

Kerala from sangam to dutch period

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Introduction. ? Kerala has a unique Geographical position. ? Kerala has a rich culture and is the meeting point of many types of ideologies, Ideas and religious views. ? Travelers, merchants and rulers visited Kerala and influenced its History. ? Story Behind the birth Of Kerala. ? Parasurama the 6th Incarnation of Lord Vishnu threw an axe far into the sea and commanded the sea to retreat. ? The land that emerged from the waters became Kerala. ? From where does the term Kerala come from ? ? Sanskrit scholars derive the name from “ Kera or coconut”, which is a staple product of Kerala. Others say it is derived from the Tamil word “ Charal” meaning Mountain slope. ? Arab and Persian writers and early Malayalam and medieval Tamil Literature say that the word Kerala means the land of hills and mountains. Traditional sources. ? Early history of Kerala is based on traditions. The two major sources are : ? Archaeological Sources. ? Archaeological survey and excavations were started in Kerala by Ward and Conner in 1819. ? there are 3 relics of the Historical period found in the various parts of Kerala. They are : 1. monuments 2. coins 3. inscription. ? Monuments. 1.

Stone images of Buddha, reflect the culture of Kerala during the Buddhist era. 2. Religious monuments : Temples , Churches, Mosques and Synagogues. 3. Palaces – famous Padmanabhapuram palace in Kanyakumari district and Dutch palace in Fort Cochin. 4. Forts and historical sites. ? Coins. ? Many foreign and indigenous coins have been found in Kerala. • Rast is the oldest of them. • Roman coins are the oldest Foreign coins. • Rulers of Travancore and Cochin Had their own independent coinage. • Dutch copper coins and British Indian Coins give valuable information to historians. ? Inscriptions . Throw light on the political, Cultural, and social life of the

People of Kerala. 2. Give insight into working conditions of local assemblies, how temples were managed, Relationship between the landlord and tenant and functioning Of educational institutions. 3. Some inscriptions testify the liberal policy of religious toleration followed by the ancient rulers of Kerala. ? Sangam Age(1-500 A. D.) ? Sangam Literature was composed, In which the Works of poets and writers threw light upon cultural, economic, political, Social and other aspects of the kingdoms of the South. Through these works we get to know what happened during the first 500 years of Christian Era : I. there was monarchy and patrilineal system of succession, II. Women were well educated and had a good position in society, III. Monogamy was the norm, widow remarriage was permitted, Child marriage was not there. ? No division of society into high and low castes, there was no untouchability, ? Rice was the staplefood, people had no restrictions regarding beef eating and other non-veg items. Rice-wine was a popular drink. ? It was rare to find Brahmins though some were there as Aryan Brahmins in the royal court. Agriculture was a major occupation and due to trade with countries like Rome, they flourished as a prosperous set of people. Post Sangam Period (500-800 A. D.) ? Main rulers of this period were Cheraman Perumal and Kulasekara Alwar. ? The former became a Vaishnavite Poet and the latter accepted Islam and went to Mecca. ? Adi Shankara (788-820 A. D.) lived and propogated the Advaidaphilosophyduring this period. ? After the creation of Kerala it was believed that Parasurama planted sixty-four joint Brahmin Families and gave them rules which would govern them. The Brahmins invited rulers called “ Perumals “ to rule them and each ruler was appointed for a period of 12 years to rule over them. The Kollam Epoch (800-1200A.

D) ? Politically Kerala was under the Cholas and Pandyas. •A temple was constructed at almost every town and village in Kerala • the Quilon calendar was introduced during this time in 25 July 825 A. D. ? Festivals like onam and vishu came to be celebrated. ? The 9th century A. D. saw Malayalam growing as a distinct language. ? Educational institutions like “ Salai” came into existence. ? This period also saw the grow of trade and commerce. There was trade between China and Kerala. ? Tenant system was prevalent whereby the feudal lords enjoyed life at the cost of the poor tenants. ? Sales and tax on vehicles fetched a revenue for the state. ? Ravi Varma Epoch (1200-1500 A. D) ? During this period the land relations showed certain important features : ? Increase of intermediaries as temporary holders of land. ? Increased measures to expand cultivable land and enhance income from land. ? The emergence of cashmoneyin obtaining land rights. ? Traditional landowners held the right of ownership of land. ? Pledging of land of debt on interest. Agriculture was the main occupation. ? There were other occupations like ritual-cum-medicine men, astrologers, washer men and so on. ? There was growth of trade and trading centres; ? Trade was at 3 levels : ? Transport system was essential for trade and in this context there were many boats, ships; even bridges over waterways was essential. ? Portugese Rule In Kerala. ? Political authority was fragmented by the time the Portugese came to kerala. ? In 1498, Vasco-do-Gamma reached Kappad near Kozhikode. ? Portugese, was the first to achieve a stronghold in Kerala ? A number of battles were fought between the provincial rulers and the Portugese. In 1524 Gamma was appointed the Portugese viceroy of Kerala. ? Apart from commerce, they were also interested in imparting their faith to

the people. ? Many people were forced to convert. ? In 1550's , St. Francis Xavier converted many fisher folk and other socially backward sections along the coastal regions of southern Kerala. ? The chiefs in the state (except the Muslims to whom the Portuguese were hostile) did not resist the conversion as long as they had freedom to do trade and commercial activities and the economic fabric of society was not disturbed. The Portuguese used their own tactics of divide and rule policy for fulfilling their commercial interests in the state. ? New towns had risen and old towns decayed. eg. Calicut, Cochin, Chaliyam gained importance while Quilon and Cranganore languished. ? Crops like cashewnuts, tobacco, custard apple, guava, pineapple and papaya were introduced. ? Gunpowder increased the importance of artillery. This brought unemployment among the Nairs who were well trained in swords and shields. •They established seminaries and colleges in Cochin, Angamali and Cranganore. For getting Christian priests. •St.

Francis Xavier translated Catechism into Malayalam. •Fearing ? The Dutch in Kerala. ? Dutch East India Company was established in the year 1592. ? In 1604 they came to the Malabar coast. ? There was rivalry btw Cochin and Kozhikode during that time and they took advantage of this situation. ? However like the Portuguese their involvement in the local politics was minimal. ? However they had conflicts btw Marthanda Varma of Thiruvithankur and Samuthiri of Kozhikode. ? The Dutch had the main power over the Trade activities. ? Pepper and spices were exported by merchants only after the consent of the Dutch people. They constructed forts and factories here like the Portuguese. ? They sold Indonesian spices and sugar to those ships which were going to Cochin. It turned out to be a success. ?

But this didn't last for long as it declined from 1783 and was completely stopped by 1793 due to poor demand. ? Conclusion ? The History of kerala is very essential part of the heritage of the state and country as well. ? If we study History well then we would know about the real background in which our state developed through the years. ? We can also see the contrasting practices that were in vogue during the ancient and medieval and the present kerala society.