the school started only in 1873.

The text about the starting of Boarding house given in the Chronicles of Koonammavu convent is given below: *It was said that Educumdath was to be opened soon after the Nativity of Christ feast, as it was a command of Archbishop to do so and also that the children would be arriving the next day. Therefore, the tree rooms*

that were separated with wooden rafters were to be covered on all three sides with yellow cloth, and we entrusted with it. Thus, we made six rooms, the mistress' room, the multipurpose room and the room for the chapel. (CKC I, p.83).

Page 84 of the Chronicle talks about the details of girls who came to join the boarding house. *The boarding house should be opened on the second day of the new year (1868). Fr. Beccaro asked our opinion about who would be suitable to be the boarding mistress and at the end Mooppachan himself appointed Sr. Clara. He also wrote out a few rules for the boarding house. However, on the 1st January 1868 itself, a girl named Thresia Ozhuvil was brought from Muttum. And the inauguration of the boarding house was on 2nd January 1868. In the next day of the opening two more girls were added to the boarding house.*

The aim of starting a religious house for women is described in the Chronicle of Koonammavu convent: *so that they could, besides living a smoothen and spiritual life, be engaged in a work of teaching young girls prayers, and other virtuous practices and also handicrafts like needlework etc.* From this, it is clear that the women religious life was meant for spiritual life of the members of the congregation and to train the girls for a better life. According to St. Chavara, one of the purposes of establishing a women religious congregation was to empower young girls for facing their life with spiritual wealth as well as make them self-reliant. (CKC I, p.06).

While describing the events of the first days of the convent, St. Chavara noted down his attempt to search for some women to give training in handicrafts to the sisters: *when we were looking for some persons to teach embroidery and sewing, we came to know that the sisters of Padre Jaseentha of Thankassery were good at needle work and making vestments. On writing to the Vicar Fr. Geevarghese, we received the reply that they were not willing*

to come. We trusted that God would now complete what we started (CMM I, p.129).

On the same page of the Chronicle, St. Chavara record his satisfaction in seeing that Sr. Anna and Sr. Thresia were fast in learning things shown to them: *The two young sisters Anna and Thresia took to writing on paper, playing on instruments and needle work* (CMM I, p.129).

The Letter No. V/11 is addressed to Fr. Chandy Kattakayam and in this letter, St. Chavara writes about the training given for sisters in the convent at Koonamavu. He says in the letter that, *Sisters have arrived from Cochin to teach in the convent. Good printed pictures for scapulars are not available here. So, send all the big and small blocks of the scapular available there. The printing can be done here in the hand press.* The sisters in the convent were given training for making rosary and stitching scapulars. This was an earning means for them.

Fr. Leopold Beccaro OCD, the cofounder of the women congregation writes about the starting of religious house for women in his brief biography of St. Chavara as follows: it was his (St. Chavara's) great desire to start a religious house for women with the main intension of making it a safe place for girls of Malabar (Syrian church) to live their religion as good Christians and to learn spiritual things. A full account of all the great things he had done for the realization of this desire, when God willed it so, is beyond the scope of his short biography. It is known to all how interested and zealous he was in the orderly prioress of the convent in virtue and perfection, once it was founded.

Ananada (2017) writes that St. Chavara's appreciation of the oneness across divisions enabled him to foster and value the equality of women. Different from the contemplative life style,

St. Chavara advised the nuns of the convents which he had founded, the life of contemplation and action. There were vast areas of the society that needed attention and some of these areas could be better reached by women and some services could be better performed by women given the social context, namely assisting other women and children. The visionary founder recognized the need of his time and place and act accordingly for the welfare of his neighbour and for the love of his brothers and sisters.

Narayan (2017) observes that St. Chavara is the man who shaped modern Kerala and women empowerment was a huge priority to him. He was successful in founding a religious congregation for women. He says that St. Chavara was a visionary who was keen to bring women to the forefront of Kerala society setting a model even for Europe.

Veerendrakumar (2017) presents St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara as an early proponent of gender equality. The conservative majority were against the education of women, even considering it a form of evil. At that time St. Chavara established a convent with boarding system for the uplift of women folk.

Paul (2017) says that it was St. Chavara who gifted the canopy of social security and self-esteem for women in the midst of 19th century in Kerala. He instituted convents for the sisters not only to lead a life of prayer but to empower them to lead a life with dignity. Aimed at making them self-sustaining, he trained them in handicrafts like tailoring, printing and making of rosary chains.

Raveendran (2017) observes that the education given in the boarding schools attached with the convents helped to lead a successful life for the girls of Kerala society. St. Chavara believed that women could transform society and hence equipped them

with the power of knowledge. As the torch bearers of an educational revolution in Kerala, the CMC went on to start schools for orphans and economically backward girls, industrial training centers, orphanages and old age homes.

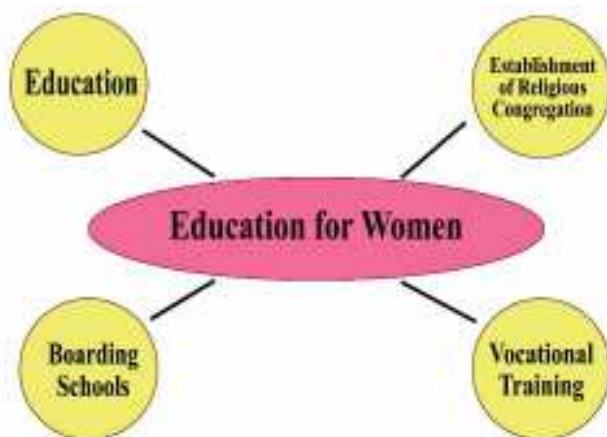
Swami Vivekananda has emphasized “if you do not raise the women who are living embodiments of the divine mother, don’t think that you have any other way to their social and economic status”. Gandhi had stated the importance of women empowerment in these words, “I am strongly in opinion that women should have the same facilities as men where and when it is necessary”. It is accepted that a mother occupies the central point in the family. Therefore, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has very rightly observed, “Education of a boy is the education for one person but education for a girl is the education for the entire family”. Around 200 years back St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara tried to actualize these ideas through his own unique methods and means. Foundation and development of an indigenous religious congregation for women, starting of boarding houses attached with the convents, provide opportunities for vocational training are the important steps taken by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara for the empowerment of womenfolk. The present world already recognizes the importance of women empowerment through education, not only on the basis of social justice but also it accelerates economic and social transformation.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was a great leader who actualized the empowerment of women. Not only for the education of women but for the advancement of them in all spheres of their life was his intention. The starting of the women religious congregation is the first and best contribution towards the enablement of women and he could do it very beautifully. This was an indigenous initiation and after that, many women congregations came up in Kerala as well as in India for the

dedicated service of the society. The contributions of Catholic nuns for the progress of the society especially for the improvement of the women folk are considerable. The women and girls of Kerala society is highly advanced in educational qualifications and other achievements than many other parts of India. This is due to the strengthening services of the religious nuns of the Kerala society. Being a founder father of the women religious congregation St. Chavara had great vision about the upgrading of the lives of women. The spiritual and physical growths of women were his concerns and he wanted to make them self-sufficient in their life. He called the convent as the *Punyasnaketham* (house of virtues) where the young girls learn the basis for a strong and pure womanhood. According to him women should be educated for the sake of family and the society. So, he made them to learn languages and mathematics. The vision of education for women according to St. Chavara is different from the education for women of today. He envisaged the education with preparation for a spiritual and family life for the girls. This was his concept behind the establishment of boarding house attached with the convent. He was particularly concerned about the vocational training of girls through the boarding house. It was the need of the time. In 19th century, women were not an earning member of the family. That restricted her in the limits of a house. St. Chavara wanted to liberate women from this detrimental situation. So, he made arrangements for vocational training which will help a woman to have livelihood. It was a need of the society at that time. He realized the power of educated and spiritual minded women in upbringing of children and in building of a family. He had his own mother as a role model for this. The state of his own sisters also must have made him thoughtful about the contemptible conditions faced by the women of that time. He loved and cared for the nuns in the convent very dearly and guided them with all necessary advices. His advice in the *Chavarul* to make the children to wear dress from childhood

onwards shows that during that time the women and children were not wearing dresses properly. Being a man and a priest, it was impossible for him to approach women in very matter concerning them. But he wanted to make them to be aware about themselves. May this also could be a reason behind the foundation of religious congregation for women. The nuns could easily reach out to the marginalized, especially women. The value of social activities and educational contributions given by nuns in Kerala as well as in international society are immeasurable. Education, vocational training, caring of destitute, medical services, special schools, family apostolate, missionary works, jail ministry, uplift programmes for children, social activities for street children and HIV patients, Palliative care units etc., are the main fields where the religious nuns dedicated themselves for the society today. St. Chavara had the vision of skill-based education for the women and that is the reason he arranged training for handy crafts and other household works like cooking and sewing in the boarding house. It was not the same skill-based education what the present society understand, but the concept and vision behind the vocational training was the same. The rosary and pious articles making business is an earning means for many families around the convent of Koonammavu even today. This working culture was formed from the vision of St. Chavara and continued through the sisters of the convent to the women of the neighbouring families. Women religious congregations, convents and boarding houses played a major role in the empowerment of women folk in Kerala. As the founder of the first indigenous women congregation, it was primarily contributed by St. Chavara. The boarding houses and schools become high schools and higher education institutions today. The members of the women religious congregation founded by St. Chavara provided quality education especially for girl children and worked for the uplift of women folk. The nuns

whom were interviewed for this study proudly said that they are following the footsteps of their founder father St. Chavara to fulfill his vision and mission for the progress of women. The authorities of educational institutions, who had given the interview, said that the concept of St. Chavara on women education and empowerment is highly relevant today and they are trying to fulfill the same concept according to the needs of the time.



St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education for Women

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is a prophetic visionary who toiled for the empowerment of women in Kerala society. He established an indigenous religious congregation for the growth of women. St. Chavara encouraged the nuns to develop a feminine charisma in their community which is the essential aspect of the spirituality of women. He started boarding houses attached to the convent and advised them to start boarding houses with all the convents for girls. The vision of St. Chavara

for the education and empowerment is different from today's concept of women education. St. Chavara envisaged the empowering of the human society in its march toward the realization of the reign of God through the convent-educated girls. In the boarding house the girls were formed to be spiritually enlightened and socially empowered. The syllabus and other system of formation were arranged accordingly for the girl child. When St. Chavara established a religious institute for women with a purpose, it included education of girls as well. According to St. Chavara, the convent and boarding houses were reserved for the girl children to learn matters of their religion and sacred scripture. He also dreamt of religious women giving spiritual leadership in the church and in the society. He wanted to make them spiritually empowered and accordingly arranged the atmosphere of the convent. Self-sufficiency and self-reliance are the values to be inculcated in the women personality. For this they should be an earning member of the family. St. Chavara had a concept of skill based and family oriented educational method for the girl children in the boarding houses. Also, they were motivated for the spiritual life of nun in the convent. With self-respect and high self-esteem, they were considered equal to their counterpart, men, and that was a starting point of social change towards the dignity of women in Kerala society.

The religious congregation CMC followed the footsteps of their founder, St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and women empowerment is one of the important ministries for them today. Education for girls, technological and vocational training centers for women, self-help groups and saving organizations for women, agricultural movements and support for women, awareness programmes and activities against the violation of gender equality and dignity of women are some of the major concerns of the congregation. The convent education system changed the social face of Kerala society at a large. The educated

and employed women become the symbol of development of the society. The empowerment of women through education and vocational training should be continued for the creation of a better world. Education for women is one of the main concerns of government and other social authorities of today. The empowerment and enlightenment of women should be continued for the building of good families and a value-based society.

CHAPTER IX

ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION THROUGH MEDIA

Education becomes more effective and inexpensively available by the usage of media. Media made it possible the reach of the education to the wide range of mass and that also with minimum time consumption and expenditure. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara used the media of his time, which was printing press and means of Art and Drama, for educational purpose. The printing press at Mannanam was a high point of Chavara's ingenuity and enterprise. The influence that the press has had on the development of Kerala and the Malayalam language is unparalleled. He used all the means and ways for knowledge and communication of his time effectively and fruitfully. It was because of his charisma and foresight that Mannanam and Kottayam is today's hub of the printing and publishing industry of the state. By starting schools attached to churches, St. Chavara was convinced that education was not the prerogative only of the upper caste. Foreign missionaries too, had played a role in spreading education among the lower strata over the four-tiered caste hierarchy but St. Chavara stands high as one of the few intellectuals of our own soil who played a proactive role in accelerating the spread of education. It was at this juncture that he realized that the print media was crucial if the learning revolution facilitated through schools was to progress in a meaningful and effective manner. It was as a culmination of this vision that he set up St. Joseph Press at Mannanam in 1846. The available media was used by St. Chavara for attaining knowledge and led others to the light of knowledge. Today's media world should learn from him for the effective use of communication channels and spread the

light of knowledge around. Spiritual and moral books were published from the Mannanam Press and that was used as an effective mode for the education by St. Chavara. Education about media and on media is needed in the present society. This could be meritoriously practiced if we take St. Chavara as the model for education through and for media.

Meaning of Education through Media

The present era is the time of technology and media. There is a continual shift in the modes and means of technology being used for serving the cause of education in different periods of human history and civilization. In the early period of human history, when writing was unknown the method of verbal presentation on the part of teachers and citation and memorization on the part of students was a common practice in almost all the civilizations of the world. Oral teaching tradition maintained by the ancient sages in the *Gurukulas* of our country. This was the earliest form of technology or media which used in the educational system. With the advent of writing as the means and materials of communication, like writing on leaves and tree trunks, engraving on the metals and rocks, and also on the dried animal skins were contributed next generation of media for the communication and learning. Then the use of paper and ink materials provided the next breakthrough in the use of writing technology for teaching and learning. That provided a great impetus in the field of teaching and learning which witnessed the use of the subject matter available in the form of printing material and textbooks, a great scientific and technological advancement. After the printing technology, the educational system made use of next advanced set of instructional material like chalk and blackboards, pictures, charts, models, maps, diagrams and other graphic materials. The industrial development and technical advancement provided useful scientific instruments

and mass media techniques for educational purpose. The usage of media in education is essential at present and that makes educational transactions more effective.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education through Media from Primary Sources

The educational efforts through media done by St. Chavara are mainly by establishing a printing press for the availability of books to the ordinary people and through the Eclogues written by him. This could be explained under the following headings.

The Plantain Pit Revolution by St. Chavara

The new culture of printing press and books were started in Kerala by the arrival of Christian missionaries from Europe. They brought the technology of printing for the propagation of their faith through books. Benjamin Bailey and Herman Gundert started printing press in Kottayam in the year 1822 and at Thalassery in 1845 respectively. Other than these two printing presses there was a Government Printing press at Thiruvananthapuram started by King Swathi Thirunnaal in the year 1836. The tradition of indigenous printing in Kerala was initiated by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara by establishing a printing press named St. Joseph Press at Mannanam in the year 1846. It was the first non-governmental printing venture of the state. He made it available the technology of printing to the local people, till it was the monopoly of Europeans. He took initiative to start a printing press with the aim of publishing spiritual books for the people of his community, but it has got a wide range of reliance after that in the social scenario of the Kerala society. At first, he tried to understand the working of printing press at Kottayam which was under the management of CMS missionaries but it was not allowed. Then he strained

to get the printing information from Kollam, but that was also not succeeded. With a heart of determination, he went to Thiruvananthapuram Government press along with Fr. Paulose Muttuchira Parambil and observed keenly the working of a printing press. After returning to Mannanam he made the model of printing press which he had seen at Thiruvananthapuram with the plantain pith. According to this mould, the carpenter developed the printing press in wood which is preserved as a treasure in the museum at Mannanam today. The printing blocks or the letters for printing in Malayalam was very rare at that time but after a long time of hard work he made it possible with the help of a goldsmith named Sivaraman. He brought a Mumbai trained black Jew, named Kurian originally from Kochi for the binding of books at Mannanam press. The collection of paper, ink and led for the printing of books were not easy. But St. Chavara with total dedication completed his task to print books from the press which he started with such a hard work and efforts. The first book published from the press in 1847 was *Jana Piusham*, a 332-page translated version of Tamil Christian prayer book. The books, that are released from St. Joseph press Mannanam during the life time of St. Chavara were: *Suriyani Malayalam Nighndu* (Abraham Kathanar, 1848), *Balanikshepam* (1860), *Jnaprajagaram* (1862), *Novena* (1863), *Papikalude Sankethamayirikkunna Parishudha Dyvamathavinte Nereyulla Bakthi* (1865), *Thembavani Putrajananaparvam* (1866), *Derafa Amma Esoyude Thresya Enna Punyavathiyude Charithram* (1868). Deepika, the first Malayalam daily newspaper was first published from this press 1887.

Eclogues Written by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara - A Possibility of Performing Arts for Educational Purpose

There are 10 Eclogues available now which are written by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. All these dramas have high

educational values since they are good teaching strategies. They handle the theological and biblical concepts through conversations between the characters of the dramas.

The first Eclogue named *Shastrikalude Eclogue* (Eclogue of Learned men) the characters Tharasi and Menalcas discuss the birth of Christ, the King and savior of the mankind. Doubtlessly we could understand that the philosophical conversation between these characters included in this drama is for educational purpose. This is the Eclogue based on the message on which St. Chavara wanted future priest to engage the intelligentsia.

Avishwasikalude Eclogue (Eclogue of Infidels) is a preparation for the seminarians to face the sceptics in their future. Through this drama, he tried to convey the message that sceptics are universal and are found in any society. But the faithful should be strong in the basics of his faith and knowledge.

The third Eclogue is the *Piraviyariyippu: Edayanmarude Sallapam* (Announcement of Jesus's birth: Shepherd's colloquy) is a conversational drama between the characters named Melineus and Thithiro. All characters in this drama are shepherds and they are getting ready to go and see the child Jesus after the announcement by the angels. This is the Eclogue which was aimed at convincing the commoners about the birth of Jesus, the savior.

Kunjippaithangalude, Edayanmarude Sallapam (Collouqy of Little Children and Shepherds) is the fourth Eclogue. It covers the events after the shepherd's visit to the child Jesus and the killing of little children by the order of King Herod. The future priests of seminary should not forget that even children need to be convinced of the birth of Jesus, the savior was the message of the Eclogue.

Viswasavum Sharanavum Upaviyum Thammilulla Subhashitham (The Good talks between Faith, Trust and Charity) is one of the outstanding Eclogues among the ten. The eternal salvation of mankind is the main theme handled in this drama. At the moment of death, the only possession of any person is the virtues which he had done in his life time. This drama is highly philosophical and abstract in nature. It tries to convey the message of practicing the virtues in life and aiming at the eternity life after this earthly life.

There are other five eclogues which are also written by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. But they are not available in printed form. These five eclogues are not in its original form. They are re-written with some modifications in dialogues and in process. Only one among them was published by Kerala Sahithya Academy in 2014. The 6th Eclogue is the Eclogue of Kings (*Shmeshushanmarude Eclogue*). This is about the visit of kings to the baby Jesus and the meeting with King Herod. The three kings following the star and reaching the palace of the King Herod and ask for the savior of the world and without seeing the baby Jesus they are going to Bethlehem to adore Jesus. Through this eclogue St. Chavara declare the salvation of the entire world is brought by the incarnation of child Jesus. He used the medium of drama for the proclamation of the gospel values and teach the great mysteries and doctrines of the church.

The Educational Value of Eclogues

The meaning of the word, Eclogue is the song of the shepherd or song of the village. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara had written ten Eclogues during the time of 1856-1857 for the seminarians to play after the Christmas. The moral advices and spiritual messages are the contents of these dramas. The Major Seminary started at Mannanam in the year 1833 and it followed an ideal

model for priestly training. The classroom tools enhanced the learning skills like reading writing, copying and memorizing. But St. Chavara noticed that it was not enough to convey the biblical messages effectively and experientially. From 1833 onwards the seminary teaching learning system must be gone through different practices which were more helpful for the content transaction. After starting the seminary at Koonammamvu in 1857, as the *Malpan* of seminarians St. Chavara was probably hunting for fresh and feasible ideas to make priestly education more lively or interactive by maintaining the disciplined and spiritual atmosphere of a monastic life inside the seminary. St. Chavara must have convinced of the effectiveness of Dramas in conveying the messages. He wrote 10 eclogues and tried to teach them and stage it in the seminary. It was a method of learning. By writing and staging these dramas St. Chavara had the aim that monasteries to be the centers of learning, seminaries to be the platform to transfer and reinforce the learning to priests and the community at a large and that drama could serve as a powerful vehicle. The eclogues he wrote were in good balance of spirituality and entertainments. All these eclogues are of nearly 30 minutes and it was staged in seminaries as a practice for last one century. These dramas are Indian version of eclogues and rich in Sanskrit words. He used the medium of drama very effectively to convey and teach the theological concepts of incarnation of Jesus Christ into the ordinary colloquial Malayalam. Through the Eclogues, St. Chavara give the message that a life in sync with nature was God's design. St. Chavara emphasizes the esteem accorded to agrarian life by highlighting the biblical incident of shepherds who had received the God's message firsthand. The simple and humble hearted people are dear and close to God. The Eclogues ask us basic questions about life and personal identity through the conversations between the characters. It reveals the incarnation

of God, one of the theological mysteries of Christian faith and explains it to the ordinary people in their language through an art form.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education through Media from the Writings

Kumbalakkuzhy (2016) talks about the importance and reasons of the printing press and publishing of books by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. By the middle of the 19th century educational institutions spread all over the country. Then the need of books for higher reading rose and the remedy for this need was the printed books and dailies. Because of the British rule existed in India, who studied English language could get the English books and materials. The English printing was started already in Bombay and Calcutta by that time. But the availability of books in mother tongue only could satisfy the increasing need of reading and studying. This was understood by St. Chavara and he started the printing press and published the books in Malayalam language.

Zacharia (2017) identifies that the establishment of printing press at Mannanam was a radical act of far reaching cultural and social consequences. It promotes the devolution of knowledge to the common- most denominator of society.

Paul (2017) writes that St. Chavara started publishing, because he realized that the common people should learn to read and he worked towards that end. The printing and publishing efforts done by St. Chavara had the vision of educating the mass through books. St. Chavara was identified as the model and precursor of Kerala *Granthasala* (library) movement. In order to make available of books freely, St. Chavara devised a new method that the books were to be kept at one place, people can come and pick up a book, read it, and return it. Then other

people can also read that. This system made reading rooms and formation of library over the time.

Rajashekharan (2017) explains the revolution brought out by St. Chavara through the printing press in Kerala. St. Chavara's effort was a very indigenous method adopted by him. Knowing well that the print know-how which so far had been a European monopoly. The establishment of printing press at Mannanam made St. Chavara one of the initiators of the process of modernization of Kerala.

Rahavan (2017) says that St. Chavara realized that the print media was crucial if the learning revolution facilitated through schools was to progress in a meaningful and effective manner. It was as a culmination of his vision that he set up St. Joseph press at Mannanam in 1846.

Kuriyedath (2017) notes that the aim of starting the printing press at Mannanam was the spreading of knowledge. There were no printing and printed books available in the catholic community of Kerala at that time. St. Chavara found the remedy for this problem by establishing the printing press.

John Paul collected all the five eclogues written by St. Chavara are published by Kerala Sahithya Academy in the year 2014. Kavalam Narayana Panikker writes about the eclogues in the introduction of the book, *Edayanadakangal*, written by St. Chavara as the rising of a new era of drama in Malayalam literature. According to the other available sources about the starting of drama literature in Malayalam, *Abhinjana Sakunthalam* written by Kerala Varma Valiya Koyithamburanin the year 1882 is considered as the first drama in Malayalam. But St. Chavara had written the eclogues between 1856-1857 and they have all the essential characteristics for a drama. The content of eclogues written by St. Chavara is following the

pattern of English eclogues but it is written fully in Malayalam language. The uniqueness of Malayalam language, the appropriate characterization of staging, the symbolic meaning and philosophical dialogues, the nature of storytelling of nomadic people etc., are the special features of the eclogues. The eclogues carry a similarity with the epic stories of ancient India. St. Chavara translated and interpreted all the biblical content to a familiar tone of our culture and tradition. He made it simple and in the conversation form. So that the ordinary people could understand them without any difficulty and at the same time it is for entertainment.

Vasudevan Nair (2017) talks about the importance of Eclogues written by St. Chavara. He wrote, directed and staged them on the premises of monasteries and churches. It was used to communicate the biblical messages in the language of common people. The dramas are talking about the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Being a catholic priest, St. Chavara tried to teach the mystery of incarnation through the dialogues of drama.

Paniker (2017) identifies the Eclogues as the milestones in the history of Malayalam drama. The Eclogues were not meant for publishing or for enriching the genre of drama in Malayalam language. They were aimed at the reinforcement of the theological insights and spiritual awakening of those trainees undergoing priestly training in the monastery to which St. Chavara belonged.

Gopinath (2017) by explaining the importance of Eclogues, says that it is the attempt for redrawing the map of Malayalam drama. St. Chavara was a man of drama and art who used these medium effectively to convey his message to the ordinary.

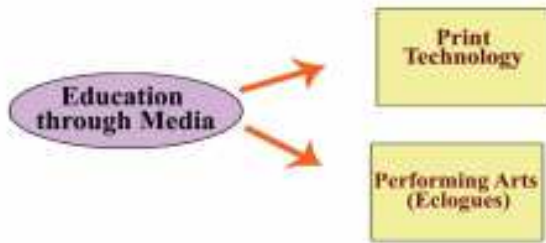
St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education through Media – Findings Emerged from Interviews

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara made use of the available media sources for educational purposes. All the experts for the interview supported this fact wholeheartedly. When we hear the word *media*, the first thing that came to mind is the printing press related with St. Chavara. There is no confusion or doubt about the contribution of St. Chavara to start a printing press at Mannanam. All have said that St. Chavara is the one who made printing technology available for Kerala common society. He used the press which was the advanced technological application available at that time for the progress of the society. He wanted to establish a community which is spiritually nourished and grounded. So that he took initiation for the publication of the spiritual books, and it was made available for a vast number of people. He was well aware of the far-reaching range of printed books, and he made use of that. The vision of inclusiveness was seen even in this mission. Though he did not start the newspaper Nazrani Deepika, later from the press he started it was published as the first Malayalam daily. Kottayam District is one of the towns which have the greatest number of publications in India. This was contributed by St. Chavara also. The Kottayam town is known as *Aksharanagari*, means the city of letters. St. Chavara had a distributing system of books and that was the initiative form of village libraries. Dr. Kurias Kumbalakkuzhy and Dr. K.S. Radhakrishnan supported this fact. St. Chavara published the book from St. Joseph Press, Mannanam and distributed through different parish churches. People could read the books and return it after a period of time. The priests who are trained from the seminary took leadership for this system. This promoted the reading habit among the people of Kerala society. St. Chavara very clearly talked about developing reading habit

from childhood onwards. He advises the parents to prepare a library at home and give books to children as a gift. This shows his interest in forming a culture of reading and it is a miracle that a person from middle of the 19th century instructs about the reading very scientifically. Fr. Jose T. Medayil, the chief editor of *Karmalakusum* said that the printing press was a ministry for St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. He published the books with the purpose of education or instruction. The books are the treasures of knowledge, and he was the man who valued books. He read books, wrote books, shared books and spread the value of books. He learned more than seven languages, and this shows his dedication to read and attain knowledge. He translated a number of stories and parables from other literature other than Malayalam, which he must have got acquainted with from his wide reading.

The Eclogue or the drama written by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is another medium of instruction and it is not familiar with most of the experts. But T.B. Abraham, Mr. John Paul and Dr. Vallikkavu are well aware of the value and content of Eclogues of St. Chavara. They said that the Eclogues written by St. Chavara is an attractive and effective medium for conveying the mysterious doctrines of the Church and basic moral and ethical values of life. Dramas are for conveying a relevant message to the audience. This is a kind of informal education and that was done beautifully by St. Chavara. He tried to teach the eternal truth of life and reality through the dialogues of each Eclogue. Through the characters of the drama, St. Chavara himself speaks about the biblical and moral doctrines. These Eclogues are not popularized since it is found only after 2000 and it is confirmed scientifically that it is written by St. Chavara. The Eclogues are the first dramas in Indian history and St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is the author of first drama written in India. There is a scope of research on the Eclogues and still it has to be studied to bring out the special features and importance of eclogues.

Discussion on St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education through Media and its Relevance in the Emerging Society



St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Education through Media

Today, media is an essential and integral part of quality education. Modern world is blessed with technological advancement and it is also useful for effective education. Knowledge is in the tip of searching fingers of the individual at any time and any space. The media determine the attitude and perception and changes the mind set of people. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara used two Medias mainly for the educational purpose; they are the print media and the Eclogues or drama. He started a printing press at Mannanam and a number of books are published from this press in his life time. One of the aims of publishing books from the press was educational. St. Chavara made available books to ordinary people and encouraged them to read the books. The common people started to go to school and get educated at that time.

The people who are educated needed books to read, and school going children also needed books for study purpose. The seminary candidates needed books for their reading and training. The Syrian Catholic Community did not have a printing press at that time, and that was a must to spread the spiritual doctrines and teaching of the church among the people. All these factors prompted St. Chavara to start a printing press and publish books. He published spiritual books from the St. Joseph Press Mannanam and he had very clear vision about the further development of the press.

The performing arts are one of the effective methods for education. Eclogues written by St. Chavara conveys the message of biblical and eternal values which a person should follow in his life. The drama has got ever ending educational value since it carries the message beyond the time limits. St. Chavara used this medium of instruction of art productively and effectively mainly to teach the seminarians of the monastery. It was a method for entertainment, enjoyment and is informative at the same time. This could be a model for educational practices of today. The complicated concepts could be enacted through simple art forms for reaching out to the ordinary people with high effectiveness. St. Chavara used all the possible means and ways to reach to the people with the message what he wanted to express whether it is spiritual or worldly. The relevance of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's contributions to education through media is high in the emerging society. The importance of printed material and performing arts has not diminished, instead it is increasing day by day. The educational system could not exist without the printing technology and the effective pedagogical methods. The present society of Kerala is advanced in reading of books, magazines and dailies. St. Chavara had an initiating role in the development of printing and reading habit of Kerala society.

CHAPTER X

ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Family is the basic unit of the society and in the present world families facing lot of chaos and problems. Numbers of broken families are increasing every day. In this modern society, the need of family education is very high and St. Chavara's vision and recommends are remedy for these problems. St. Chavara Kuriakose Elias had a clear vision about the nature and function of a Kerala family. He valued the strong and close relationship exist among family memebers and he promoted that with his words and writes. Unfortunately, we do not have a clear concept about family education even today. But from the 19th century St. Chavara speaks very clearly about the moralities and ethics of family life. That shows the greatness of this saint.

Meaning of Family Life Education

Mascarenhas (1998) says, 'Family Life education is an education that aims to inculcate a sound system of values precious to family life, in order to develop proper attitudes, skills and necessary communications to achieve and maintain stable and satisfying relationships.' Family education is an education in inculcating a sound system of values with correct priorities and to help the members of the family to acquire the skills necessary to maintain the effective relationships between them. Every individual comes from a family and lives in a family or a community of persons where life consists of a series of inter-relationships and where values determine the ethos of life. The objective of Family Life education includes supplementing the education given by the family especially by the parents in the home and the teachers in the school. It helps

to develop a good character and personality in the growing child and adolescent and provide them with good moral and spiritual code, conducive to wholesome living which will meet the challenges of today. Wherever the parents abdicate their responsibility, Family Life Education will seek to fill the gap in the school, society or college, helping them to develop a sense of right and wrong, choose good role models and set their own goals. The opportunities and role of family members undergo changes according to the development of the society at any time of the history. The family institution is still the core of society and has to be protected from disintegration. The problems and issues facing by families are one of the main concerns of every society and proper instruction and guidance should be given for the progress of the society. The family and the social patterns can be renewed to meet the changes and challenges of the time and thus improve the quality of families and the social living. By Family Life Education, families can develop the strengths to meet their needs according to the existing situations and gradually assume responsibility for the transformation of the society with an energy that is wholesome and strong. Family Life Education promotes the concept of human dignity, integrity and solidarity in a community, family and society and this is of paramount importance in a rapidly fragmenting society. The demands of the works, generation gap problems, influence of external factors etc. become the challenges for family life. Therefore, families need assistance to re-adjust before the tensions become severe so as to induce disorganization and disintegration. Through education the families should be encouraged to maintain closeness and solidarity, according to the culture of the society. A comprehensive literature review undertaken by the team of researchers led by Prof. Barbara Schneider at the University of Chicago has concluded that family structure significantly affects the academic, moral and social development of children.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Family Life Education

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's contribution on Family Life Education could be explained mainly on the basis of his letter, *Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul*. He was a man of family and he taught the lessons for building up of a good family.

St. Chavara: 'A Man of Family'

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was a man of family, although he was a *sanyasi* and a Christian priest. His life history shows that he was closely attached to his parents, especially to his mother. In his biographical poem, *Athmnuthapam* he describes very elaborately about his childhood and the formation given by his mother. In the Ist and IInd verse of this poem he talks about his mother's caring and prayerful nature. St. Chavara underlines the fact that it was his mother who gave strong basis for his spiritual life. It was from home he engrossed all the virtues of life and his childhood had great influence on him to become a man for humanity in his later life. After the loss of his parents and elder brother at the age of 12, he considered the world itself as his own family and all as his own brothers and sisters. This vision made him to work hardly for the well-being of the families. Therefore, he tried to develop a value based and spiritually oriented culture in the families. This he explains in the letter '*Oru Nalla Appante Chavaraul*'. He preached and wrote for the families. He was a man of his own family and later he becomes the member of the bigger family, the universe. In this wider meaning, we can say that he is a man of family. St. Chavara had a very positive view about marriage and family life though he was a celibate. He gratefully acknowledges the very fact of his birth, the blessed human life that was bestowed upon him by God through his own family.

St. Chavara always kept the spirit of family oneness in his community life as a religious priest. He addresses the fellow

priests as 'my dear brethren', in Malayalam it is '*Kudappirappu*' which means the children who born from same mother. He had the vision that all are one in brotherly love, and we should keep this spirit in our words and deeds. He took care of his brothers and sisters and did everything for their growth and uplift. This is the vision of ancient India that depict in the *manthra* from Maha Upanishad, '*Vasudhaiva Kudumbakam*'. The whole universe is considered as a family. It is a social philosophy stemming from a spiritual perception that the whole of humanity is originated from one life energy. Universal love and brotherhood make us understand the sorrows and pleasures of others and to be aware of it and to become the part of it. The ancient sages of India stood for the whole universe with the slogan that '*Loka Samstha Sukhino Bhabanthu*'. The person who realises and experiences the universe as his own family would stand for the wellness of fellow beings and all the creations of the universe. St. Chavara shared this great vision and he considered God as his Father and all others are his brothers and sisters.

Primary Source - *Oru Nalla Appante Chavaraul* (Testament of a Loving Father)

St. Chavara had written a letter to his parishioners at Kainakari and this is an instructional document for families. The basic principles and values for a good family are described in it with lots of stories and parables. He had written this letter as his will to the dear ones and relatives of his native place. This letter could be analyzed in the following headings.

- ***Oru Nalla Appante Chavaraul* - Magnacarta for Families**

The letter written by St. Chavara, *Oru Nalla Appante Chavaraul* is a textbook for family education. This was dated on 1868 February 13th. He had an authentic vision about the well-being

of families of his society. Therefore, he wrote this book about the upbringing of children, responsible parenting and relationship building among members of the family and others. The modern psychological and sociological elements for developing a healthy family could be seen in this book. He explains deeply and systematically the different aspects of a family life the meaning of a family, need to have an intimate, peaceful family atmosphere, methods to keep the cordial relationship among family members, the good habits inculcate among the children by parents, need of education, choice of life and vocation etc. This letter is popular with the title 'Testament of a Loving Father' and divided mainly in to two parts: Rules for a family and upbringing of children. The spiritual perception about the family and relationships are quite unique and the concepts made clear with examples and analogies.

- **Definition of a family/ A Christian Family**

The letter starts with a very meaningful and accurate definition of a family: *A family is the image of heaven, where members live together by the bond of blood and affection, duly respecting and obeying the parents, walking peacefully before God and people, seeking eternal salvation according to each one's proper sate of life.* In this definition, he brings out the personal, social and spiritual dimensions of a family. Further, he writes about the importance of having a good family, *the greatest sorrow for a man would be to live in a family where there is no peace, no order and where members live independent of each other without caring.* His advice is to avoid the quarrels and scandals among the family memebers. He says that a good family is the resemblance of heaven. The relationship between the elders and the youngsters of the family is also important to have a model family. According to him, the aim of having a family is living peacefully and attains the salvation. This did not happen when people

are living in isolation. Therefore, a family should keep up mutual understanding, relationships and respect each other. All these ideas and concepts he brings in the definition of a family. Family is a bond of communion, genetic as well as emotional along with the definite goal of relentlessly 'seeking eternal salvation' in accordance with each one's state of life that would enable members of a family to slowly but steadily shape an earthly- human family into a true image of heaven.

- **Social, Moral, Ethical and Spiritual Values for a Family**

Family is a custodian and transmitter of important values. The family is the place of origin of values and the most effective means of humanizing and personalizing society. It makes an original contribution in depth, in building up the world, by making possible a life that is properly speaking human in particular, by guarding and transmitting virtues and values. In the family the various generations come together and help one another to grow wiser and to harmonize personal rights with the other requirements of social living. St. Chavara explains the rules and regulations based on values and virtues which should be practiced in a family. He gives prime importance to practice charity at home. *Love one another and forgive mutually each one's faults and shortcomings.* He warns that *a family that is always at feuds will meet with destruction.* Patience and forgiveness are other virtues one should practice at home and society. He informs about the litigations in the court that will destroy the families. According to him the family which has no contracted debts is to be considered as the richest one. He cautions about countless expenditure more than that of one could afford. He promotes the values of time management, God-fearing, decency, justice, discipline etc. and deject the misconducts like gossiping, idleness, injustice and inequality. He teaches the parents about their responsibility

towards their children and advise the children to respect and obey the parents. He gives guidelines to keep up healthy relationships and abide in a peaceful life. He talks about the importance for a prayerful atmosphere at home and keeping a daily timetable for leading an effective life. He talks about the importance of good books and advice to have a home library. He says that keeping the books at home which have got bad content, is like keeping fire in a hay-stack. *Spiritual books and philosophical writings that promote and nurture devotion are treasures to be earned for children. Buy as many books of this sort as your means allow and keep them in store in your house.* From this we could understand that St. Chavara knew well the effects of reading books and literature as it nourishes our intelligence and widen the horizon of our knowledge and experience of life. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara wrote this 40-points instruction manual for the well-being of husband and wife, parents, youth and children in the family calling them to give attention to their social, moral and spiritual responsibility.

- **Principles for Responsible Parenting**

Parents and children are bonded for a life time. Even if the parents die, children hold their values, memory, even habits in their hearts and minds. In other words, parents continue to live through their children. The second part of the Testament of a Good Father is about the upbringing of children. He says that the children are the treasures given by God to the parents. The parents are advised to lead a prayerful life which is an example for their children. He illuminates through his letter, how to practice spirituality based on a strong foundation on prayer life within a family. Children should be nourished with spiritual food along with the material food. Those days the children were not dressed up properly and considering this situation he directs the parents not to allow the children to walk naked even inside the house. He instructs about the

healthy distance between the boys and girls during the time of their growth has to be maintained and teach them to respect each other. According to St. Chavara, education of children is one of the important responsibilities of the parents. The mode of action of parents for the character formation of the children is described very systematically by St. Chavara. *One should be neither too stern nor too lenient with one's children. Too much indulgence will make them proud and too much sensitivity and punishment will make them desperate, shameless and weak of intellect.* Also St. Chavara had a clear teaching on the punishment given to the children: *Before giving them, punishment rebuke them with prudent benevolence. While accusing them be careful not to use abusive terms.* The fundamental principle of mutual respect he teaches as: *the mother must set an example to children in loving and respecting father, and the father should teach them to love and respect mother. If parents do not love and respect each other the children cannot be expected to love and respect them.* He continues his instructions about the upbringing of children with the advice that *do not teach children to tell lies and use cunning means under the excuse that this is the way of the world.* He insists to have evening prayer at home and inculcate the sense of justice and truth among the children. One of his unique advices is about the choice of vocation of the children. St. Chavara asserts that the need and aptitude of children should be considered not the ambition of parents on selecting the vocation of the children. Finally, St. Chavara advise the children to revere their parents and do not hurt them with words or deeds.

- **Relevance of *Oru Nalla Appante Chavaraul* (Testament of a Loving Father) in the Modern World**

The Testament of a Loving Father contains basic principles of responsible parenting and building up of a good family. The specific feature of this instruction material is, it was produced

in the 19th century and still it is relevant in the 21st century. He describes the means and ways to build up a good family with a heart of loving father and in simple language with analogies. The psychological and social principles of responsible parenting like respect for personal privacy, consciousness about conversations, give practice for charity at home, cultivating sense of justice among children, handling of wealth and money in proper ways, balancing the income and expenditure, make the best use of resources, moderation in food habits, keeping authenticity and honesty in day-to-day life etc. are the contents of this letter. The importance of developing a habit of reading among children is also explained beautifully. He had given more emphasis on spiritual basis of the family and spiritual formation of the children. We could identify this as the need of the time. He illustrates the family as a nest which is buildup of love and communion and travelling together to the desired goal that is attaining the salvation. In this journey parents, elders and children have got their own roles to fulfill and St. Chavara reminds all those responsibilities with a systematic and analytical mind. He advises parents that they have to be vigilant enough to handle their children with prudence and love. The solution of the many problems of upbringing of children is given in this instructional manual. Each and every sentence of *Chavarul* is relevant and meaningful even today with content and conceptual wise. Through the letter to families St. Chavara proved himself as an excellent teacher and a pastor. This was a letter for the Christian families of Kainakary, but it is relevant for all the families to have a robust and peaceful life.

Primary Sources other than Testament on Family Life Education

There are some other writings from St. Chavara which clearly support the values of family life. The selected texts other than Testament are given here:

Athmanuthapam, the poetic work of St. Chavara also has a family educational value. In the Canto I, lines 45- 140 and Canto II, lines 1-34, he clearly describes how his own mother trained him in his childhood. He depicts his mother as a role model for all other mothers. It is very clear from these lines that he got the strong basis for his prayer life, spiritual growth, moral development and character formation from his mother.

*Mixed in her sweet milk, she regaled me
With the thoughts of heaven, and words of grace so pure
And when reason grew strong, little mind
Patiently, informed, to lips holy names.
Huddled close to her feet, I learnt aright
Gently, of matters of sublime, of my faith (Canto I,49-54)*

The parents should correct their children but with love and utmost care. He says how his mother corrected him:

*Never once she use the rode to chastise
Nor with a harsh touch did she smite me
Her, eyes they wielded the mighty power to hit me
Or needs be, to fondle me, in approval. (Canto I, 80-84)*

Again, he talks about her devotion to the saints and how she conveyed to the little child beautifully. By explaining his own mother's method of child bringing, he respects his mother and giving a model for all other mothers.

Providing Education for Families: Ministry of St. Chavara's Followers

The men and women religious congregation namely CMI and CMC are following the path of their founder St. Kuriakose

Elias Chavara and they consider the ministry of Family Apostolate as one of their major duties. These congregations spend their wealth and members for the uplift of families and consider it as their prime duty. This spirit they have received from their founder and that is also an evidence of St. Chavara's contribution for the Family Education. The two congregations are actively doing family services through counseling, home visits, construction of houses, helping to solve the problems and issues of the families, providing spiritual, psychological and ethical helps for managing the issues of family life and also handling the problems of grooming the children.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Family Life Education from other writings

There are a number of books and articles written on the significance and importance of the Testament of a Loving Father.

Even though Testament of a Loving Father was written only fifty years ago, it contains concerns that are adaptable to the current environments. Through this letter St. Chavara was transferring the thoughts that came as revelations to him by the power of his meditations and purity of mind. Guidelines for the family were foreseen and devised as guidelines for posterity. The letter is a short one of 18 pages but, its magnitude relevance and its consoling warmth travel across the borders of time by the unmatched lights of its naïve love and pure thoughts (Chacko, 2004).

Kaniarakath (2018) analyzes the theological dimensions of the Chavarul and establishes St. Kuriakose Elias as the Teacher of Family Theology. The book starts with the explanation on the settings of the Testament and contains a comparative analysis between the views of St. Chavara and other teachers of the

Church on family. The important principle for a family is God centered life and it is the duty of parents to form and maintain the culture of God centeredness in the family. This letter could be considered as the masterpiece manual on Christian family spirituality, and it is highly biblical, pastoral, theological and still relevant.

Vasudevan Nair (2017) says that the Testament of a Loving Father is replete with wise sayings that goes beyond any religion. Dictums like 'a day you have not helped another person shall not be counted in your life' graces the horizons of humanity.

Mohammed (2017) explains the social approach of directives of family written by St. Chavara. He had written the Testament strongly founded on practical observations and real facts in the society. The characteristic traits of a family analyzed by the social scientists are universality, emotional basis, limited size, formative influence, central position in the social structure, responsibility of the members, social regulation and permanent and temporary nature. All these characteristics are addressed by St. Chavara in his letter the Testament. He realized the social and functional importance of families as early as in the 19th century and the realization survives beyond the time.

Rajaratnam (2017) identifies the invaluable insights of the Testament by explaining the qualities needed for a family described by St. Chavara. The instructions for the protection of health, career and finance, individual qualities needed to develop by the families, social interaction system within the families, principles for parenting etc. are described in detail. The Testament written by St. Chavara is timeless, precious, vital filled with wisdom yet so simple, vivid and practical.

Raghaviah (2017) describes the Testament of a Loving Father as a saint's vision of a model family. St. Chavara visualized

the family as the most vital edifice of humanity and would have immense influence in building a society. He emphasized the great importance of the spiritual tradition nurtured in the family and explained how to practice it in the family.

Paul (2015) writes that the Testament is fruits of his meditation and the lesson of his life, is for all times. The tenets for building deep family bonds were set down as guidance for all generation. The Testament rings with authority and insists that its dictates are complied with. It is both a celebration of the values of family life and a document on the do's and don'ts of bringing up of children. St. Chavara's definition of the ideal family make this document universally acceptable manual for good families (James, 2015).

St. Chavara always stressed on the spiritual renewal of the families. He wrote the Testament for family discipline. He wished to make each family a heaven on earth. Even today the Testament serves as a guideline for the reform of families (Noel, 2015).

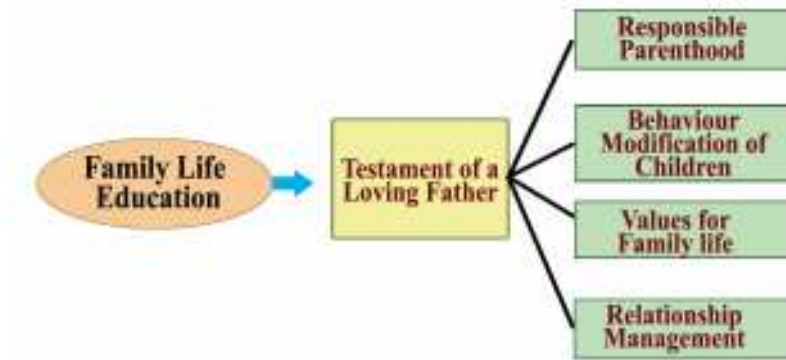
St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Family Life Education-Findings Emerged from Interviews

Educations for families is very much needed today. We could inculcate family education through the formal educational system of today. During 19th century it was not possible. Therefore, St. Chavara had given the instructions in the form of a letter to his parishioners. The content of the letter is relevant even today. But the ways and means could be changed at present. In *Chavarul*, he addressed and advised all the sections of family. He considered parents and children as separate groups and given them instructions according to their status and responsibility. For him parents and children are the mini sections of the society and strappingly constructed family

contributes towards a well-developed society. Fr. George Edayadiyil CMI, the Rector of Dharmaram, Bangalore opined that all the services done by St. Chavara were oriented towards the uplift of families. It is not justice, if we limit the contributions of St. Chavara for families only by the Testament for the family education. He had sermons, letters, retreats, pastoral works etc. for the well-being of families. He prepared priest to guide the families. He gave education to girls and women for leading a better life in their families. Therefore, not only the Testament of St. Chavara, but all the activities he intended to build up virtue-based family and thus to form a value centered society. Family education is needed even today but it is not taken seriously by the church or the government. In modern world we have to find out new methods and means for the education of families. Some of the interviewees opined that the parent associations, associated with the educational institutions could be used as a platform for the family education. The Testament- *Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul*, is the best instructional material for family education. This was the opinion of all the experts who participated in the interview. The message and importance of Testament is not reached to the people. Though it was written exclusively for the parishioners of St. Chavara, it is relevant for all including non-Catholic families. The *Chavarul* describes various topics like responsibilities of parents and children, the mutual respect among members of the family, the virtues and values should teach and practice in the family etc. St. Chavara talks about the importance of reading books and preserving a small library at home, before 200 years ago. He talks about the discernment of life choice, the sharing of inheritance of a family, the finding of a suitable marital relationship and giving justifiable wages to the servants and workers. Almost all the dimensions of a family life are explored and addressed in the *Chavarul*. The modern principles of parenting and child upbringing are

shadowed in the *Chavarul*. Fr. Thomas Kallukalam, the rector of Chavara Bhavan Kainakari, said that St. Chavara is a man of family. The childhood of St. Chavara was in Kainakari, the small village in Kuttanadu, and this place influenced him to form the vision about family. His autobiographical poem named *Athmanuthapam* witnesses that his own family was a sweet memory and model for him. Based on that childhood experiences he had in his family he built up the concept of a model family and later he advised his parishioners through the letter, *Chavarul*. The pastoral experiences as a priest also added to his vision about families. He realized the cause of ills and evils of the society are due to the lack of virtue-based families. So, he wanted to renew the families and he tried in all possible ways to educate the families for a better life.

Discussion on St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Family Life Education and its Relevance in the Emerging Society



St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Family Life Education

The home of God- centered family is the first and best school where in education is looked up on as a co-operative task shared by both parents and elders in the childhood of an individual

and it will be continued and developed afterwards. A family is the basis for an individual's self-identity, self-esteem and self-value. The family is considered as the miniature unit of society with the members of each unit finding mutual fulfillment leading to maturity. The family-society link has been made to appear that the family has no other function except to act as a constitutive element of the bigger society. It is the atmosphere of love and generosity, honesty and loyalty that transform the lives of members of a family to mature and caring individuals. Since the creator of all things has established the conjugal partnership as the beginning and basis of human society, the family is the first and vital cell of the society. Therefore, caring of the construction and continuous education for the families is very much needed. Here comes the importance of family ministry done by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. He recognized the significance of family life education and also became a proponent for the family life education.

Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul written by St. Chavara is a best syllabus and instructions for family life education. *Chavarul* has amazing relevance in contemporary society. Modern living and advancement of technology have caused human beings to lose the kind of family ideals pictured by St. Chavara. Every instruction in this document is a reminder to parents and children of the present time. All religions would agree with the spirit and basic messages of the Testament though the author is a Catholic priest. Family life education is a need of the time now. The *Chavarul* includes the messages with an eternal value and relevance because staying together as a family and brining up children are the most challenging tasks whenever the society progress materially and intellectually. The reality of home management and upbringing of children require an orientation strong enough to conform to moral values and for this St. Chavara's Testament is precious source of reference and assurance.

The relevance for the concept of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara on Family Life Education in the Emerging Society is at high level. From the interviews it is clear that Family Life Education is very much a need of our times but practical and effective methods using for actualizing it is lacking. St. Chavara promoted Family Life Education in all possible ways and that should be followed by the contemporary society for a better formation. The family has a vital and organic link with society. It is the foundation and nourishes it continuously, through its role of service to life. It is from the family, citizens come to birth and it is within the family that they find the first school of the social virtues that are the animating principle of existence and development of the society itself. The family life education is need of the time and it is highly relevant. But the mode and methods of family life education should be changed according to the modern time.

CHAPTER XI

ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Vocational education is not a job training; it is not perfection of skills, it is not tricks of the trade, but it is the attitudes, emotions, ethics, conduct, language and beauty that transforms jobs into vocations and making men and women to the guardian of their neighbors and citizens of the world. It is to walk worthy of the vocation where with we are called' (Keller and Franklin1948). Vocational education aims at the act of directing of a person's life activities so as to make them significant to themselves and useful to the fellows. It is the education and training for doing a manual work. There are different concepts about vocational education and one among them is that education which is craft-oriented. The major objective of craft-oriented education or training is to aid learners in work efficiency that is possible in earning their living by providing special instruction in single crafts or trades. The education or training given in this manner lacks academic or cultural aspects of education. We could say that St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara identified the need of the time and implemented vocational training for the men and women for the well-being of individuals and the society. He had taken the initiatives for the handy craft vocational education. He promoted the concept of earning for the family and that gives respect and fulfillment for the person. A grossing member is an asset for the family as well as the society.

Meaning of Vocational Education

Vocational education with its emphasis on preparation for jobs and careers in diversified vocational-professional fields, occupies an important place in the bringing up of new workers

and entrepreneurs. The meaning attached to the word 'vocation' is something which makes the individuals life worth living for themselves and for the society. Vocational efficiency has become one of the primary concerns of modern education. Education has got a realm of vocational aim. Human progress depends upon techniques as much as upon intellectual stimulation. Without vocational skills and technological efficiency education tends to be an exercise in contemplation and abstraction. The purpose of education is not merely contributed to the continuity of culture, but also to change peacefully and rationally the material foundations of civilization. Education must essentially aim at giving the individual a capacity to earn his/ her livelihood. Vocational education in the true meaning stands for the specific job training that suits to the individuals' needs and capacities and enables the individual to become economically self-sufficient. A good programme of education not only enables the individual to develop the personality and meet the physical needs of the life and also it should be helpful to contribute for the enrichment of society. The vocational skills should be trained in such a way that it promotes the progress of the community. The education in its broad sense is vocational in nature, since it contributes to vocational competence. But in narrow meaning vocational education is for 'making a lively hood.'

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Vocational Education from Primary Sources

There is evidence that St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara had taken the initiative for giving training in some skills and handicrafts in the seminary and in the boarding house as the part of their learning system. The purpose of this training was to make the individual more self-sufficient and life oriented.

In the chronicle of Mannanam monastery (Vol. I, p. 57), it is written that the learning activities of the seminary includes *praying, drawing, writing, singing, playing the instruments, discussions* etc. It is clear from this explanation that the members of the seminary were trained in some basic skills of drawing, musical instruments and singing. This starting gave path for training and vocational centers run by the fathers of the monastery. The CMI congregation has numerous vocational training centers today which share the vision of St. Chavara.

In the description of starting of the convent at Koonammavu, the materials which were prepared and kept in the rooms of sisters by the founder fathers, St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Fr. Leopold Beccaro OCD, are given. The materials needed for the needle and craft work is placed in sisters' room for them to get practices. The Chronicle of Koonammavu Convent says about these materials like this: *for sewing a box of needles, ball thread, card thread, silk thread, yellow and violet colour thread, black silk thread, pair of scissors, pen knife, stylus (a pointed tool for writing on palm leaves), wire and pliers to make rosary and penitential girdles were kept. There were the brown cloth and cloth imprinted with the image of Mary and other things necessary to make scapulars. They had not only brought all these kinds of things but also arranged them with their own hands before we arrived* (CKC, pp. 11-12). They kept all these materials in order to make them use for handy craft training. It was in his vision that women should learn a means for lively hood and that will help them to stand firm on their own. The sisters were trained in different handy works and that in turn was taught to the girls in the boarding house later. Thus, the girls also received the vocational training. It was not the exact form of vocational education of today. But he encouraged the making of rosaries, scapulars, flowers with papers and cloth etc. The Koonammavu convent becomes a school for handy works and the people around the convent learnt to make rosaries and other pious

articles from the sisters of the convent. It became a business which helped those families to earn their income. The rosaries and other pious materials made in Koonammavu are having exporting quality and highly appreciated worldwide.

From the beginning of the convent, St. Chavara and Fr. Leopold had enthusiastically provided an ecosystem which was needed for the uplift of the members of the convent. It is written about the training in handicrafts in the Chronicle of Koonammavu convent as: *our delegate very reverent Moopachan was in search of a woman of some learning to teach us handicrafts. At a place called Kotta in Cochin, there was a woman called Francisca, who made woolen articles. She knew how to make flowers and such other things. She also knew enough of needle work. Moopachan and Priorachan together came to see us and then told us all these in detail*

(CKC, p.35). In this description we get a clear idea that the sisters were given training for handy crafts work. This could be considered as the primitive form of today's vocational education.

There is evidence in the Chronicle of Koonamavu convent about the training given to the sisters for the handy craft works. St. Chavara and Fr. Leopold brought some ladies to give practice in the handy works. In the page 60, it is given like this: *when he asked us whether the granny who had been brought from Anjuthengu to teach us work had begun her teaching, we replied, yes. Again, on the page no. 156 describes about some foreign ladies who would teach the sisters the works: on November 24th Rev, Garveenamoopachan from Fort Cochin came along with our fathers to the chapel and saw it after which they went to Edukkumdath and then they came upstairs to see our works. He said to our fathers: there are foreign ladies there who know very good arts and crafts. I shall send one of them to teach them. She is devout and virtuous person.* This shows that the sisters of the

convent were learning the art work and simple handicrafts. St. Chavara and Fr. Leopold searched for people who could provide training in these to the sisters. They envisaged a convent system which will be helpful for learning some art and handy craft work for the girls and that will be helpful for them to earn in their life. The convents started different educational and training centers later based on this vision of founder fathers. Handy crafts centers, small scale printing press, bread making units, the holy particles for holy mass and pious articles making units for church activities, cloth stitching and embroidery making units etc. came up related with the convents for the uplift of women folk. Vocational training centers and self-help groups are today's continuation of this vision of St. Chavara on Vocational training.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Vocational Education from Secondary Sources

The famous historian Narayan (2017) observes that St. Chavara realized that vocational training was necessary to promote self-employment avenues for women and that there should be opportunities for them to market their products.

Paul (2017) writes that the vision of St. Chavara on education was radically different from the conventional notion. For him education was not just learning from text books, rather vocational training was an important part of education. Perhaps in India, he was the first to realize this and develop a stream of education in directions other than the *Gurukustyle*.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Vocational Education-Findings Emerged from Interviews

The experts said that St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara had the vision of Vocational education and he inculcated that in the training given for the seminarians in the monastery and also to the

nuns and girls in the convent. But it is entirely different from the formal vocational education of today's concept. It was an informal training which aimed to prepare the individual for better life and performance. There is another aim to earn for the livelihood. He understood the values of an earning member within the family and that will raise the respect and status of the person as well as the family. Therefore, he wanted that the individuals should be self-sufficient and protect themselves with their own effort. Through the vocational training he wanted to actualize the all-round development of the individual. We should understand the vocational training was an integral part of his educational vision. During his time, even the education for common people was not easy to access. When St. Chavara opened the school and a learning system, he thought about the future of the individuals that they could lead a life without depending on others. For that the students should be trained with something which is productive and useful. The policy for vocational education came into existence even much after the impendence of the country. This is one of the peculiar contributions of St. Chavara that he could promote the vocational education event though it was not in the present form. He had taken special care for the vocational training for girls in the boarding houses of convents and took initiative to bring good trainers for teaches them simple handy crafts. The nuns also trained under his instruction and that became a practice in the convent life. Later the convents managed the handy craft and stitching centers especially for the women. The uplift and progress of an individual and a family could be based on the earning members of the family. Education has got a vocational aim too and it was recognized and actualized by St. Chavara even two centuries ago. Music and playing musical instruments were practiced in the seminary and in the convent for the liturgical purposes. Training in cooking and household works is given for the better family life and that was mainly given to the girls who joined in the boarding

houses attached with the convents. The basics of Mathematics and languages like Malayalam, Tamil, and Sanskrit were taught in the schools and boarding houses. Special teachers were appointed for the handy craft work and that also was an integral part of the education. Thus, St. Chavara made it possible to form a new generation who were educated and trained well to face the life with confidence and hope. This is also a model for the modern educational system. Vocational training and Vocational education are very much needed for a developing country like India. So, the inspiration and idea of the great sage St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara could be imitated for more progressive community.

Discussion on St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara’s Contributions to Vocational Education and its Relevance in the Emerging Society



St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara’s Contributions to Vocational Education

Vocational education and the training for a particular vocation were different at the time of 19th century. The occupation or the job was determined on the bases of religion and the caste. There was no choice for the individual to select the interesting job. But at that time, St. Chavara initiated the skill-based education and vocational training. Both in the seminary and in the convent, he had given the education with the practice of some skills and crafts. This shows that he had a clear view about the uplift of the society and the methods and measures which must be adapted to achieve that. The educational system in the seminary and in the boarding houses for girls followed the learning of some basic skill training and handicrafts. This helped the individual to build up a better life and contribute towards the progress of the family and society. That was the vision of St. Chavara. He searched in different places for appropriate trainers and brought them to conduct the classes providing all facilities. This shows his dedication and determination for giving the vocational training. The congregations started by St. Chavara, namely CMI and CMC, continue his vision for vocational training by conducting several educational institutions only for the vocational purposes which is fulfilling the nation's requirement of today. From the interviews, it is clear that St. Chavara contributed for the vocational education, and it was slightly different from today's concept on vocational training. He emphasized on the training in handy crafts and some basic skills like music, gardening, making pious articles and rosaries. Based on the above facts the analysis could be concluded that St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's contributions to Vocational Education is highly relevant in this Emerging Society.

CHAPTER XII

ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO VALUE EDUCATION

The present world experiences the paucity of persons with values. An effective educational system should provide the persons with high morale and values. This was understood by St. Chavara and through his writings and activities he became a model for values and inspired others for living a value-based life. As a teacher and a formation superior of seminarians and nuns he taught the meaning of eternal values and became a model for them by practicing it. The *Chavarul* written by him is a best document for value education. Value education is an essential need of the society at any period of time. St. Chavara believed that education and culture should grow into charity for the subjugated and the orphans. He cried out to the world that every human being has the right to live and die in honour. Therefore, he established the home for destitutes and shelter for the abandoned ones. This was an educational strategy of authentic teaching on values of sympathy, love and care for others.

Meaning of Value Education

Education is an essential human virtue, and without it, human being is a splendid slave, and a reasoning savage. It is therefore necessary to humanize him. Man is what education makes him. Education fashions, shapes and models him for society. An individual is not a human being in any proper sense till he is educated. With the help of education, he is transformed in to a real human being fit for social life. According to Wilmont, "Education is the apprenticeship of life." It assumes the full

burden of bringing up-to date. Education implies experiences, insights and adjustment on the part of man as he is stimulated towards growth and development. Man develops his intelligence and reasoning, receives knowledge and cultivates good habits, skills and essential human virtues. Education enables an individual to realize higher values of life which are essential for that person to become the 'roof and crown' of all creation. Therefore, education should be based on real values.

Value is an attribute for or against an event or phenomenon based on a belief that it benefits or penalizes the person, group or institution. A value is a preferred belief on which the individual chooses to act up on. The human conscience is the primary source of value awareness. Human values play a significant role in national development also. The transformation of a developing country presupposes a change in values which brings out the progress of the nation and its unity. Values guide the behaviour and put meaning into the existence and keep every individual on the right path towards the life goal. A person is known for his or her own values since his or her attitudes and behaviour result from their expressions. Education is aiming at the behaviour modification of the individual and this growth should be based on real and positive values. The international association for Human Values defines human values as 'attitudes, norms and behaviour that represent highest expression of human life' common across cultures, including caring for others, compassion, cooperation, service to the society, generosity and sharing, a sense of commitment and responsibility, integrity and so on. Values help people to solve common human problems by defining what is desirable, useful, beneficial and important. Value education is a significant part of Indian culture. *Veda Vyas* in *Bhagavad Gita*, describes 26 values that are denoted for an ideal human being. This includes the values like fearlessness, purity of heart, charity, control over senses, sacrifice,

straightforwardness, truth, nonviolence, renunciation, absence of anger etc. Sage *Valmiki* in his *Ramayana* declared 15 attributes like piety, gratitude, truth, commitment, compassionate, pleasant, self-knowledge etc. for a personality to observe as moral practice. Various commissions on Education and all educational policies proposed so far by the government speak about the need for developing attitudes, values and skills that are desirable in a person to be an effective member of society. According to Gandhiji the true meaning of education is harmonious development of head, heart and hand, i.e., the enlightenment of mind, compassion and dignity of labour. To guide the individuals on the right path, to develop an overall personality with good morals, the value inculcation is needed in education.

Value education means inculcating in the individual a sense of humanism, a deep concern for the well-being of others and the nation. The aim of value education is to develop the social, moral, aesthetic and spiritual side of a person which is often undermined in formal education. It teaches us to preserve whatever is good and worthwhile in what we have inherited from our culture. It is the building of capacity to transform a diseased mind into the very strong, fresh, innocent, healthy, natural and attentive mind. A transformed mind is capable of higher sensitivity and a heightened level of perception. This leads to fulfillment of the evolutionary role in human and in life.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Value Education from Primary Sources

There are social, spiritual, moral, religious, family and biblical values present in the writings of St. Chavara. All of his poetic works, mediation points, letters, etc. contain a lot of value-based instructions and suggestions. The chronicles also have

value-based texts but it was mainly focused on day-to-day affairs of the monastery and convent as well as the historical events of the time. The Testament includes mainly family values. This shows that he was a man of values. Being a Catholic priest and a superior of the congregation his life was a model for others. The contemporaries identify St. Chavara as 'man of God', a man adorned with divine grace', a man of divine vision', or 'a man full of Holy Spirit'. This was because he always lived in the presence of God. Fr. Leopold Beccaro, his spiritual mentor, describing his sainthood as 'after a life of great innocence, such that he himself could declare before the death that he never lost the baptismal innocence'.

Selected texts on different values from his writings are given below:

He described prayer as the conversation between friends. Meditation is a conversation which presupposes an intimate relationship with God. He says: *for, when friends sit to close each other, they find enough topics to talk about without cessation. If there is love, conversation goes unlimited. No one needs teach either of the two fiends how to go on talking. For the heart has a language of its own* (Colloquies on Meditation, I).

Love and forgiveness are biblical values. He says: *Each one forgives the short comings of others. That will give you peace on earth and eternal joy in heaven* (Testament I,1).

He advises not to gossips. *Do not go round the houses of others and collect information about them. For, if you will look after yourself properly, you will have no time to look in to the affairs of the people* (Testament I, 7).

He was a hardworking man and he promotes the industriousness as a value. *Work as becomes your status in life. It does not become a man to refuse to work. Laziness is mother to all*

other vices it leads to drink. Drunkenness is disgraceful before the world and guilty before God (Testament I, 12).

He talks about the avoidance of undue wealth, stinginess and extravagance. *What you have achieved by crooked means or by theft will soon melt away like snow. Both stinginess and extravagance are equally sinful (Testament I,13).*

He also talks about the importance of having good friends. *Do not go for many friends. Choose one carefully from among a thousand. One who does not love God will not love you either truly (Testament I,16).*

Truthfulness is another value which is emphasized by St. Chavara. *Do not let stolen things remain in your house even for a short while. Do not mix with people who steal other people's property. For tomorrow they will not hesitate to your property. Moreover, you share their guilt and sin (Testament I, 17).*

For him fear of God is true wealth. So, he advises, *the essential worth of family consists in its holiness and fear of God. Such family will enjoy divine blessings both in this world and the next. Slander and foul talk in homes, darken the light in good families (Testament I, 18).*

He gives importance for being modest in all the words and in deeds. *Be exceedingly chaste, modest and careful, in all your movements, whether sitting or walking or lying or playing. Immodesty is disgraceful before God and men (Testament I, 19).*

He always promotes the value of charity and love. He reminded people that *A Day passed without doing something good for others should never be counted in the book of life (Testament I, 13).* This is one of his famous quotes which is an inspiration to do good deeds for others.

St. Chavara had special care for poor and needy and he writes: *do not allow beggars to leave your house empty handed, do not fail to give as much as you can, by the way of charity, never withhold just wages to the laborers or make undue delay in paying them, because that is an offence that cries out to God for justice, do not insult the poor, neither vex them, because, if God sees them weeping, he will surely wreak vengeance on you* (Testament I,13).

Humility is one of the greatest values for St. Chavara. He says: *As a mark of humility the Rev. Fathers must set an example to the youngsters in coming forward to perform the meanest offices of the community without seeking exemptions* (Letter, VI/2).

Solitude is essential for an authentic spiritual life. *We cannot enjoy the sweetness of the religious state and fulfill the obligations unless we keep ourselves aloof from others in solitude* (Letter, VI/2).

Obedience to the will of God is a great biblical value and that was practiced by St. Chavara in his life. *He who practices perfect obedience in all these spheres will enjoy heavenly peace already in the monastery which is a mini heaven. The significant mark of a true religious is total negation of their self-will and perfect obedience as though he had no eyes or ears of his own. One who poses such virtue is a true religious* (Letter, VI/4).

St. Chavara advises to practice to keep presence of God in day-to-day life. *Offer up to God every pulse beat of our veins, every winking of our eyes, and every breath of ours each chipping of birds –yes, everything as our prayer. Offer all these in union with the works of our Lord, which are of infinite merit* (Letter, VII/3).

One of his famous quotations for practicing the love of God in each moment of our life is like this: *Above all learn the art of loving God. Stay consistently in His presence. Walk along with Him. Converse with Him continuously* (Letter, VII/6).

He always promotes the value of reading good books. In the following text he says how the reading habit helps an individual to grow in spiritual life and attain the union with God. *The time you save after your proper work and recreation should be spent in spiritual reading. Some may like to read light materials, such as news and stories, others may like read about the holy passion and sufferings of the saints. The first group cares more for knowledge and enjoyment, the second group for knowledge and devotion. The latter is the sure way to acquire virtue and to preserve in the same. If you love reading you will love solitude. When the soul delights in solitude, Jesus Christ will come to converse with that soul in solitude and begin communing with it* (Letter, VII/86).

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Value Education by Actions

Two initiatives by St. Chavara could be considered as the very actions of the application of value education. He considered the old and sick people and started a confraternity for the dying. *Upavisala*, the house for the orphans and abandoned is another attempt to protect the poor of the society.

- **Confraternity of Happy Death**

St. Chavara not only gives instructions for value education, but he had taken initiatives to practice the ethics of life. Being a spiritual leader of his time, he used his influence among people to do good works. It is the very right of a human being to spend the last moment of life with honor and respect and die in peace. This was a main concern of St. Chavara. He prompted people to start a Confraternity of Happy Death. He published a circular in the year 1843 from Mannanam, inviting people to join the confraternity: *in order that such a pious practice may be continued without break and as the team action will be more propitious, all those who wish to meet a happy death may form a*

confraternity under the patronage of St. Joseph for happy death. (Circular IX: 1). He instructs people to give little money for the purpose and join in the group. "Of all the help given to a man, the greatest is that given to him at the moment of death. This is again, the greatest act of charity. One cannot measure the greatness of such a dead". The members of the confraternity were advised to visit the sick and the dying either in the hospital or at home. The duty of the members is to help, nurse and prepare them for a happy death. He writes in the letter to his parishioners: Every member should go alone, or in company with others to visit the sick person who is reported to be nearing his or her death, and see that the last sacraments are administered to him or her and designate person to nurse the sick person, taking turns and setting a time table for them to change their duty time. The information and his helpers will be responsible for this and all the members are bound to obey him. This act of mercy is the primary duty of members.

He also advised them to adopt a poor family in their neighborhood and to provide them with food and clothes especially on the feast day of St. Joseph. This became a pious tradition in Christian families, monasteries and convents. They follow this tradition of giving food and clothes to a poor family on every March 19, the feast day of St. Joseph.

- ***Upavisala - House of Charity***

Love for destitute is the noblest form of humanness. Love for God become genuine only when a person can care for the fellow being. St. Chavara inspires his people to start a house of charity, *Upavisala* for the destitute and the abandoned to have free shelter and care. This shows the compassionate attitude of St. Chavara and his great concern for the poor and sick. Inspired by his concept of caring for poor the parishioners of Kainakary started a home for destitute. All the people irrespective of

religion, caste, creed or gender were admitted in that house. This was the first established charity home in Kerala and that is also a historical event which is contributed by the great visionary, St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. This is considered as an essential service to the society now. Today there are numerous orphanages, home for boys and for girls, destitute houses, palliative care units, houses for mentally challenged etc., in the society. St. Chavara being a man of God and man for others fulfilled his responsibility to take care of his fellow beings who are very poor and sick.

Following the footsteps of St. Chavara, the men and women congregations started by him, CMI and CMC, run hospitals, palliative care units, mobile clinics, orphanages, old age homes, homes for destitutes, social work centers, houses for street boys and girls, rehabilitations centers for men and women, house for transgenders, care homes for HIV patients, institutions for differently abled children etc. The vision and mission radiated from the great legacy St. Chavara, still shines through activities of these congregations.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Value Education from Secondary Sources

Vithuvettical (2004) gives a full description on the virtue-based life of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara elaborately in the article 'A life Full of Virtues'. St. Chavara is a man of faith, hope and charity. Cardinal virtues like Prudence and temperance, religious values like poverty, chastity and obedience, humility etc. were portrayed in the personality of St. Chavara very clearly.

St. Chavara upholds the traditional and cultural values ingrained in the fiber of the society, while breaking down the pillars of oppressive structures. The famous Malayalam poet

ONV Kuruppu (2015) explains the cultural reawakening brought out by St. Chavara and establishes the fact that he was also the proponent of cultural values of Kerala.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was a 'man of God' and this was the most attractive factor of his personality. The strong faith in God was enunciated in every step of his life. His love of God is based in the love for others. The aim of starting the religious house is that the salvation of the soul and save the souls of others. He always believed that all the talents which he had received from God are fully for the goodness of others. He was a peace maker among the difficult situations of the Church as well as society. He proved with his life that one could love God whole heartedly and could express that love for God through the selfless actions which are needed for the uplift of others (Ikkara, 1981).

Kadankavil (2014) depicts St. Chavara as the personality decorated with abundant virtues. His writings establish beyond doubt that besides all theological and cardinal virtues, St. Chavara adorned with all desirable natural virtues.

Sreedharamenon (2017) says that St. Chavara's contributions to achieve communal integrity and tolerance in society are priceless. He has always shown a deep concern for the feeling of the non- Christian community of the locality. St. Chavara taught us that peaceful human relationships are much important than the religious institutions constructed in stone and wood.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Value Education- Findings Emerged from Interviews

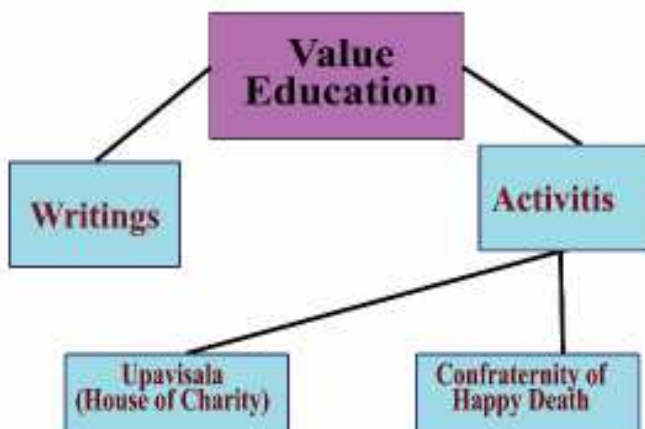
The experts of interview opinioned that St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara lived a life of values. We cannot find a syllabus-

oriented value education in his educational vision and mission. But what he did was fully value oriented and value based. He brought out the values by his very actions. Love, charity, prayer, equality, justice, peace, teamwork, community spirit, respectfulness, simplicity, modesty, humility, neatness, discipline, reading books, responsible parenthood is some of his great values. He tried to cultivate the empathetic attitude by caring of elderly and sick of the society. It is also highly relevant at present.

Joy Chencheril, the writer and chief editor of *Karunikan* magazine, Kochi, opinioned that education itself is value based, especially the education of two centuries ago. There is no need of any distinction between value-based education and general education. At that time, especially a saintly person like St. Chavara, the education given is only value based. He was a man of soil and recognized the true value of Indian culture. Therefore, his social activities were rooted in the culture of India. Internal transformation was his intention in all of his activities, because he was a spiritual person. There was a clear and authentic alignment between his words and actions. He addressed the hearts of people and his works and words were rooted in Christian values. St. Chavara brought out the great value of equality and justice by the very action of providing educational facilities for all. His writings are filled with the narration and advices of virtues and there are simple explanations with small stories and parables to describe the real meaning and concept. He preached the values and lived for the values. The *Upavisala* is the best example for his concern for destitutes and poor people. Also, the Confraternity of Death is another initiative which could only get origin from a person of value-based life. Through the collection of handful of rice, known as *Pidiyari*, St. Chavara taught a social value of sharing and empathy. He promoted the religious harmony and it is

very evident in the history of selection of the place of Mannanam Monastery. He refused to start a monastery at Pullarikunnu, due to the dislike of the Hindu of that place. He wanted all the people should live in peace and harmony. There are values in his writings and most of them are biblical and spiritual in nature.

Discussion on St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Value Education and its Relevance in the Emerging Society



St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Value Education

Increasing concern is expressed every day about the general deterioration in values in contemporary social life. It is always the acts of immorality that have shown the seeds of unhappiness, hatred, jealousy, enmity in the society. There is need for appropriate educational action to meet the challenges of societal shrinkages in values. The National Educational Policy (1986) has stated 'the growing concern over the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in order to make

education a forceful tool for the cultivation of the social and moral values. Education without vision is waste; education without value is crime; education without mission is life burden. St. Chavara with his vision, mission and value-based education build up a new society here in Kerala with equality and unity. His advices are suitable remedies for current problems which exist even today. He had great concern for poor and old, also women and children. He sees the suffering person as a blessing and says that the presence of a suffering member in the house would bring the blessings of God. He prompted the younger generation to care and support the older ones of the family. St. Chavara promoted ethical, moral, spiritual and social values through all of his activities. We cannot distinguish them only for educational system. He lived for the values and virtues, thus emitted the rays of them to his surroundings and after the two centuries it is still remained to inspire thousands of people. All of his writings filled with values and he inspired people to live values by starting the *Upavisala* and Confraternity of Happy Death. This was the first initiatives in Kerala which become a model and practice thereafter to live values. His life was model and based on true, internal values. This is one of the reasons of the inspiration which he radiates even after two centuries of his death. The opinions from the interviews also support the fact that St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara has contributed much for the Value Education. Internal transformation was his intention in all of his activities being he was a spiritual person. There was a clear and authentic alignment between his words and actions. He addressed the hearts of people, and his works and words were rooted in Christian values.

CHAPTER XIII

ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

Spirituality is fundamentally a search of the knowledge of the highest and the Absolute by direct experiences and manifestations of this search in every mode of living, thinking and acting. Spiritual means growing in selfless love towards God and humanity. Saint Chavara was a man of prayer and true spirituality. He considered God as his own father and the whole humanity as his brethren. He was fully devoted to God and completely at the service of human. Through his writings and activities, he spread the fragrance of spirituality. By establishing the religious congregation for men and women he started an era of spiritual awakening in Kerala. He had given emphasis in contemplation as a *sanyasi* and active life style like a missionary. St. Chavara is an outstanding memorial of divinity. He lived a Christ-centered and Christ-oriented life in the midst of strenuous activity, stretching out his hands to everything within reach, grasping and guiding them into God. This method of spirituality he practiced and transmitted to the followers of his congregation. Thus, he builds up a culture of spirituality rooted in God experience and branched in service of others especially for the poor and abandoned. The present world is of absurdness and problems. Men, and women are searching for the meaning of life and peace of heart through their lives. St. Chavara brings out the solution for all these problems by his exemplary life and through his writings. The spiritual advices and instructions given by St. Chavara inspires many, even after 200 years, even in this 21st century, mainly because of its spiritual value.

Meaning of Spiritual Education

Moral and spiritual values cannot be excluded from education. Genuine spirituality implies a questioning spirit and identification with the highest symbol of cultures. Spirituality promotes equality among all men and women regardless of the barriers of race, religion and nationality. The word 'spirit' comes from the Latin word *Spiritus* meaning breath- breath of life. In Indian Philosophy, *Vedanta* teaches the spirit is all pervading. Spirit is the life source or power. Identifying one with the spirit, which is the life energy of a person, is spirituality. Spiritual aim of education is very important in Indian context. Life itself aims at attaining the Goal, that is the union with God. The country has a great tradition of searching for truth and leading a life of spirituality, which is symphonic with the whole universe. There is no education without the refining of heart and soul. The great philosopher Friedrich Froebel says that by education the divine essence of human should be unfolded, brought out, lifted into consciousness and individual himself raised in to free, conscious obedience to the divine principle that lives in him and to a free representation of his principles in life. Education should lead an individual to the real knowledge of God and self and to the pure and holy life to which that knowledge leads.

Spiritual Vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara had a clear spiritual vision with multi dimensions. His life history shows that he is a man of deep prayer and meditation. The important dimensions of his spirituality could be explained in following headings

- **An Intimate Relationship with The Ultimate Reality**

St. Chavara is a '*dhyanyogi*' which means the one who is united with God. Through his writings he gives us the picture

of himself as a man who has the real vision of God and in his language, it is the 'Darsanam'. His mind was always tuned with the wisdom of spiritual enlightenment and this was the power of his actions. He is considered as a mystic who followed the Christian spirituality in Indian mode. He expressed his longing for the vision of God and tries to embrace the eternal bliss. He considered the Ultimate Reality, God is the reason for his existence and he lives fully in God's presence. He was a Yogi, who being in union with God and the universe throughout his life. He may be rightly described as a *sthita-pranja*-a steady minded person always keeping the mind fixed on the God the ultimate, in all moments of life.

- **God and Humanity: Father and Children**

The beauty and uniqueness of the spirituality of St. Chavara is that he experienced God as his own Father and all the human beings as his brothers, sisters and children. This feeling of belongingness became the strength and energy for him to work hard for them. He tried to find solution for the issues and problems of the people due to the feeling of oneness with them. This experience is rooted deeply in his prayer life. In this sense, St. Chavara's spirituality is a dynamic one which transforms the surroundings and situations. He inherited the culture based on spirituality and transmitted the essence of true spiritual education. In his writings God is understood as the Father of the family of humankind. He uses the expression 'my Father' to address the divinity and this in turn taught him that all are the children of God. As a responsible brother of humanity, he served the family of the world by his actions and life.

- **The whole Universe is one Family**

Chavara's concept about the universe is like a family. In its wider dimension he considered God as the loving Father of

humankind and he is the son of God to serve this family of humanity. He addresses the divinity as Father and that shows the personal intimacy with the supernatural power (for him it is the Trinitarian God of Christianity) he had throughout his life. This paved the basis for his vision and mission and it was effective all these years. To serve the humanity and accept the world as one family, individual need to have the vision that all are brethren of same family. For Chavara it was a strong feeling and experience, so that he could not suppress the urge for serving the humanity without any discrimination. So, he channelized all of his energy both spiritual and human nature to hold every one of the society together towards oneness. This vision he got from his God experience since he was a Christian priest. The concept of *Vasudevakudumbakam* is the vision of ancient India. St. Chavara practiced this vision in his life.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Spiritual Education from Primary Sources

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is a person of true Indian and Catholic spirituality. He believed that the objective of education is to give individual the unity of truth, the ultimate reality. As a religious priest, he, himself was in search of the Ultimate and his God experience is the major energy source behind his effective initiatives. In his view no education is worth unless it gives a person clear vision into the spiritual direction, which will be possible through living in an atmosphere surcharged with genuine spirituality. St. Chavara in his capacity as a great spiritual teacher has placed before the world at large moral and spiritual values whose number would be legion. He had a very good and strong faith in God. All his activities and services are the outcome of natural flow of love and care, towards the goodness and welfare of the fellow beings. He was a person who always trusted God and surrendered himself to the providence of God.

The spirituality of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is depicted very clearly in all of his writings. But the biographical poem *Athmanuthapam*, the meditative and prayerful thoughts named *Dyanasallapangal* (Meditation Colloquies) and the Letters written to the priests, nuns and parishioners are rich in spiritual thoughts. Since they are written by St. Chavara, we consider them as Primary Source for spiritual education in this study.

Athmanuthapam: St. Chavara was a mystic who experienced the presence of God in all the creatures of the world and he invites everybody to do the same. This poem shows the basic spiritual disposition of an ordinary soul who is longing for the Ultimate. St. Chavara describes his whole life in a meditative way and give thanks to the Lord for his life in this work.

St. Chavara accepts the mighty work and power of God the Almighty and he himself surrender to God. From the very birth onwards, he sees the love of God which follow him as close as a shadow. He says:

God Almighty, You created me, that I am a sinner,

You moulded truly great in your likeness (Canto 1: 2-10)

He always trusted in the providence of God. He was very much aware of God's grace up on him and always kept grateful heart. This is emulsified in the poem:

From the first moment of my human birth

To shield me from dangers dire, You did grant

To be beside me each passing moment

To guide and guard me, an infant to survive! (Canto 1: 20-24)

He continues with the thanksgiving attitude in this poem all throughout. For him God was everything. The

following lines are the expression of his soul's inner most desire and from this it is clear that he could experience God in everything and in everywhere.

*God, you my Love, my joy and my all my good fortune
If not with you, how could I live my life?
My every breath, my food, my drink*

What solace have I save in you! (Canto II: 144-147)

He is a person of cosmic worship and he enjoyed the beauty of the nature. This is one of the qualities of all the mystics.

*O gaze a moment, the spotted canopy of heaven
The radiant sun and the pale fare moon
The mighty globes and bright cluster of stars
The green grass of the earth, its floral wealth
Gaze at the universe entire and quietly muse
Why they were called to be and judge your worth!
If such be your portion on the transient earth
How great, the treasures in store for you above? (Canto II:
291-299)*

The poem *Athmanuthapam* is a banquet of spiritual journey. It includes the genuine search of a soul for its creator, the longing of heart for the union with God, the cry of a person due to the departure from God, the confession of a son to his loving father and the proclamation of biblical and universal values to all. Being a Catholic priest, he meditates up on the life and faith mysteries of the Lord Jesus and his mother Mary in this poetic work. It is the result of his deep contemplation and personal God experience. This is an invitation for all who read to experience the loving God as he experienced in his life.

Dyanasallapangal (Meditation Colloquies): In this book St. Chavara communicate with God through simple dialogues. That was his prayer method. St. Chavara prayer taken as a conversation with God presume an intimate friendship with Him. He addresses the God Almighty as his own father, *EnteAppa*. The word father- *Appa* is used in this book 31 times and that denotes his relationship with God that is like father and son. He put himself in the place of prodigal son and addresses God as his own father. The mediation is in the form of a conversation and St. Chavara listen to the words of God which makes him cry due to the repentance and love for the good Lord. Chavara understand God as a loving father without any restriction and full of mercy.

He continually examined his consciousness by asking fundamental questions to his own self. This is another quality of a spiritual man. He asks: *Servant of God, what are you doing? Where are you going? Where will the path trading take you? Therefore, stop a while and make a review of your life (Dyanasallapangal)*. The main content of Colloquies is closely related to St. Chavara's daily meditation and prayer. In other words, these are the living expressions of St. Chavara's inner God experiences. His constant filial conversations with God and his expression of deep grief for his short comings with a repentant heart is depicted in this book. The 'Colloquies in Meditations' bears testimony to his sanctity and mysticism, and St. Chavara proved himself to be a *Dhyanayogi*, one who reached the higher levels of spiritual enlightenment. 'The will of God be done and make it happen' was his motto. St. Chavara was very well aware of God's will for him and he tried to actualize that throughout his life. At the last stage of his life, he asked his superiors that, 'do I have my own will?' He was obedient to the rules and regulations of the monastic life and surrendered himself to the will of God completely.

Letters: He advice the priests and nuns to prepare themselves to have a peaceful death by practising virtues and values in day-to-day life.

The letters show his practical wisdom to use productively the vast area of cultivable land. His spirituality is linked with the nature, human and God. He asked to take care of the surroundings of convents and monasteries with proper cultivation and greenery.

In the **Testament of a Loving Father** his advices to the parents about spiritual formation of the children is as follows: *'teach them to call on name of God as soon as they are grown up enough. Show them the pictures of God and saints and teach them to honour and love them. Teach them the small basic prayers as soon as they can lips out these prayers. How commendable it is to nourish the souls of your children also as you bring them up in the physical plane'*.

Disciplined atmosphere for a fruitful spiritual life at home:

Discipline is the value which is undoubtedly a most fundamental element in the moral and spiritual education of an individual or a society. He advises people to have a daily time table for a disciplined life: *be careful to go to sleep in time and rise also punctually. All, in the family, should get up at least by six o' clock. Say the morning prayers. Let those who can attend Holy mass in the church, do so. Breakfast at 8.00 am and lunch at 12.00 noon. In the evening say the family prayers in common. Then meditate for half an hour. It can be on some subject raised by the spiritual reading from any good book.* He beautifully blends the daily life of a common man with prayer and medication. He says this as mandatory for a good family life. According to him, family prayer, personal meditation, spiritual reading etc., should be essential part of daily routine of every individual and family. He continues: *After eight o' clock have supper and*

then make an examination of consciousness, say prayers before retiring to bed, and proceed to sleep. The head of the house must carefully see to this routine being kept up. Read out this routine every Sunday and the first of every month before all the members of the house. He instructs this as a life style of a family.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Spiritual Education from Secondary Sources

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is mostly identified as a spiritual person. There are numerous writings on his spiritual contributions and various dimensions of his spirituality. The selected and relevant ones are only given here.

Fr. Leopold Beccaro OCD, the first biographical writer of St. Chavara says about his spiritual command that 'the young priest (St. Chavara) preached sermons in many churches, at a time when preaching was very rare and performed many other pastoral services with great zeal. During this time, he preached a retreat in the Parish of Pulicunnu at the request of parishioners. Those who participated in the retreat were moved by it, and derived great spiritual benefit, as is testified by many. Who still retain fresh memories about it'. He further explains the aim of starting monastery at Mannanam by St. Chavara is 'to take care of spiritual well-being of others and to work earnestly for their salvation'. He continues about his spiritual service as 'St. Chavara attended to every spiritual need of his parishioners with incomparable interest and zeal. Anybody who had at least a very short acquaintance with him was aware of this fact'. Fr. Leopold mentions that Holy Father Pope Pius IX, gloriously reigning, on hearing about the stability of Chavara's faith and about his zeal for saving the Christians from the schism, wrote to him a letter of high praise and deep satisfaction.

St. Chavara invites everyone to find self-realization and to reach mystical union with God. He sees his heavenly father, the God Almighty, in the father of prodigal son of the Bible, meditates up on Him and portrays Him with all His virtues. He says that God who forgives all his sins is his Father and he is His son. This is his Abba (Father -son) experience with God. This is very much visible in his works, *Compunction of the Soul* and in the *Meditative Colloquies* (Vallapura, 2004).

Paul (2017) identifies St. Chavara as a man of prayer. He realized that he was created in the image and likeness of God. Looking around, he saw that the other people were created in his own image and likeness. He prayed with the insight of Indian mystic vision that he and they were not different. His prayer was of the vision totally for the society. With this vision he blended his care for humanity, anxiety for his fellow beings, and labour for their welfare.

Sreedharan (2017) writes that spiritual life and social growth went hand in hand as far as St. Chavara was concerned. He would have envisaged well in advance, the overall growth of the entire Kerala society and what was requires to make it come true. This was his noble aim he had behind establishing schools with every parish churches.

Ommen Chandy (2017) the former Chief Minister of Kerala identifies the most remarkable aspect of the versatile personality of St. Chavara was his spirituality. The inner stream of all his activities was his spiritual glow within him. Spirituality was clearly reflected in his humanitarian initiatives like the setting up of *upavisala*- a house for destitutes, a child care center, a house for the care of people with special physical needs and so on. All these initiatives were educational instructions in actions for the society.

Anandha (2017) says about the spirituality of St. Chavara in this article 'Linking Faith'. Chavara, true to the profile of the

founder saint, surrender to a divine inner call. He chose to accept his divine calling but it required the total surrender of his life. He overcame his desires, limitations through renunciation and spiritual contemplation for the love of God and through service to others. In laying self aside, he experienced God.

Mallanie (2017) identifies St. Chavara as a man of prayer and friend of God. The intimacy of St. Chavara is clearly explained in the book of *Dyanasallapangal*. The prayer is a meaningful conversation together with the close friend that is the God for St. Chavara.

Marques (2015) describes St. Chavara as the mystical flower of Mannanam. *Athmanuthapam*, the poetic work of St. Chavara is an expression of dynamic movement of a soul for the Lord. This poem teaches us to dig deep in to the ground of personal experience, very existences, and to tend the soil of gratitude within an individual.

St. Chavara carried with him the pulse of the entire universe in his continual search of God. He lived a life of *Rishi* or *muni*, who was seated at the feet of his omniscient and omnipresent master in deep contemplation for hours together seeking His will and empowering spirit. It is the intimacy with the ultimate that enabled him to offer himself as gift to God amidst the magnitude of obstacles and pressures. The elements of contrition, humility, and self- surrender in St. Chavara take root from his firm conviction that he is a mere trifle before God, the eternal foundation of all virtues. This thought does not make him desperate but leads him to a profound trust in the all- pervading divine providence (Mullopparambil, 2004).

St. Chavara's childlike trust and confidence in the Lord is one of the remarkable characteristics of his spirituality and Christ

experience. God had become everything for St. Chavara. His experience that God is his father and he is his son is the most sublime aspect of his God experience. He contemplated the passion of Christ that he addresses Jesus as the 'Father'. He experienced the intensity of God's unconditional love in its depth and perceived the manifestation of that love in the self-obliteration of Jesus on the cross (Rose, 2018).

Jacob (2015) describes St. Chavara as the spiritual father to thousand. St. Chavara never failed to seek succor in the Lord, the God, and spend much of his time in prayer and meditation. He knew how vital these were for the spiritual uplift of fellow priests and the laity. He believed that a robust Church and a healthy community could be founded only on the bedrock of absolute faith in God and deep commitment to His ways. To foster this faith and commitment in his people and rejuvenate them in spirituality, he introduced various measures in course of time.

St. Chavara's first concern was the spiritual renewal of the society. He started his mission with the renewal programmes for the priests. For the training of the priests and their education he started seminaries adjoining to the monastery Vazhakkulam, Elthuruthu etc. He renewed the liturgy of the Syrian Catholic and prepared a book which explains the meaning of all rituals in the Holy Mass. He started annual retreat for the laity. It was he who made the Sunday sermons compulsory in the churches. The retreats and the sermons became the fruitful time for the spiritual instructions (Noel, 2015).

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's Contributions to Spiritual Education - Findings Emerged from Interviews

Spiritual education is the need of the time but is lacking in the present educational system. All those who were interviewed stressed on the importance and significance of spiritual

education in the present scenario. They confirmed that the educational contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara are founded and shaped up on the soil of pure spirituality. Because St. Chavara is basically a Christian – Indian saint. He led a purely spiritual life of *sanyasa* and tried to radiate the golden rays of that meaningful spirituality. He was a man of *bhakthi* and *karma*, contemplation and action, prayer and work. His spirituality is based on the Biblical values and ethical doctrines since he was a Catholic priest by life style. He could blend his prayer and activities for the fulfillment of God’s will which he had recognized through his long hours of meditation. He was a mystic who experienced God and become a symbol of God’s love in the physical life itself. He wanted to provide a spiritual enlightenment and spiritual empowerment for the people. This was his primary aim behind the starting of schools and other social activities. He realized that a society, family and individual who are strengthened with spiritual enablement become liberated from every bondage.

Discussion on St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara’s Contributions to Spiritual Education and its Relevance in the Emerging Society



St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara’s Concept on Spiritual Education

'Education is the manifestation of the perfection that already exists in humans' said by Swami Vivekananda. In the quest of material gain and the importance given to humanism, humans have damaged their holistic nature especially in the spiritual and emotional aspects. True education is the effective means to regain the spiritual basis for the life. All the great leaders and educationalist pointed out this fact by their actions as well as their words. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is also a great forerunner who led his people towards the spiritual enlightenment through his various activities. He was a man of spirituality who believed strongly in God and in the goodness of human beings. He had solid trust in God the Almighty and considered all of his fellow humans as precious. He was filled with love of God which expressed in the out flow of charity. All of his historical initiatives were the act of commitment and dedication towards the entire humankind. The historical context, events, persons and the needs of the time play a role in shaping the life, deeds, attitudes and the spirituality of an individual. St. Chavara's spirituality is also constructed on his personal experience of God and that was an intimate relationship as a father and son, between God and him. St. Chavara was a person who could live in harmony with God and the universe, prayer and action, solitude and companionship. Deriving inspiration from both the Indian spiritual tradition and Christian spiritual sources, St. Chavara become a contemplative and met God in his silent meditation. This he achieved by accepting the purifying fire of God's nearness and turning to God with a sincere heart, shedding tears with profound sorrow for his son. The experience of God was shared with his fellow men through the daily activities. The services for the humanity, initiatives of various movements for the uplift of the society, writings and instructions etc. reveals the spiritual person of St. Chavara.

CHAPTER XIV

THE EFFECTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA IN THE EDUCATIONAL FIELD OF KERALA SOCIETY

The educational vision and mission of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara has influenced many people and institutions in a fascinating way. Humayun Kabir mentions three main values recognized and stressed in the philosophy of education in ancient India, namely, 'the quest for the liberation of the individual from the bondage of evil, tolerance and forgiveness and the principle of disinterested devotion'. These fundamental values among many others have inspired Indian education throughout the ages and St. Chavara was a greatest exponent of these values by his educational revolution. Today's Kerala society is progressed and developed in many social aspects than 19th century. An egalitarian society is formed through the educational institutions which follow the vision and mission of St. Chavara. All the sections of society are getting education based on his vision. He did not limit the educational facility only for his community but opened to all. That is the unique contribution of St. Chavara as a social and educational reformer. The results of the educational initiations started with St. Chavara is enriched the Kerala Society at a large and that enabled the society to become one of the progressed and developed society of the country. St. Chavara was concerned about public education and spiritual education at the same time. He renewed the society with educational revolution and reformed his community of Catholic Church with his faith-based activities.

The worth and effect of the educational contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is not limited in the number of

institutions that he had started. He was a precursor for educational revolution in the Kerala society. The peculiarity of his contribution is that the facilities of education were opened for all, including the least sections and the feebler part of the community. For this purpose, he prepared and inspired the common people and made them to stand for a common goal. The confidence and faith in the ordinary people are a marvelous quality expressed by St. Chavara. In all of his initiatives he encouraged and promoted the participation of public and brought all those movements as a great success. St. Chavara also valued specific features in the indigenous system of education that was flourished in India once up on a time in the form of *pathsalas*. Their most important feature was that they symbolized the will of the society to take the responsibility of educating its children. The system he brought by the order 'A School for A Church' is an indigenous mode for mass education and that served as the centers for spreading literacy among all throughout Kerala society.

The educational contributions of St. Chavara benefitted for all, especially the children, women and marginalized people of Kerala society. His wholehearted involvement in the training of priests as an efficient and knowledgeable leader of the Catholic community and through them reached out to the rest of the society by establishing formal training in the newly established seminaries, indicates very powerfully, the innovative nature of his educational involvement (Chakkalakkal, 2013). St. Chavara made a change in the attitude and perspective of public about education and people started to think that education is must and the next generation should be educated without fail. This attitudinal change was promoted by St. Chavara and his disciples who followed his spirit and mission successfully. He did not leave his vision and mission with himself; instead, he prepared a group of enthusiastic and vibrant followers, both men and women to continue the mission

and vision. This is another quality of a great leader. The religious congregations founded by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, CMI for men and CMC for women, tracks his vision faithfully and provides quality education according to the need of the time.

The vision and mission of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is formed from his personal God experience. That was his source of energy and inspiration. He found the problems and issues of the time as his responsibility and searched for the effective solutions. This he achieved through the long hours of deep meditation and he made the discernment about God's will on each issue. He keenly observed the problems and analyzed them to understand the root cause. Then the suitable remedy was formulated and actualized with a zealous heart for the goodness of the other. He was never fatigued or tired in his mission, because he considered all those initiatives as his duty towards his fellow humans. The contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara are unique by its clarity in vision, enthusiasm in mission, inclusiveness in approach, dedication for goodness, concern for poor and marginalized and commitment for the progress of all. He responded to the cry of the needy and listened to the voice of the voiceless. St. Chavara brought out a soft revolution to demolish the existing evils of the social system in Kerala and he succeeded in that. Education is the main tool he used for this purpose and thus he became a revolutionary of social change.

CHAPTER XV

THE RELEVANCE OF EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA IN THE EMERGING SOCIETY

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara lived in Kerala, a century ago. The 19th century socio-cultural background and the needs of the time are different from the current society of Kerala. Therefore, the present study tries to find out the relevance of Educational Contribution of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in this Emerging Society. The data collected from the opinionnaire and interviews are taken for this propose. Both are given the response that the Relevance of Educational Contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is at very much high level in this emerging society.

The Relevance of Educational Contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the Emerging Society - Opinion of Teachers and Religious Persons

Opinionnaire was given to the Teachers and Religious Persons regarding the relevance of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara's educational Contributions in the Emerging Society. The details are given in the table below.

	Items	HighNo. & (%)		MediumNo. & (%)		LowNo. & (%)	
		Teachers	Religious Persons	Teachers	Religious Persons	Teachers	Religious Persons
Sl. No.	The significance of educational contributions of St. Chavara	184 (92%)	188 (94%)	14 (7%)	10 (5%)	02 (1%)	04 (2%)
	The relevance of St. Chavara's concept on social reformation through Education	190 (95%)	182 (91%)	10 (5%)	14 (7%)	00 (0)	04 (2%)
	The significance of St. Chavara's concept on formal education.	180 (90%)	168 (84%)	16 (8%)	24 (12%)	02 (2%)	04 (4%)

The Relevance of Educational Contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the Emerging Society – Opinion of Teachers and Religious Persons

The above Table reveals that 92% of Teachers and 94% of Religious Persons of this study are of the opinion that the Relevance of Educational Contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is high in the Emerging Society. The Relevance of Educational Contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the Emerging Society is at medium level according to the 7% and 5% of Teachers and Religious Persons respectively. Only 1% of Teachers and 2% of Religious Persons opined that the Relevance of Educational Contributions of St. Chavara is at low level. Majority of the Teachers (95%) and Religious Persons (91%) said that relevance of St. Chavara's concept on social

reformation through Education is at high level in the emerging society. The significance of St. Chavara's concept on formal education in the emerging society is high for 90% of Teachers and 84% of Religious Persons under the study, but it is at medium level for 8% of Teachers and 12% of Religious Persons. 2% of Teachers and 4% of Religious Persons said that the significance of St. Chavara's concept on formal education in the emerging society is low.

The Relevance of Educational Contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the Emerging Society - Findings Emerged from Interviews

All the experts of the interviews had the same opinion that the Relevance of Educational Contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the Emerging Society is very high. Even though the social and cultural situations are changed the essence of educational vision and mission of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara remains the same. And it is highly effective in today's context. It is not the number of institutions or a public educational system is needed today. But the quality of education is one of the essential requirements of present educational scenario. St. Chavara started Sanskrit schools in the 19th century, and it was quality education of that time. Same spirit should be followed to ensure the quality education at present. The marginalized and weaker sections are still in need of equal opportunities and free education in the country. The empowerment and enrichment of the women folk changed their destiny from 19th century, but they are also needed to be supported and helped to achieve more. Media and communication became the necessities of modern life. Media is an effective tool for meaningful education and that also is highly relevant at present. The vocational education and training programmes have received new forms of career

development but the aim of vocational education is remain as attaining self-efficacy and self-earning which promote the growth of the society. Family Life education needed to be more attended by the society. St. Chavara had the clear vision and perception on family life for the betterment of the society. It is still valued and more relevant than his time. The present society is suffering from value deterioration and a declining moral. Education could be a remedy for these issues and problems, by inculcating real values in education. Therefore, the concept of value education of St. Chavara is very relevant in emerging society. The spiritual empowerment and spiritual enlightenment are always relevant for the integral growth of the persons. It is highly significant in Indian context also.

Discussion on The Relevance of Educational Contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the Emerging Society

The Relevance of Educational Contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the Emerging Society is high according to opinionnaire and the interview with the experts. The relevance is high for the different dimensions of Educational Contributions of St. Chavara, namely, Education for all, Education for Marginalized, Education for Women, Education through Media, Education for Family life, Vocational Education, Value Education and Spiritual Education.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF CONTRIBUTIONS OF ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

The findings of the present study have wide spread implications in education. It is apparent that the educational contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara have a lasting impact and effect on education.

- Kuriakose Elias Chavara is a great proponent of education for all without any discrimination. There should not be any kind of distinction and discrepancies for the availability of educational opportunities for all.
- St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara promoted education for the marginalized. The government and educational management should provide enough facilities and provisions for the weaker sections of society in order to get educated.
- St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara had the vision of spiritual enlightenment and total liberation of the person through education. This should be one of the important aims of the educational system of present era.
- St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara considered that providing education is the responsibility of the society and he pooled all the resources from the locality without any compromise of quality. The indigenous resourcefulness is a great wealth of the society. That should be made use of to ensure the quality education to the growing up generation.
- St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was very much concerned towards the basic needs of the students from lower status of the society. It is worth to satisfy the basic needs of poor and needy for the sustainable effect of education.
- St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara realized and promoted family life education. There should be provisions for the formal and informal methods for family life education, since the destruction of family relationships are increasing day by day.
- St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara enabled women with education and spiritual training. The women education should be enhanced with special consideration for the uplift of the country.

- St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara instilled vocational training in education. Formal and informal vocational training should be provided for children and women for the betterment of their future.
- St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara advocated media-based education. Education becomes more effective by the assistance of media. There should be enough media and advanced technological support to give quality education.
- In the time of value deterioration, St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara brought out the importance of value education. Education should be value based and there should be provisions for adapting real values into the life.
- St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara is a great sage of spirituality. Spiritual education shall be promoted for the self-realization and a God experience.
- St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was innovative, remedial and challenging in his educational vision and mission. Education should address the needs of the time and prepare the students for a better future.

CONCLUSION

St. Chavara lived in the 19th century but his mission continues through his followers even today. The spirit and vision which he instilled like a magnificent light in the dark age of Kerala society is still glowing with its beauty. The transformations that St. Chavara commenced in the educational and social fields are well known today. Maybe it is not interpreted as revolutionary according to the present time. But it was very relevant during his time and continues to inspire us even today. His diehard spirit and the desire to overcome all struggles is indeed a remarkable trait of St. Chavara. Lack of education was one of the root causes and the main hurdle for the advancement of the community. Syrian Catholic Church to which St. Chavara belonged to also was lagging behind in education at that time. Even the priests who were considered as the leaders of the community were not educated formally more than the *Kalari* system. By realizing these factors, St. Chavara came forward to remove the ignorance of the people by providing them the opportunities of education. The Sanskrit school at Mannanam in 1846, the catechetical schools attached to monasteries and parishes, secular schools for all, declaration of 'A school for A Church', schools for the Harijans and marginalized are the endeavors by St. Chavara which become an educational revolution in Kerala history. He prepared his fellow priests and the nuns in the convent which he established with the vision of social commitment and dedicated love for God and human. Thus, he continued his mission through the ages without fail. The followers of St. Chavara are inspired by his vision and mission and his contribution to the society. This gives a progressive nature to the educational work of St. Chavara. The educational and social initiatives started by him have not diminished by time, instead it continues to prosper with modified changes in action and without changing in spirit.

His writings and teaching were inspired by his deep experience of God and fellow humans. They are the guiding light for the congregations he founded and for the Church and humanity at large.

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APPENDIX

List of Experts Interviewed

1. **Perumbadavam Sreedharan:** One of the most outstanding writers in Malayalam. Former Kerala Sahithya Academy President. Won Kerala Sahithya Academy Award (*OruSankeerthanam Pole*), Malayatoor (*Narayanam*) Award and Vayalar Award (*OruSankeerthanam Pole*).
2. **Dr. D. Babu Paul IAS (Late):** Writer, orator, lexicographer. Former Chief Secretary of Kerala, He contributed the first Bible dictionary in Malayalam He won the Guruvayur Nair Samajam Award, Alexander Marthoma Award and NV Sahithys Puraskaram.
3. **Dr. Thomas Chathamparambil CMI:** Vice Chancellor of Christ Deemed University Bangalore. Orator, educationalist and academician.
4. **Dr. Kurian Kachapilli CMI:** President of Dharmamaram Vidyakshetram, Bangalore, Professor in Philosophy at Dharmaram Vidhyakshethram, Bangalore. Writer, orator and theologian. His books include *God of Love* and *Between Partners*. Former provincial of Bhopal CMI province.
5. **John Paul:** Malayalam Screen play writer. His movies include *Chamaram* and *Ilakkangal*. Won the Kerala sate award for best book on films.
6. **Dr. K.S. Radhakrishnan:** writer, orator, academician, Former chairman of Kerala Public Service Commission, Former Vice Chancellor of Sanskrit University, Kalady. His books include *Gandhi-Sree Narayan Guru*.
7. **Dr. Paul Achandy CMI:** Prior General of CMI congregation. Former professor at Christ University Bangalore, Former director of Amala Medical College Trissur.

8. **Dr. Saju Chakalackal CMI:** Professor of Philosophy at Dharmaram Vidhyakshetram, Bangalore. General Councilor of CMI congregation. Writer of many books in Philosophy, religion and Indian social reality.
9. **C.V. Anadhabose IAS:** Advisor to the government of Meghalaya. Eminent civil servant, housing expert, innovator, writer and orator, He has held the rank of Secretary to Gov. of India, Chief Secretary, and university Vice Chancellor, Chairman of Habitat Alliance in consultative status with UN and was a member of the Un habitat Governing Council.
10. **Fr. John Mannarathara CMI:** writer and columnist. Principal, Silver Hills Public School, Kozhikode. Former director of Chavara Cultural Centre Kozhikode. Edited the life and legacy of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Light on the Burnt Horizon.
11. **Malleha Raghaviah:** Freelance Journalist. Worked for The Hindu and The Sentinel. Has dealt extensively with social concerning women and children, art and culture.
12. **Dr. George Edayadiyil CMI:** Chancellor, Christ University Bangalore. Rector Dharmaram Vidhyakshetram Bangalore, Former Chief Editor of Jeevadahara, Former director of Darsana Cultural Centre, Kottayam.
13. **T.M. Abraham:** Theater director and play writer. Vice Chairman of Kerala Sangeetha Nadaka Academy. Has written Malayalam fiction, plays and books.
14. **Fr. Thomas Panthamplackal CMI:** Former Director of CMI research and documentation wing, Former Director of Chavara central Secretariat, writer of many books and articles on St. Chavara.
15. **Kabitha Mukhopadhyay:** Freelance artist and illustrator. BFA and MFA holder from Visva- Bharathi University.

16. **Dr. Mohandas Vallikkavu:** Journalist and Writer. National level Secretary of Progressive Writers Association and State level general secretary. Executive member of KPAC, Director of Prabhath book house, Secretary of Thoppil Bhasi foundation, Former member of Kerala State cultural and publication department, Former member of syndicate of Kerala language institute.
17. **Dr. Jessy CMC:** Provincial Councilor, Educationist, active in the service for women and children.
18. **Lida Jacob IAS:** Former Additional Secretary, Former Director of Rehabilitation and Deputy Secretary, Former Director of Kerala Urban Development project, Former Secretary of Department of General Education Government of Kerala. She was the collector and district Magistrate Kollam (1992-1994).
19. **Dr. Kurias Kumbalakkuzhy:** Literature critic, Educationalist and Historian. Former professor in MG University Kottayam, Former Director of Kerala State Institute of Children's literature, Former Member of Syndicate, Senate, Academic Councilor in MG university Kottayam. Author of more than 30 books. KCBC literature award, I C Chacko Award, Kerala History Congress Award, Vailoppilly Award are some of his achievements.
20. **Dr. Paul Kalluveetil CMI:** Writer, orator and historian. Number of books and articles are in his account mostly about St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara.
21. **Fr. T. Medayil CMI:** Chief Editor *Karmalakupumam* Magazine, Mannanam. Writer, orator, teacher and historian.
22. **Sajay K.V:** Asst. Professor in English, Madappally Gov. College, Vadakara. Writer and orator. The book titled *Ee Kadalas Marikukayilla* is a unique literate study on St. Chavara's *Chavarul*.
23. **Fr. Thomas Vattakkadu CMI:** Orator, writer, retreat preacher. Active in social services.

24. **Dr. Joseph Chennattussery CMI:** Pro- Vice Chancellor, Christ University Bangalore. Historian and director of Chavara research center and Archives Mannanam.
25. **Fr. Thomas Kallukalam CMI:** Director of Chavara Bhavan, Kainakary. Orator, writer and social worker.
26. **Dr. Mathew Vattathara CMI:** Former director of AMLED School Dubai, Former provincial of Rajagiri CMI Kochi province, Director of Rajagiri Educational Institutions, Ernakulam.
27. **Fr. Roby Kannanchira CMI:** Director Chavara Cultural Centre, Kochi, Writer, orator and excellent organizer.
28. **Dr. Sebastian Chamathara CMI:** Provincial of St. Joseph Province Thiruvananthapuram, Former Prior of St. Joseph Monastery Mannanam, Formerly Professor in Kuriakose Elias College, Mannanam.
29. **Dr. Navya Maria CMC:** Provincial superior of Kothamangalam CMC province. Active in educational and social uplift of women and children.
30. **Dr. Sophy Rose CMC:** Visiting professor in theological centers. Orator and writer. Very many books and articles are in her account on St. Chavara.
31. **Dr. Francis Vallapura CMI:** Writer, advocate and thinker. Published the book titled A milestone in the history of Eclogue.
32. **Dr. Magie Jose CMC:** Principal, St. Mary's College Trissur. Educationalist. Active in the services for the uplift of women and girls.
33. **Dr. Jose Kuriyedath CMI:** Provincial of CMI Rajagiri Province, Kochi. Writer, orator and educationalist. Former Principal of Sacred Herat College Thevara. Permanent member in State and National level committee for Social Science.

34. **Fr. Joy Chencheryil MCBS:** Chief Editor of Karunikan Magazine Director of Emmaus Publication, Kochi, Writer, orator, musician and lyricist. Many books are on his account which includes *Ayanam* and *Kripavasantham*. First Christian priest who wrote and directed Kathakali on Biblical theme.
35. **Sr. Preethy CMC:** Principal, St. Joseph Higher Secondary School Koombanpara, Adimaly. Teacher, active in ministries for women and children.
36. **Dr. Prasanth Palakkappilly CMI:** Principal, Sacred Heart College, Thevara. Environmentalist, Educationalist and active in social services.
37. **Dr. Cheriyan Kuniethodath CMI:** Educationalist, writer, and orator. Former professor and head of the department of Malayalam, Devagiri College Calicut, Former Chief editor of *Kudumbadeepam*, Former director of Navakerala cooperative and publishing, Co. Member Board of Directors Cochin Kalabhavan.
38. **Dr. Kochurani Joseph:** Former HOD of Economics Dpt. Bharath Matha College Thrikkakara. Columnist, spoke person, resource person for personality development and family training programmes.
39. **Fr. Zcaria Ethirett CMI:** Rector of Mannanam St. Joseph Monastery. Vicar of the parish for the Dalits, Mannanam
40. **Dr. Lilly P.V.CMC:** Principal, Mercy College Palakkad. Educationalist, Active in various programmes for the uplift of girl students specially for the backward sessions of the society.

**Published Volumes in the
“Theological Studies on Saint Chavara”**

Kochumuttom, Thomas. *Spirituality of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara* (Theological Studies on Saint Chavara 1). Kochi: Chavara Central Secretariat, 2017. Pages: xxii+433; ISBN: 978-93-84964-76-4.

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