

CHAPTER - VI

TEMPLE ENTRY FREEDOM IN KERALA

The first practical temple entry agitation which was staged at the precincts of Guruvayoor temple in British Malabar resulted indirectly in throwing open the Travancore temples to untouchables in 1936. After the success of Vaikom Satyagraha, there would not have taken place any serious attempts to throw open temples to untouchables. But the temple entry Satyagraha and Fast (hunger strike) of Kelappan, directed the attention of not only the whole of Kerala but also the rest of India towards Guruvayoor. This Satyagraha helped to intensify the feelings of the people in the matter of temple entry. When the Travancore rulers checked the development of Satyagraha and fast at Guruvayoor, a telegram from Gandhiji, made them active for the cause of temple entry problem. This was an indirect result of the Guruvayoor Satyagraha.

On September, 27, 1932, Gandhiji sent the above said telegram to the Maharaja of Travancore that, "THE LIFE OF ONE OF KERALA'S GREAT SERVANTS, KELAPPAN, HANGES IN THE BALANCE FOR OPENING GURUVAYUR. SEEING THAT THE UNEXEMPLED WAVE OF AWAKENING PASSING THROUGHOUT THE LAND FAVOURS OPENING ALL TEMPLES. WILL YOU NOT EXERT YOUR GREAT INFLUENCE SECURING OPENING GURUVAYUR AND, IF POSSIBLE; OTHER TEMPLES? YOU KNOW PERHAPS THAT KELAPPAN HAS BEEN FASTING SINCE 20TH OPENING



TEMPLE".¹ The Travancore Government had been surprised by the Statement about the necessity of Maharaja's approval for throwing open Guruvayoor temple.² This telegram of Gandhi directly influenced the Travancore Government to explore the possibility of throwing open 'other temples' which was referred in the telegram because at this time, the Travancore Government had a favourable attitude towards temple entry freedom as the result of a favourable feeling which engendered through the Satyagraha and fast of Kelappan. This telegram might have been the root cause of the eventual introduction of temple entry freedom in Kerala.

TEMPLE ENTRY ENQUIRY COMMITTEE IN TRAVANCORE

During the temple entry Satyagraha time, a feeling which favoured the temple entry freedom developed in Kerala among the Public people and got All India importance. The Travancore Government decided to appoint a Temple Entry Enquiry Committee to enquire into and report on the question of temple-entry. So a Committee was appointed on November 25th, 1932 by the order of the Government (Order R.Dis No.648/Dev. dated 25th November 1932).³ The committee was required to report on the

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1. The Hindu News Daily, dated October 1, 1932, Quotation: Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi Vol.L1, Op.cit, P.147.
 2. ibid, P.147, Fn. No.1.
 3. Report of the T.E.E.C., Travancore, introduction, P.1 , Par.1.



subject, and appointed V.S.Subramonia Aiyar as its President.

The committee's report was on the basis of its findings submitted to the Government on January 1934. The following is some of the extracts of the Committee's Report, about the decisions of the Courts relating to temple-entry that, "The Courts in British India and in Travancore have repeatedly held that the entry of Avarnas into temples constitutes difilement".⁴ Again reports, "To sum up the position, the courts have treated the right of the Savarnas to keep Avarnas out of their temples according to their faith to save them from pollution, as a Civil right capable of adjudication in a court of law. On the merits, they have held that, according to long standing usage and religious authority, The avarnas have no right to enter the temples and that they are entitled to offer worship only from the position outside the temples assigned to them by usage."⁵

4. ibid, Ch.II, P.35, Par. 25.

5. ibid, P.38, Par.29.



To know the extent of feeling in the country about temple entry question, the committee had taken written and oral evidences. It is reported that "We have issued a questionnaire and secured replies from 3, 122 persons. Of these, 2, 867 are Savarnas and 255 Avarnas. The Avarnas who sent us replies are in favour of temple entry being allowed and this is not all surprising... Further, it is only the more or less educated and modernised among them that would be in a position to answer the questionnaire, and among them the desire for temple - entry, especially, as a symbol of social equality, is very strong."⁶ Out of a total of 4118 written evidences received from the Savarnas, 3230 written evidences were against temple entry; and 888 were for temple entry and the oral evidence shows 160 deposing for and 37 against temple entry.⁷ But the net total of the evidences from Savarnas and Avarnas show that there was a majority of people who were against temple entry.

6. ibid, Ch VI, P.74, Par.84.

7. ibid, Supplementary note, PP 290 - 91.



The Committee states that Hindu Society is bound to take immediate and adequate measures for the uplift of the Avarnas socially and economically. It is possible to work out a scheme for the attainment of the above said objects independently of the question of temple entry. The committee suggest for this purpose action in the following lines:-

"(1) Distance - pollution or Theendal should be removed by appropriate legislative measures, subject to reservations in the matter of entry into temples and into their adjuncts like temple tanks, temple-wells, Homapurams, Anakottils, etc, and subject to the following provisions:-

(a) Public tanks used for bathing purposes should be thrown open, after separate cisterns are attached to them or portions of them are walled off, where people could wash their clothes, etc; before getting into the tanks for bath.

(b) Public wells should be thrown open, after they are provided with cisterns, in which water should be stored from the wells by Municipal or Health Department employees, and from which water should be drawn through taps.

(c) Government sarais should be thrown open, after they are provided with separate kitchens, as in the case of such as are already open to all classes.

The committee think that prompt action should be taken as regards these three items.



(ii) Arrangements should be made for providing Bhajana madoms, instituting religious lectures, opening schools for adult instruction, and having proper housing and sanitation and the adequate supply of wells and tanks for such Avarna Communities as in the opinion of Government require such assistance. This item may be so worked as to be completed in a definite period, say, ten years.

(iii) In important centres, temples may be built and consecrated, where Savarnas and Avarnas may worship together, such savarnas retaining their full rights of worship, etc, in temples where Avarnas are not now admitted."⁸

The committee also warned that if temple entry is allowed, one result apprehended is that the opposition from a fairly large section of Savarnas is likely to lead to breaches of the peace. But the Government should be able to take the necessary precautionary measures. The Committee reported that any change in the matter of temple entry could be made only with the advice and concurrence of Paarish at of Vaidiks, Vadhyans, Tantries and the Ashavanchery Tamprakal and of men learned in the Sastras and Conversant with present day world - movements.⁹

8. ibid., Ch.VI, P.82, Par.100

9. ibid., P.81, Par.99.



The report of the Temple Entry Enquiry committee was not a relevant one as it could not make satisfactory recommendations in the matter of temple entry. So the report of the Temple Entry Enquiry Committee became useless for two years after its submission. After the submission of the Committee Report, people were not much interested in the temple entry movement in Travancore.

But the temple entry question discussed here and there in Travancore without any serious organised attempts. Public meetings in regard to Harijan uplift also were held at various places. A meeting of the Harijans was held at Chengannur under the Presidentship of G.Ramachandran on November 3, 1935.¹⁰ In this meeting, resolutions requesting Government to throw open Government temples and Public Institutions to all classes of Hindus alike were passed. A memorial requesting Government to allow temple entry to all Hindus was read and passed at the annual meeting of the Sri Kumara Bhajana Sangham, Moovattupuzha on February 13, 1935.¹¹ The idea of leaving Hindu religion and accepting another religion also came into prominence at this time among the lower classes. Hindu Public meetings were organised by the local areas at Adoor, Mavelikkara, Ambalapuzha and Aranmula, on February, 1935".¹² In these meetings, the

10. The Weekly Secret Bulletin. Vol.II, dated November 9, 1935, No.45, (Sree Ramavilasam press, Trivandrum, 1935) P.3, Par.272.

11. ibid, Vol.II dated February 16, 1935, No.7, P.4, Par.42.

12. ibid.,



folly of leaving the Hindu religion was also explained to the Harijans who were present there. Thus a silent movement for temple entry spread in all parts of Travancore after the submission of temple Entry Committee's Report.

EFFORTS OF HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

On March 22, 1936, at the annual meeting of Kerala Harijan Sevak Sangh, held at Traivandrum a Temple Entry Committee was appointed for starting temple entry agitation in Kerala.¹³ By the decision of the Temple Entry Committee, temple entry conferences were held at the capitals of Harijan Sevak Sangh in Kerala. After the conference Jathas marched at various places in Malabar to focus centre the attention of people in the matter of temple entry. In Travancore the Jathas were prohibited at this time, but were permitted to go as Bhajana team. They also collected the signatures of Savarnas for temple entry question and observed April 19, 1936 as Temple Entry Day in Kerala.¹⁴ About 55000 signatures of Savarnas in Travancore have been collected.

13. The Mathrubhumi Daily, 14, 206, November 17, Ed.K.Kelappan (Calicut). P.2.

14. ibid.



The Kerala State Temple Entry conference held at Trivandrum on Mary 9th 10th under the Presidentship of Smt.Rameswari Nehru, mustered more force to the temple entry agitation.¹⁵ The resolution of temple entry on equal status to all Hindus introduced by K.Kelappan, was unanimously passed in that conference. A team of deputation its was also appointed to introduce the temple entry matter before the Maharaja of Travancore.¹⁶ Smt. Rameswari Nehru made a fortnight tour in Kerala and achieved great strength to the temple entry movement after the conference. Thus the feeling in favour of temple gained momentum among the common people.

The main reason for speeding up the temple entry movement in Travancore was the favourable attitude of the

15. ibid., 14, 199 November 7, 1936 P.8 - refers that the members of the deputation were Changanassery Parameswaran Pillai, Ennakkattu Rama Varma Raja, R.Anantha Rao, Mulloor Govinda Pillai, M.Govindan and Elathoor Devaki Antharjanam, etc.

16. Mathrubhumi Daily, 14, 199, November 7, 1936, P.8.



Maharaja Sri.Chithira Thirunna Bala Rama Varma of Travancore.¹⁷

Mr. G.D.Birla, the president of All India Harijan Sevak Sangh had taken an interview with the Maharaja of Travancore in the third week of June, 1936.¹⁸ The interview with Maharaja revealed that he had favourable attitude towards the temple entry matter. Mr.A.V.Thackar, the Secretary of all India Harijan Sevak Sangh, in his speech at Calicut on November 6, reflected his hopes about Travancore temple entry matter.¹⁹

That the Maharaja may be taking any decision about this matter on the nearing next birth day of Maharaja on November 12.

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17. INDIAN EXPRESS 'An Epoch making reign', VOL. LIX: NO.259, July 21, 1991 (Cochin Edition) - reports that "Sri Chithira Thirunna Balarama Varma, the youngest Maharaja to ascend the throne of Travancore was born on November 12, 1912 to Kochi Koll Thampuran of Kilimanoor Palace and Sethu Parvathi Bai.

Sri Chithira Thirunna was only 12 when he became the titular head of the Travancore State, following the untimely death of his Uncle, Maharaja Sri.Mulam Thirunna in 1924. As Chithira Thirunna was young, it was his mother's elder sister Sethu Lakshmi Bai who took over the administration of the Kingdom as Regent. However the Regency of Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bai was terminated in 1931, three years ahead of Schedule. Sri.Chithira Thirunna who was 18 then, assumed Power."

18. ibid P.6.

19. ibid, P.2.

ibid.



The deputation party appointed by the temple entry conference consulted the Divan Sir. C.P. Rama Swamy Aiyar on November 3; and handed over the memorial to the Divan for submitting it to the Maharaja. The memorial contained about 55000 signatures of savarnas who favoured temple entry. The Divan informed them that the Government was deeply thinking about the temple entry matter.²⁰ This deep thinking about the temple entry problem in Travancore effected good results on November 12, 1936 as the form of temple entry freedom in Travancore.

TEMPLE ENTRY PROCLAMATION IN TRAVANCORE.

On November 12, 1936, the Travancore Government published an extra-Ordinary Gazette which contained the Temple Entry Proclamation by

HIS HIGHNESS SRI. PADMANABHADRASA VANCHIPALA SIR RAMA VARMA
KULASEKHARA KIRTIPATI ANNERY SULTAN MAHARAJA.

RAMARAJA BAHADUR SHAMSHER JANG, KNIGHT GRAND
COMMANDER OF THE MOST EMINENT ORDER OF THE INDIAN EMPIRE,
MAHARAJA OF TRAVANCORE

20. The Mathrubhumi Daily, 14, 206 November 17, 1936, p.2.



It reads thus "Profoundly convinced of the truth and validity of our religion, believing that it is based on divine guidance and on all-comprehending toleration knowing that in its practice it has, throughout the centuries, adapted itself to the needs of changing times, solicitous that none of our Hindu subjects should, by reason of birth or caste or community be denied. the consolations and solace of the Hindu faith, we have decided and hereby declare, ordain and command that, subject to such rules and conditions as may be laid down and imposed by us for preserving their proper atmosphere and maintaining their rituals and observances, there should henceforth be no restriction placed on any Hindu by birth or religion on entering or worshipping at the temple controlled by us and Our Government."²¹

The Maharaja did this proclamation at the time of his twenty fifth birth day (November 12, 1936, thursaday) which became a memorable day and marked the dawn of a new age in Kerala. Thus the restriction on entering and worshipping at the temples in Travancore on certain Hindus was removed. A number of rules in regard to use the temple entry freedom were also enacted by the Maharaja of Travancore by a Proclamation on November 24, 1936.²²

21. The Travancore Government Gazette Extra Ordinary,
Dated November 12, 1936 (Government Press, Trivandrum, 1936).

22. Appendix No.4, Temple Entry Rules.



Temple Entry Freedom Monument of Travancore.

The people of Travancore and all India heard the news of Proclamation with great pleasure. The Travancore Maharaja was widely praised as the hero of the new age. Many public meetings were held at Travancore and other places for praising the Maharaja of Travancore and sent congratulatory messages from various places. The people of Travancore decided to establish an immortal statue of the Maharaja of Travancore who issued this epoch making proclamation at a public meeting held at Traivandrum on December 10, 1936.²³ For this purpose the Temple Entry proclamation Memorial committee was formed under the presidentship of Changanacherri K. Parameswaran Pillai.

The committee commissioned Mr. Devi Prasad Roy Chodhary, the well known sculptor to make a bronze statue of His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore. The Government gave sanction for erecting the statue in the 'Iron Villa Grounds' within the Fort, opposite to His Highness ancestral Home and in close proximity to the temple of Sri. Padmanabha.²⁴ The Maharaja of Bikaner laid the foundation stone of the statue of January 26 1939.²⁵ But the unveiling of the statue had to wait for about

23. Temple Entry Proclamation memorial souvenir (Government Press, Trivandrum, 1924) P.7.

24. ibid., P.7.

25. ibid.



18 months after the foundation stone of the pedestal was laid. The Maharaja of Dholpur performed the ceremony of unveiling of the statue on July 20, 1940.²⁶ "Iron Villa Grounds" have been made into an attractive park by the committee. Inscriptions of the Temple Entry proclamation in Sanskrit, English, Malayalam and Tamil languages have been engraved on brass plates (4ft x 4ft) installed on suitable concrete mounts in the four corners of the park.

This statue of the Maharaja of Travancore is an important mark of the immortality of temple Entry proclamation. Maharaja Rana of Dholpur says that "And this, I think is the very essence of His Highness ' great charity to the souls of his people, which pervades through that proclamation".²⁷ Thus the temple entry proclamation became a Monument of victory and bane of the Travancore Maharaja Sri.Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma.

26. ibid.

27. ibid., 'H.H. The Maharaja Rana of Dholpur's Speech', P.40.

IMPORTANCE OF THE PROCLAMATION

The temple entry proclamation of Travancore is of Himalayan importance in India. For the removal of untouchability in Kerala, temple entry freedom to all Hindus was essential at that time. Without temple entry freedom it was impossible to turn the whole attention of society towards the national independence of India, The Services of all sections of people with equal terms was necessary for making the foreign rulers quit from India. The Travancore state in Kerala has thus contributed its part for the national awakening through the temple entry proclamation. This proclamation wiped out the age long curse of untouchability on Hindu culture and protected the sanctity of Hindu culture. In its conclusion, the report of the Temple Entry proclamation Memorial Committee says that "The memorial that has been erected will help generations yet unborn to remember with feelings of love, veneration and gratitude the momentous step taken by our patriotic, far-seeing and gracious sovereign, and people will recognise more and more clearly that no event has given a greater impetus to the advent of a new era than the Temple Entry Proclamation. With one bold stroke of the Pen His Highness has emancipated the Harijans and redeemed Hinduism to the lasting glory of this ancient state and its illustrious Royal House."²⁸

28. ibid., P.7.



Maharani Parvati Bai and Divan Sir.C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar also co-operated with the Maharaja for issuing such a proclamation. The activities of the members of the Harijan Sevak Sangh also co-operated with the Maharaja' to enact his wishes for the uplift of the country through the form of Temple Entry Proclamation.

This Proclamation was the first of its kind in India. Even though there were agitations in various parts of India for temple entry they failed to achieve their aim. In such a context, the proclamation has far more importance and through it Travancore in Kerala achieved a large quantity of popularity as an enlightened state. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar states that "It fell to the lot of His Highness, not as a result of agitation, although some people have claimed to result as due to agitation, but Suo moto and of his own free will, to have made it possible for every Hindu subject to enter the historic temples of this land of faith and bend in adoration before the Supreme. Such an act required may minority vision and usage amidst difficulties and handicaps."²⁹ He again says that "when it is remembered that this decision was a purely voluntary act on the part of sovereign solicitous for the welfare of this subjects and was not the result of

29. ibid, 'Welcome speech by C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar', Opcit P.44.



any immediate pressure, the greatness of the achievement becomes even more apparent. This action brake^d (braked) the calamity of Hindu religion and h^{elped} to strengthne the Hindus.³⁰ The Travancore census of 1941 reports that "Unapproachability and untouchability which had driven many a Hindu to leave his fold to seek solace in other religions were removed by this proclamation."³¹

The proclamation caused to the reduction in the number of converts to other religions and encouraged the converts to come back to the Hindu fold. So Mulloor Govinda Pillai boldly states that "For this one act of supreme statesmanship the names of His Highness the Maharaja and Her Highness the Maharani will go down to posterity as the saviours of Hinduism and will be remembered with impreishable gratitude and ever growing veneration by generations yet un-born and history will record Sir.C.P.Ramaswami Aiyar as the greatest Divan of Travancore"³² So temple Entry Proclamation in Travancore, has high validity in the history of India, especially in Kerala.

30. ibid, 'Introduction' by C.P.Ramaswami Aiyar, Op.cit, P.IX.

31. Census Report of Travancore, 1941, Vol.XXV, Pt.I by A. Narayan Thampi, (Government Press, Trivandrum, 1942) P.126.

32. T.E.P.M. Souvenir, Op.cit., P.51.



TEMPLE ENTRY FREEDOM IN BRITISH MALABAR.

The Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation could not make any serious effects ⁱⁿ British Malabar. The attitude of the Zamorin was not favourable to temple entry in Malabar. The Zamorin had no wishes to change the existing customs and usages in temples. For this reason, when hearing the news of the Travancore Temple Entry proclamation from the 'Mathrubhumi' news reporter he said that the Travancore Maharaja had freedom to give temple entry right to his subjects; but the Zamorin was only a trustee of the temples which were under the supervision of Hindu Religions Endowment Board; and the 40th Section of the Hindu Religious Endowment Act which had been pressing the trustees to act without any default in the ancient usages and proceedings of temples".³³ He blamed the 40th Section of the Hindu Religions Act and told that its amendment would be helpful to act him as free.³⁴ It was a

33. The Mathrubhumi Daily, 14, 204, November 15, 1936 P.7.

34. Madras Hindu Religious Endowment Act, 1926, Fort St. George Gazette, No.10, Pt.IV, (Government Press, Madras) Ch.IV.P.129. It describes the section 40(i) of the Act that "The trustee of every religious endowment is bound to administer its affairs and to apply the funds and properties of such endowment in accordance with the terms of the trust, the usage of the institution and all lawful directions which a competent authority may issue in respect thereof, and as carefully as a man of ordinary prudence would deal with such affairs, Funds or properties if they were his own.

(2) A trustee shall subject to the provisions of this Act, be entitled to exercise all powers incident to the provident and beneficial management of the religious endowment and to do all things necessary for the due performance of the duties imposed on him.



a misinformation given by the Zamorin because he was not ignorant about the other provisions of the religious act which he referred to the Mathrubhumi reporter.

The Malabar Temple Entry Bill

The Malabar Temple Entry had been taken by the Madras Government at this time. It was because of the Congress Ministry was then in power at Madras under the premiership of C. Rajagopalachari. The Madras Government decided to introduce the Malabar Temple Entry Bill in the Assembly. The rules under the Malabar Temple Entry Act was that "The Malabar Temple Entry Bill was published in the Fort St. George Gazettee on the 30th August 1938. It was proposed to introduce the Bill at the next meeting of the legislative when the Bill is passed and asserted to by His Excellency The Governor, it will become law on the publication of his assent.

2. Under clause 10 of the Bill the provincial Government may make rules for the purposes of carrying into effect the provisions of the Act. As the Act cannot be worked until the rules are issued it is necessary that the question of framing the rules should be taken-up well in advance so that they may be ready for issue as soon as the Bill becomes law.



3. The President, Hindu Religious Ednwoment Board is therefore requested to submit at an early date for the consideration of Government necessary draft rules under clause 10 of the Bill."³⁵

A conference was held under the auspices of Malabar Temple Entry Committee on October 16, 1938, to take decision in regard to the changes in the Bill.³⁶ The committee unanimously passed the changes in the Bill. The Malabar Temple Entry Committee appointed a propaganda Committee for achieving the favour from the people of Malabar to the legislation of Malabar to the legislation of Temple Entry Act.³⁷ Soon the Malabar Temple Entry Committee started the propaganda work.

On December 1, 1938, Prime Minister C.Rajagopalachari introduced the Malabar Temple Entry Bill in the Assembly.³⁸

35. Memorandum No. 38396-IF dated 14th September, 1938, Education and Public Health Department, Government of Madras, (Hindu Religious Endowment Board's Office, Kozhikode).

36. Mathrubhumi Daily Ed.K.A. Damodara Menon, 16, 174 October 18, 1938. P.3.

37. ibid, 16, 190, November 8, 1938, P.3. - At the Conference held on November 6, at Kozhikode under the Presidentship of K.Kelappan decided to appoint K.Kelappan, Ambalakutta Karunakara Menon, Changanassery Parameswaran Pillai, C.K.Govindan Nair, A.K.Rama Varma Raja, Pavakkal Viswanatha Menon as propaganda committee members.

38. ibid, 16, 209, December 3, 1938, P.5.



On December, 2 the Madras Assembly passed the Malabar Temple Entry Bill and also the resolution of Prime Minister to send the bill to a select committee and the bill was returned to the Assembly on December, 5, after the decision of Select Committee.³⁹ The committee met on the 3rd and 4th December 1938, considered the provisions and representations of the Bill for a careful scrutiny and made several changes in the Bill as a result of their Scrutiny.⁴⁰ The select Committee's opinion was that the changes made in the Bill are not such as to require re-publication of the Bill. The Madras Assembly received the report of Select Committee on December 5, 1938, on the resolution of Prime Minister and on December 13, 1938, the Malabar temple Entry Bill was passed in the Assembly and also passed in the Madras Council with the resolution of Prime Minister to pass the Bill as law.⁴¹ Thus the Malabar Temple Entry Bill was finally passed as a law by the legislature. The Malabar Temple Entry committee held an emergency meeting

39. ibid, P.8.

40. Select Committees Report, Malabar Temple Entry Files, 1938, (Hindu Religious Endowment Boards Office, Kozhikode) P.3.

41. The Mathrubhumi Daily, December 15, 1938, P.5.



at Kozhikode on December 22, 1938 for taking decision in regard to temple entry propaganda for strengthening the opinion among people, in all the taluks of British Malabar.⁴²

A copy of the Malabar Temple Entry Bill was forwarded to the President of Hindu Religious Ednoment Board and he was required to forward a draft of revised rules with reference to the Bill not later than 18th December 1938.⁴³ He was also required to follow the rules for election to the Madras Legislative Assembly as far as possible in regard to the Bill. He submitted it in due time.

The Malabar Temple Entry Bill got the assent of the Governor of Madras on January 18, 1939 and this Bill became an Act after its publication on the Gazettee on February 7, 1939.⁴⁴ The next step in regard to the Bill was to take referendum. The Malabar Temple Entry Committee had seriously taken this

43. Memorandum No. 38396-3F dated 14th December 1938
special Education and Public Health Dept. (Hindu Religious Ednowments Board's Office, Kozhikode).

42. ibid, 16, 225, December 23, 1938, P.3.

44. Appendix No.5 Malabar Temple Entry Act.



referendum matter and had done work in regard to it. They had organised temple entry marches and meetings at various places for the success of referendum in regard to the temple entry Bill.

The Madras Government also made the 'Malabar Temple Entry Rules of 1939' for the proper legislation of Malabar Temple Entry Act.⁴⁵ These rules contained the provisions in regard to the submission of appeals in requisition or objection of temple entry referendum, procedure of voters etc., taking of votes was in the form of open ballot system.⁴⁶ Section 42 of the Rules States that if any question arises as to the interpretation of these rules, that question shall be referred for the decision of the Government and their decision shall be final in this case.⁴⁷

45. The Appendix of G.O.No.419, P.H. Dated 4th February, 1939, (Hindu Religious Endowment Board's Office, Kozhikode).

46. ibid, P.3. Section 15, (2) of the Malabar Temple Entry rules reads thus: "The Ballot boxes shall display distinctive colours, deep yellow being assigned to the ballot box or boxes for the receipt of votes in favour of throwing open the temple. Outside the polling station shall be provided a board on which is displayed in bold and clear print in the language of the revenue taluk the significance of the colour assigned to each box."

47. ibid, P.5.



Conservatives And Temple Entry Bill

On hearing the news of the introduction of the Malabar Temple Entry Bill in the Assembly, the Zamorin Raja sent a Memorandum about the Bill. to the authorities. Zamorin in the memorandum argued that no one should have authority to claim entry into the temples which are being private property.⁴⁸ This argument of the Zamorin reveals that his desire was to preserve the temples as private property under his supreme power. The sanatanists or the most conservative-minded persons formed an organisation known as the 'Malabar Temple Security Committee' for opposing the Malabar Temple Entry Bill. As a result on November 28, 1938, a deputation of the Malabar Temple security committee consulted prime Minister C.Rajagopalachari and submitted a memorandum to him for preventing the Bill.⁴⁹ The Prime Minister replied them that it was not possibly a practical matter to postpone the Bill, when they entreated him at least to postpone the Bill temporarily. This was the attitude of the Zamorin Raja and the conservatives in the case of Temple Entry Bill.

48. The Mathrubhumi Daily 16, 198, November 19, 1938
Ed.K.A. Damodara Menon (Kozhikode) P.5.

49. ibid, 16, 205, November 29, 1938, P.6.



The Sanatanists or conservatives of temple entry question, attempted to oppose the temple entry to untouchables. The activities of the Zamorin Raja proves that he was against the temple entry of untouchables. For example, one important conference of the sanatanists was held at palaghat on February 24, 25 and 26th under the presidentship of the then zamorin Raja.⁵⁰ The function was introduced by the Raja Vasudeva Raja of Kollenkode. The zamorin had left the conference hall only after appointing his nephew as president and authorised Sri.Paliath Achan, his Secretary to read Zamorin's presiding speech. The Zamorin was very anxious about the future of temples. He observed that the temples are private property and so it would be useless to all, if the temples would be thrown open so as to the Bill and he concluded his speech that law could be repealed only through another law and requested all kings and nobles for achieving a stable judgement in this matter if it was required to go up to the privy Council. In this speech the Zamorin also condemned the practice of temple entry in Travancore through the Temple Entry Proclamation, and praised the Maharaja of Cochin as the defender of Dharma. Mr.Kelappan got an invitation letter to this conference but he was absent because he thought that it was a sin to attend such a conference.⁵² The observations of

50. ibid, 16, 281,P.3.

51. ibid.

52. ibid, 16, 286, March 5, 1939, P.3.



the Zamorin about some Travancore temples that the Savarna Hindus abandoned the worship in temples consequent on temple entry was rejected by the Travancore Devaswom Commissioner C.N. Sree Ranganatha Sastri. He, in his rejoinder, stated that the Travancore Temple became more attractive to people than ever before.⁵³ It is clear from the abovesaid discussions that the Zamorin and conservatives were seriously attempted to prevent the temple entry of low caste Hindus.

THE MADRAS TEMPLE ENTRY AUTHORISATION AND INDEMNITY ACT OF 1939.

On July 17, 1939, the Governor of Madras made an ordinance known as the Madras Temple Entry Indemnity ordinance of 1939.⁵⁴ In the wake of referendum in regard to Temple Entry Bill, the Harijans entered into the Sree Meenakshi temple at Madura in Madras on July 8, 1939.⁵⁵ This act from the side of the trustees of Madura Meenakshi temple, created some resistance from a section among the public people in Madras and there was possibility of legal action, towards the trustees who caused this Entry. So the Madras Government prepared a bill to

53. *ibid*, 16, 290 March 10, 1939, P.4.

54. *ibid*, 17, 87, July 11, 1939, P.4.

55. *ibid*, 17, 99, July 13, 1939, P.3.



preserve such kind of trustees, known as the Temple Entry indemnity Act of 1939 immediately after the Harijan temple entry at Madura.⁵⁶ The Madras legislature was not in session at this time. So the Governor of Madras issued an ordinance on July 17, 1939 known as the Madras Temple Entry Indemnity ordinance, 1939 when the matter was presented before him.⁵⁷ In his speech, on July 21, at the meeting held at Congress House in Madras, C.Rajagopalachari stated that it was the strength of congress Ministry which was revealed through the ordinance.⁵⁸ On August 31 the Prime Minister presented the Bill in the Madras legislative assembly and told that this bill was brought to the assembly for performing the promise of Hindus, who have taken it through signing the poona pact (for socio-religious reform of Hindus) on September 24, 1932.⁵⁹ The Temple Entry Indemnity bill was passed by the assembly on August 4.⁶⁰ The Bill passed in the assembly and council got the assent of the Governor on September 4, 1939. Thus a part of the Malabar Temple Entry programme succeeded and the Bill came into prominence as an act. This act resulted in the opening of only a few temples in Madras and a few in Malabar

56. ibid, 17, 103, July 18, 1939, P.5.

57. ibid, 17, 108, July 23, 1939, P.7.

58. ibid, 17, 118, August 4, 1939, P.6.

59. ibid, P.6.

60. Appendix No.16. The Madras Temple Entry Authorisation and Indemnity Act, 1939.



The following reference cited from the Fort St. George Gazette states that "where as in the opinion of the trustees of the Sri. Krishna Swami and Sri. Kadakkavu temples at Kothakurusi in the Malabar District, the worshippers of the temples are generally not opposed to the removal of the disability imposed by custom or usage on certain classes of Hindus in regard to entry into and offer worship in the temples;

And where as the said trustees accordingly purpose to throw open the temples to the said classes of Hindus, with the approval of the provincial Government, under section 3 of the Madras, Temple Entry Authorisation and Indemnity Act, 1939 (Madras Act XXII of 1939).

Now, therefore, His Excellency the Governor of Madras, in pursuance of section 3 aforesaid, hereby accords his approval to the proposal of the said trustees, namely, to throw open the temples to the said classes of Hindus".⁶¹

61. G.O.M.S. No.186, E & R.E., April 11, 1947; The Fort St. George Gazette, No.16, dated April 22, 1947, P.105.



THE MADRAS HINDU TEMPLE ENTRY DISABILITIES REMOVAL ACT.

'A bill to remove the disabilities of certain classes of Hindus in regard to entry into temples in the district of Malabar, was introduced in the Madras legislature by M.C.Raja on August 1938.⁶² This bill became an act, by which the Harijans or low caste Hindus got the same rights of citizenship as the other Hindus.⁶³ Both acts the Temple Entry Authorisation and Indemnity act and Religious Disabilities Removal Act would be helpful to remove the disabilities of untouchables in Malabar to some extent, but these two acts could not have fulfilled the temple entry problem with all its aspects. Some instances like the prohibition of Harijan procession on the Kizhoor Road near a family temple, in Payyoli shows that the Temple Entry Disabilities Removal Act was not through success for the removal of temple entry disabilities.⁶⁴

62. Mathrubhumi Daily 17,5, March 23, 1939, P.8.

63. Appendix No.7, The Madras Hindu Temple Entry Disabilities Removal Act.

64. Mathrubhumi, 17, 252, January 11, 1940, P.6.



THE MADRAS TEMPLE ENTRY AUTHORISATION ACT

The Malabar Temple Entry became a truth on June 2, 1947. It was through this Act that British Malabar in Kerala got temple entry freedom.

The Madras Temple Entry Authorisation Bill got the assent of the Governor General on May 11, 1947.⁶⁵ But the Bill became an Act only on June 2, 1947. Thus temple entry freedom in British Malabar became a truth. The purpose of the temple entry Bill was to authorise entry into Hindu temples in the province of Madras and the offer of worship therein by certain classes of Hindus who by custom or usage are excluded from such entry and worship.⁶⁶

The Act in its 'Statement of objects and reasons' says that, "It is the settled policy of Government to remove the disabilities imposed by custom and usage on certain classes of Hindus in respect of entry into Hindu temples which are open to the general Hindu public and the offering of worship therein. The Madras Temple Entry Authorisation and Indemnity Act, 1939 (Madras Act XXII of 1939), contains a provisions which enables trustees

65. Fort. St. George Gazett, Pt. IV-B, No.6(1) dated June 10, 1947, Act No. V of 1947. (Malayalam) - The date is available in this document.

66. Appendix No.8 - Madras Temple Entry Authorisation Act, 1947.



or other authorities in charge of temples, with the approval of Government, to throw them open to the excluded classes of the Hindu Community, whenever they are satisfied that the general Hindu Public is not opposed to that step. Under this provision, a number of temples have been thrown open in recent months to the excluded classes amid scenes of general enthusiasm and satisfaction. The existing provision is however inadequate, as the Government cannot take the initiative but have to wait until the trustees of other authorities in charge of a temple take the first step and apply to Government for approval. Government are thus helpless wherever a trustee takes up a recalcitrant attitude and refuses to obey the people's will. Government are fully satisfied that Hindu public opinion demands this reform and that the time has arrived for throwing open all Hindu temples in the province to the excluded classes. The Bill accordingly seeks to do so.

The Bill makes it clear that the excluded classes will hereafter have a right to enter any temple which is open to the Hindu public generally and offer worship therein in the same manner and to the same extent as other classes of Hindus. In particular, the excluded classes will have the same right to bathe in sacred tanks and wells appurtenant to temples and the same right of passage over any sacred place (including hells or hillocks and roads, streets and path ways) as other classes of Hindus. The trustees or other authorities in charge of a temple



will however have power to make regulations for the maintenance of order and decorum and the due observance of rites and ceremonies in the temples, provided only that such regulations do not discriminate against the excluded classes in any way; and to ensure this result, the power to make regulations have been made subject to the control of Government and to any rules made by them. Provision has also been made for the punishment of any one who prevents a member of the excluded classes from exercising the right conferred by the Bill or who molests or obstructs such a member in the exercise of such right.

The Malabar Temple Entry Act, 1938 (Madras Act XX of 1938) and sections 3 and 4 of the Madras Temple Entry Authorisations and Indemnity Act, 1939 (Madras Act XXII of 1939) lay down the procedure to be followed by the trustees of a temple before a temple is thrown open to the excluded classes, and these provisions will no longer be needed. The other provisions of Act XXII of 1939 indemnify certain persons against the consequence of their unauthorized entry into the Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple at Madura and other temples in 1939 and in view of the lapse of time, these may also be safely repealed now. Both the Acts are therefore repealed in toto. A consequential amendment has also been made in section 40 of the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act, 1926 (Madras Act II of 1927)"⁶⁷

67. The Fort St. George Gazette, No. 4, dated January 28, 1947
Pt. IV-A-Bills, PP. 93-94.



The people of British Malabar had joyfully welcomed the temple entry freedom. The Malabar Temple Entry Welcome Committee which was formed on May 31, 1947 at Guruvayoor under the presidentship of Kiduvath Krishnan Nair, made arrangements for celebrating the temple entry freedom on June 2, 1947.⁶⁸ On the morning of that day, a public meeting was held at Guruvayoor and after it, Sri.Kelappan, Sri.U.Gopalamenon and Sri.V.J. Raman led the devotees to the temple.⁶⁹ Thus the people of British Malabar began to use the temple entry freedom by giving special importance to its introduction in Guruvayoor temple.

Through the Act the long standing custom of Madras State including the British Malabar District have converted. On June 2, 1947, all the temples in Malabar were thrown open to all Hindus. The Mathrubhumi wrote in its editorial 'the Guruvayoor Sathyagraha' on June 1, 1947 that, it had played an important part for the removal of untouchability and temple entry agitation; and had given leadership to the whole India in this matter which is prestigious for the Malayalies.⁷⁰ Thus, finally after taking a long time, the temple entry struggle became successful.

68. N.N., 'Mathrubhumiya Guruvayoor Satyagrahavum' (Malayalam) Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Guruvayoor Satyagraha 1982. P.53.

69. ibid, PP. 53-4.

70. The Mathrubhumi, Daily, June 1, 1947, Quotation:Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Guruvayoor Satyagraha, 1982.



TEMPLE ENTRY FREEDOM IN COCHIN

Effects of Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation in Cochin.

The effect of Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation was very serious in Cochin. Innumerable meetings held in Cochin passed resolutions in favour of temple entry, and representations were made to the Maharaja of Cochin to throw open the State temple. But all their efforts were in vain. The Cochin Government also were rejected permission to introduce the temple Entry Bill in the Assembly.

The Travancore temple Entry proclamation also resulted in some difficulties in connection with Travancore and Cochin temples. The Travancore Government have some rights over some of the temples in Cochin area and trouble arose in the conduct of usual temple rites and ceremonies in such temples. The temples at Vaikom, Trippunithura, Chottanikkara, the perumthrikovil temple of Travancore etc; were some of the examples."⁷¹

71. Report of the Administration of the Devaswom Department in The Cochin State, 1936-37, Cochin Government Press, Ernakulam 1938) P.37-states that "The arrangements made by our Government for the conduct of usual sandhya Vela ceremony in the Vaikom temple had to be stopped and The age long conduct of the ceremony abandoned as the Avarnas suddenly entered the temple, without any notice whatever "Again it states that "The para and Arattu processions that used to be taken out through Travancore territory in connection with Ulsavam, etc, of the Cochin Temples such as Trippunithura, Chottanikkara, etc. had to be abandoned due to the altered conditions resulting from the issue of the proclamation. Similarly the usual para procession relating to the Perumthrikovil temple of Travancore and Arattu in the Trippunithura Valiakulam had to be discontinued as the Avarnas had entered that temple".



The Irinjalakuda Koodamanikkam temple also has some repercussions, in the proper conduct of pooja and other ceremonies. Over this temple the Government of Travancore has a certain control. Nedumbilly Tharananellore Nambudiripad, who was one of the six tantries of Koodal Manikkam temple and had officiated in the Sree Padmanabha Swami temple at Trivandrum and one Kunjan Chakiar who performed Koothu in some of the Travancore temples had referred to conduct their duties. Both of them entered the Koodamanikkam temple for their duties but the vaidikas declared that the temple was polluted by the entry of these persons. The reason was that in Travancore there was no pollution practice after the proclamation. The temple got purified from the pollution caused by these persons.⁷² "The result of the temple Entry proclamation also slightly affected the Perumanam Temple. The Travancore citizens who annually conducted the Koothu and Koodiyattam in this temple were declared to be ineligible to enter this temple."⁷³ "Thus the Cochin state made the Travancoreans as untouchables because of the temple Entry proclamation in Travancore. The Cochin Government feared the pollution arose from Travancore "In the

72. *ibid.*,

73. Nilakam perumal, A Hindu Reformation (First pub. April 1937, R.J. Reprint 1937, Goreon & Co., Madras) Ch. IX, P. 67 Ram & Co., Madras.



Cochin temple at Poothotta, the daily pooja had to be suspended as the Avarnas entered the adjoining Travancore temple which is situated so close to the Cochin temple that the entry of Avarnas into the one automatically pollutes the other".⁷⁴ Thus the Cochin Government made possible arrangements even to suspend the temple rites for preserving the 'Sanctity of temples'.

Non interest of Sir.R.K. Shanmugham Chetty, The Cochin Divan Towards Temple Entry Freedom.

During the time of Travancore temple entry proclamation, the aged Maharaja of Cochin was very orthodox in character and his Divan Sir.R.K. Shanmugham Chetty was also indifferent in temple entry matter to low caste Hindus, eventhough he was non-Brahmin. Because soon after the Traavancore Temple Entry proclamation, Mr.Kelappan sent an open letter to Sir.R.K.Shammugham Chetty as Divan of Cochin and not as his class mate. In this letter Mr.Kelappan requested to the Divan that it was the Divan's duty to advise the Maharaja of Cochin to throw open the temples in Cochin to all Hindus for the welfare of theCountry, because the advice of the Divan would be accepted to the Maharaja of Cochin.⁷⁵ As a reply to the open letter of Mr.Kelappan, the

74. ibid, P.37, op.cit.

75. The Mathrubhumi Daily, 14, 219, Decâber 2, 1936, P.4.



Divan failed to make any efforts in regard to the temple entry problem.

The Cochin Divan Sir. R.K. Shamugham chetty was also not in favour of temple entry. Because he thought only about the physical welfare of the low caste Hindus by omitting their spiritual welfare. As a non-Brahmin, he observed in his speech at Cherayi that temple entry is not a matter for human progress and fall; and the sources of human welfare are now the Government offices and legal courts; and advised not to make haste in temple entry matter.⁷⁶ The policy of the Divan is regard to temple entry matter in the Cochin State as it was felt that achieving appointment into Government services was more important and urgent than going entry into public temples. So the non-interest of the Divan was a cause to prohibit Cochin to follow the example of Travancore.

TEMPLE ENTRY AUTHORISATION IN COCHIN

The Temple Entry Authorisation Proclamation of Cochin was issued by Sree Kerala Varama, Maharaja of Cochin in an extract ordinary Gazette on 20th Devenber 1947. But this act could not come into prominence at that time. It came into force only on the first day of Medam 1123 (1948, April 14th or 15th).⁷⁷

76. ibid, 17, 243, February 29, 1940, P.3.

77. The Cochin Government Gazettee Extraordinary dated December 20, 1947 (Cochin Government Press, Ernakulam, 1947).



The preamble of the proclamation clearly describes the circumstances for such a proclamation that, "WHEREAS it is our desire that the disabilities imposed by custom or usage on certain classes of Hindus against entry into Hindu temples in Cochin State should be removed; AND WHEREAS subsequent to our message dated the 27th day of Dhanu 1122 (January 1947) the Government of Madras have enacted the Madras Temple Entry Authorisation Act, V of 1947; AND WHEREAS under the provisions of the said Act most of the temples in the adjoining District of Malabar and in the rest of the province of Madras have been thrown open to all classes of Hindus; AND WHEREAS such of our Hindu subjects who are labouring under the disability are showing signs of impatience; AND WHEREAS WE are satisfied that the time has now arrived to adopt the religious practices of the Hindus in this respect to the needs of changing times;..."⁷⁸ But this proclamation could not have given full temple entry freedom to the people of Cochin.⁷⁹ The Government also published a list of temples which came under the authorisation of temples open to all Hindus through an advertisement on April 10, 1948.⁸⁰

78. ibid, P.1.

79. Appendix No.9-The Temple Entry Authorisation Proclamation of Cochin.

80. The Cochin Government Gazette, Vol.LXXII, No.29, (Malayalam), dated April 10, 1948, Pt.I, No.7.



In this list, there were 133 Incorporated Devaswom temples with some of its Kizhedams (Sub-temples), 38 un incorporated Devaswom temple with some of its Kizhedama and 3 temple as other temples under the administration of Devaswom department.

Limitations in Temple Entry Freedom

The owners of private temples were not favourable to this proclamation. Most of them attempted to preserve them temples and appurtences of temples from the authorisation limits of this Act. So the Executive Authority of the Government decided to exempt the temples such as the Kakkat Ganapathi temple at Kunnamkulam village and the Temples and shrines situated in the Myalpazhur Mana Compound at Edakkattu Vayal Village, through a notification on the Gazette.⁸¹ Other such temples which were exempted from the limits of the temple Entry Authorisation Proclamation by the Executive Authority were the orvankara Vishnu temple, Thrivikramapuram temple and cheruvilli Thrikkovu temple at Thrivikramapuram Village, Mandothingal temple at Meloor Village, Kallath temple and Thattakkat temple at Maradu Village in Cochin.⁸² The Executive Authority also released

81. ibid, Vol. LXXXII, No.30, dated April 17, 1948, P.554.

82. ibid, Vol.LXXXII, No.42, dated July 17, 1948, Pt.I, P.848.



23 temples from the limits of the Temple Entry Authorisation Proclamation of September 1948.⁸³

Some of the owners of private temples filed suits in the High Court and District Courts of Cochin for granting permission to establish that their temples are not temples as defined in the limits of the Cochin Temple Entry Authorisation proclamation of 1948. For example, two of such temples which filed suits to the High Court were the Thaliakonam Sree Krishnapuram temple and its appurtenances at Madayikonam Village in Mukundapuram Taluk and Changaram Kulangare temple at Ayanthol village in Thrissivaperoor taluk.⁸⁴ One of the suits filed in Thrissivaperoor District Court was about the Panangattukara Karthiayani temple, Mangalam Siva Temple, Kumaram Kinattukara Bhagavathi temple, Ravipura Mangalam Vishnu temple and its prevints at Thekkumkara Village in Thalappilly taluk.⁸⁵ Another of such suit filed in the Anjikaimal (old name of Ernakulam) District

83. ibid, Vol.LXXXIII, No.4, dated September 25, 1948, Pt.I, p.94.

84. ibid, Vol.LXXII, No.34 (Malayalam), dated May 15, 1948 Pt.III, p.206.

85. ibid, Vol.LXXXII, No.45, (Malayalam), dated August 14, 1948, Pt.III, p.365.



Court was about the pishariyakkal temple and its precincts at west Chalakkudi Village in Mukundapuram Taluk.⁸⁶ So it is a fact that the temple entry freedom in Cochin was incomplete in all its aspects through Temple Entry Authorisation Proclamation and it could not have satisfied the wishes of low caste Hindus.

Full Temple Entry Freedom in Cochin.

It was during the reign of Sri.Ramavarma (1948-49) Maharaja of Cochin, Cochin got full temple entry freedom. A Bill was introduced in the Cochin Legislative Assembly to solve the limits and defects of Temple Entry Authorisation Proclamation of April 1948 and it was through this bill that the temple entry freedom in Cochin became real one as in other parts of Kerala. This Government Bill is known as the Cochin Temple Entry Authorisation proclamation (Amendment) Bill, published in the Gazette through a notification dated February 19, 1949 and the full note of the Bill is the following:

"WHEREAS it is deemed necessary to amend the Cochin Temple Entry Authorisation Proclamation, V of 1123, it is hereby enacted as follows:-

1. This Act may be called the Cochin Temple Entry Authorisation Proclamation (Amendment) Act of 112 (SIC); and it shall come into effect at once.

⁸⁶.ibid, Vol.LXXXIII, No.8 (Malayalam) dated October 30, 1948, Pt.III, P.55.



AMENDMENT OF SECTION-2

2. For clause (2) of Section 2 of the Cochin Temple Authorisation proclamation, V of 1123; hereinafter referred to as the proclamation, the following shall be substituted, namely:-

(2) "Temple" means a place, by whatever name known, which is dedicated to, or for the benefit of, or used as of right by, the Hindu Community or any section thereof, as a place of Public religious worship, and includes subsidiary shrines, as well as tanks appurtenant to the temple".

Deletion of 3, Section 5 and 8 of the Sections 5 and 8 proclamation shall be deleted.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS:-

The temple entry Authorisation proclamation, V of 1123, defines "temple" as a place which is dedicated to, or for the benefit of, or used as of right by, the caste-Hindu community in general as a place of public religious worship. Such a definition of the terms "temple" restricts the scope of the proclamation by excluding the temples which are not used as of right by the Caste-Hindu Community in general from its scope. It is deemed necessary to extend the scope of the proclamation to all temples used as a place of public religious worship by the Hindu Community or any section of the Hindu community.



Section 8 of the proclamation provides that the temple of Sree Poornathrayeesan situated within the Fort area of Trippunithra is not and shall not be deemed to be a temple for the purposes of the proclamation and by this provisions the Sree Poornathrayeesan temple is removed from the scope of the proclamation. It is considered necessary to remove this exemption. Hence the Bill."⁸⁷ This is February 19, 1949, with the right of full temple entry freedom in Cochin, Kerala became a land of social equality in the case of temple worship.

CONTRIBUTION OF TEMPLE ENTRY FREEDOM IN KERALA.

Kerala achieved equal temple entry freedom of worship to all classes of Hindus before 1950. But it is a wondefful stigma that the right of entry into the Srikovil for performing poojas (duties to the deity) in public temples is still only in the hands of Brahmin priests. Except Brahmins, the Hindus are not practically yet allowed to do poojas in public temples because whether the thought of pollution to the deity or on the wishes of the people to support the existence of the old custom of doing poojas in public temples by Brahmin priests. The ignorance about the pooja principles by other Hindus including Kshatriyas and sudras was another reason for the existence of such a custom.

87. *ibid.*, dated February 19, 1949, supplement o Pt.I, Notification-Cochin Legislative Assembly,



In the context of Brahmin monopoly in the matter of temple poojas; to establish complete equality and unity among Hindus in social matters, it was essential to solve the problem of Brahmin ascendancy in the matter of temple poojas. So a long time after the temple entry freedom, a meeting of leading men of Hindus held at the premises of Sree Mookambika temple in Parour on October 9, 1935, and agreed to make changes in the matter of temple poojas.⁸⁸ For this purpose, again they met on August 27, 1987 at Paliyam in Chendamangalam for the agreement of Paliyam proclamation.⁸⁹ The proclamation says that, "Sanatanadharma (Hindu religion) is based on Vedic principles. Smritis are the codes of conduct written to help the people to practice these principles. Numerous Smritis originated because there were efforts to make the customs suit the place and time. But, for a long period there has not been any modification in the codes of conduct. So, caste system based on birth originated and got deep rooted in our country. As a result, organisation of various communities

88. P. Kerala Varma Raja, 'Samohya Parishkarthavi' Ed. K.G. Vadhiar Janmabhumi Daily (Malayalam) 11,128, dated September 25, 1988. (Ayodhya printers, Cochin). P.5.

89. ibid.,



became corrupted. Moreover, this type of caste system developed to such a stage as to question the very foundation of our sanatana Dharma. This is a proclamation announced after discussions in several assemblies by the pandits who have a long tradition of vaidika - tantrik dharma and sastreas.

Now are recognise that for the continuance a life based on the great principles in Kerala birth is no more a valid criterion and that Brahmnihood can be achieved by any person with his righteous action (Karma). We proclaim that one who has acquired Brahmnihood this is eligible to do the duties of a priest including rituals in temples. All Hindus have the right to the sixteen religious duties (Shodasa Karmas). But the eligiblity forpriest hood is the religious performance upto Samavarta. We unanimously resolve that this performace should be according to Ashvalatana grihyasutra only.

This proclamation made at the 21st conference of Kerala Kshetra Samrakshna samiti, and the decision at conferences of vedic scholars in Kottayam, paravur and paliam will be very i important. This conference also resolves that the attention of all Hindu organisations with activities all over Kerala should be drawn to this matter."⁹⁰ But the provisions of this

90. ibid, P.5.



proclamation could not be a success in Kerala of the old deep rooted unbroken caste society. The main merit of this proclamation is that it correctly shows the true form of Hindu culture. So the paliam proclamation of 1987 was a far reaching result of the temple entry freedom which helped the Malayalies to reveal the true form of their culture within a period of Quarter of a century. Thus the struggle for temple entry freedom in Kerala culminated in success by re-establishing the real essence of Hindu culture in Kerala. Such a culture was the contribution of temple entry Freedom in Kerala.

