

**Decoding the ‘Other’,
Deconstructing the Self :
Redefining Ayyankali as an
Agency of an ‘Organic Protest’**

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Abstract

The Dalit Movement is an organized resistance of the ex-untouchables to caste oppression or against the hegemony of Brahmanical ideology. Historiography has acquired a radical turn with the coming of ‘history from below’ and the debates on alternative histories. It has necessitated a critique of the dominant paradigms of historiography from the margins in order to engage with dominance and subordination. The establishment of the British rule resulted, on the one hand, in closing the traditional avenues to mobility and on the other, in opening several new ones. More important, it set forces in motion which altered fundamentally the overall character of society. The Britishers were instrumental in bringing modern knowledge to India and Indians and also such new values as the equality of all before the law and the freedom to practice as well as to propagate one’s religion. So also, there was a new humanitarianism or western rationalism in the abolition of suttee human sacrifice and slavery. As a result, parallel to the upper caste reformism, there were also non brahmin movement, necessitated by the colonial administration in the East and it’s by product, modernity which had propelled social movements that helped to reconstitute the identities of the communities all social groups. It is in this historiographical context that the engagement with written history problematized by Ayyankali a Dalit thinker and activist of twentieth century Kerala, (Movement of Ayyankali)acquires significance.

Keywords: *Hegemonic Ideology, Colonial Modernity, Dalit de-casteist discourse, Body as a metaphor of activism ,Black masculinity, Organic Protest .*

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Historiography has acquired a radical turn with the coming of ‘history from below’¹. This opens up the possibility of various articulations of history by subordinated social groups to explore the prospect of a radical practice of the discipline².

In any society, dominant and subordinated classes, as well as their ideologies, have always been in conflict. The ideology that serves the interests of one group subverts the interest of others.³ Not surprisingly, subordinated classes everywhere do not share the dominant ideology and history.⁴ Neither do they share nor have a history of their own.⁵ This ideology takes the form of hegemony and later into domination which acts as an effective tool to indoctrinates the masses and creates a consensus in civil society in a peaceful manner.⁶

The establishment of the British rule resulted, on the one hand, in closing the traditional avenues to mobility and on the other, in opening several new ones⁷. More important, it set forces in motion which altered fundamentally the overall character of the

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- 1 A key aim of Dalit Studies is to recover histories of struggles for human dignity and caste discrimination by highlighting Dalit intellectual and political activism. See, Ramnarayan S. Rawat and K. Satyanaranana (eds), *Dalit Studies*, New Delhi, 2016.
 - 2 Sanal Mohan, ‘Searching for Old Histories. Social Movements and the Project of Writing History in Twentieth Century Kerala’ in Raziuddin Aquil and Partha Chatterjee (eds), *History in the Vernacular*, New Delhi, 2008, p.357.
 - 3 For holistic view see, Charles Tilly, *Domination, Resistance Compliance Discourse*, Vol. 6, No.3, *Sociological Forum*, 1991, pp. 593-602; Braj Ranjan Mani, *De Brahmanising History, Dominance and Resistance in Indian Society*, NewDelhi, 2005, pp. 188 ff.
 - 4 History as an academic discipline, pre-occupied with scholarly description and analysis, has so far, succeeded in creating the history of the dominant ‘event,’ ‘structure,’ and ‘process’ to thus, consciously leave out the so-called ‘non-event,’ ‘ordinary’ and ‘small’ not encompassable in the structure or process. For details see, Caven Kaplan, *Reconfigurations of Geography and Historical Narrative : A Review Essay, Public Culture*, Vol.3, No.1, 1990, p.28; Nicholas Dirks, *History as a sign of the Modern, Public Culture*, Vol2, No. 2, 1990, p.25.
 - 5 Sanal Mohan, ‘*Dalit Discourse and the Evolving New Self: Context and Strategies*’, *Review of Development and Change*, Vol.V,No.1, Jan- June, 1999, p.1; N.K. Jose, *History Never Engs (Mal.)*, Vaikom, 1999, pp.1 ff
 - 6 Literally, hegemony indicates political, economic, military and cultural predominance or control over others. See, Antonio Gramsci, Buttigieg Joseph (ed), *Prison Note book*, New York City, Columbia, University Press, 1992, pp. 233-38.Hegemony is also established culturally. By the possession of cultural capital, which is an insidious social mechanism that ensures the social reproduction and the cultural reproduction of the dominant class. For details see, Bernard Cohen, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*, Princeton University Press, 1996; Terry Egleton, *After Theory*, Penguin, U.K, 2004; Egleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction Britain 1983*, (2008); Robert Philipson, *Linguistic Imperialism*, O.U.P, 1992, (2003); Udaya Narayana Singh, *Translation as Growth Towards a Theory of Language Development*, New Delhi, 2010.
 - 7 K.Saradmoni, *Emergence of Slave Caste: Pulayas of Kerala*, Delhi, 1977, p.13.
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society.⁸ The new opportunities, at least at the higher levels, simultaneously led to the birth of backward class movement⁹ known as Non-Brahmin movement or enlightenment,¹⁰ necessitated by the Colonial modernity.

Modernity has propelled social movements that helped to reconstitute the identities of the communities or social groups.¹¹ To make it clear, the colonial practice of the Census and its fascination with numbers also played a significant role in the making of caste identity.¹² The decennial census reports highlighted the aspects of caste, sub castes, community, etc., which gradually awakened one’s caste consciousness and its numerical strength which later acted as the catalyst of social movements.¹³

It was in this context of modernity that the depressed felt an intense need to understand their past, or to search for a past which was not available in any of the dominant texts. That was mainly done by social reformers including Ayyankali and others through their social activism that brought about initiatives to establish a new self among the Dalits.¹⁴

Ayyankali’s Movement

There is a shifting paradigm in the movement of Ayyankali that went into the making of the new social identities.¹⁵ The struggle led by Ayyankali was exclusively for attaining a material benefit and a social space for his fellow beings rather than allaining any form of salvation.¹⁶

Ayyankali’s social activism began by organizing a group of untouchable youths called Ayyankali pada comprised brave youths who were trained in martial arts and were

8 M.N. Srinivas, *the Cohesive Role of Sanskritization and other Essays*, O.U.P, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 28 ff

9 Ibid.

10 Rajkumar, *Dalit Personal Narratives: Reading Caste, Nation and Identity*, New Delhi, 2011, p. 136.

11 Paul Gilroy, *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Harvard University Press, 1995; Sanal Mohan, *Dalit Discourse and the Evolving New Self: Contest and strategies*, *Review of Development and Change*, Vol. IV, No. 1, Jan- June, 1999, pp1-3.

12 D.R. Nagaraj, *The Flaming Feet and Other Essays* in Prthvi Datta and Charashobi (ed.), *The Dalit Movement in India*, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 94-5.

13 Ibid.

14 Sanal Mohan, *Search for Old Histories*, op.cit., pp. 357ff

15 Sanal Mohan, *Dalit Discourse*, op.cit., p.16

16 For understanding the nature of Ayyankali’s agitations see, K.K.S. Das, *Ayyankali Kerala Charithrathil (Mal.)*, Trivandrum, 2009, pp. 32-45.

ready to combat in case of attack.¹⁷ Many of the victories of Ayyankali's movement owed much to the sheer physical force of this brand¹⁸. This makes it a different genre among similar movements.¹⁹ It is evident in the forceful entry of Ayyankali in to the public space.

To achieve the right to way for the avarna caste was the first target of Ayyankali. He organized pulaya youths,²⁰ as stated earlier, and walked along the prohibited roads in his native village of Venganoor in order to assert the right of using public roads for himself and his people hitherto denied by the upper caste. Clashes took place in several places between the Pulayas and the upper castes, especially the powerful land controlling Nairs. But for the first time the Pulayas dared to fight back. As a result, the Pulayas under Ayyankali's leadership won the right to walk on the public roads in most of the areas of Travancore by 1900.²¹ Similar clashes also took place when the pulayas broke the traditional ban to witness the Maharaja's procession during the temple festival in Trivandrum. In another instance in 1912 at Nedumangad, Pulayas forcefully entered the market which resulted in clashes with Muslim traders.²²

A notable event of his social activism was his forceful entry as stated earlier, in to the caste – Hindu 'public sphere'. The lower castes and the Dalits were denied entry into the public road and street that were reserved for the upper castes. Anybody violating this caste code (Jatimaryada) was punished severely. In such a social milieu, Ayyankali willfully violated the diktat in 1893 by travelling through a public road in a Villuvandi (bullock-cart) that was used only by the upper castes.²³ This was an irritant to the Nair

17 C.Abhimanyu, Ayyankali (Mal.), Trivandrum, 1990, pp. 53-54.

18 Sanal Mohan, Dalit Discourse and Evolving Self, op.cit., p. 17.

19 Lee Staples, Community Organising for Social Justice: Grass roots Groups for power, *Social Work with Group* Vol. 35, issue 3, 2012, pp.287-296. Social justice is strongly connected to community organizing and group work which is essential for fostering equal human rights, distributive justice, and a structure of opportunity, collective empowerment etc. For knowing the nature of such squadron agency see, I.S. Alinsky, Rules for radicals: A practical primer for realistic radicals, New York, 1971; J. Coleman, Social Capital in the creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.94, pp. 95-120; M. Delgado, Lee Staples, Youth led Community Organising, New York O.U.P, 2008.

20 The organized youths were given training in martial arts and were formed a group known as Ayyankali pada as mentioned earlier. See, K.S. Mani, Ayyankali, the liberator of the Blacks in Kerala, Samskara Keralam (Quarterly), Trivandrum, 1989, p.19.

21 J.W.Gladstone, Protestant Christianity and People's Movement in Kerala 1850- 1936, Trivandrum 1984. P.267.

22 Joseph Mathew, Ideology, Protest and Social Mobility. Case Study of Mahars and Pulaya, New Delhi, 1986, p.102.

23 Vide, M.K. Kumaran, Sree Narayana Guru Prabhavam, Trivandrum. 1978, p.167; C.Abhimanya, Ayyankali, op.cit., T.H.P. Chentharasseri, Ayyankali, (Mal.), Trivandrum, 1979, pp.10-13; T.H.P Chentharasseri, Ayyankali, Athasthitharude Padathalavan (Mal.), Trivandrum, 2014 (2007), pp. 19-21.

as dress and vehicle were powerful signifiers as it is capable of emitting messages of dominance and insubordination. A group of outraged upper caste youths tried to block his path, but determined to fight Ayyankali jumped out of the Cart with weapons in hand and screamed. This drove away his detractors.²⁴

The Caste, race, colour and even language here remained as a powerful idiom of caste consciousness.²⁵ Then Ayyankali, continued his maidan journey through all the forbidden roads and returned and these by asserting the legitimate claim to public space hitherto denied to the lower castes.²⁶ This open challenge to upper caste hegemony of social space empowered them,²⁷ even though it created much embarrassment among the feudal elements and in the social setup of Kerala.²⁸ Similar incidents of ride and forcible entry were reported from different places like Parassala, Parasuvakkal, Amaravila, Neyyattinkara, Perumpazhuthoor, Balaramapuram Chaliyar Street, Nemom, Kazhakoottam, Kaniyapuram, etc.²⁹ The spread of agitation shows the extent of success attained by Ayyankali in making the issue a focal point of mass mobilization eventually forcing governmental intervention in favour of the scheduled castes.³⁰

Another important struggle that Ayyankali heroically and successfully launched was to break the upper caste monopoly in education and open the doors of schools to the untouchable children. Though virtually unlettered, this man with his instinctive intelligence could grasp the significance of education for his people to achieve their freedom.³¹ This was clear from the encouragement he had given in establishing libraries and night schools for

24 Sanal Mohan, op.cit., pp 16-7

25 For details see, Morton Klass, *Caste: The Emergence of the South Asian Social System*, New Delhi, 2004; Y.T. Vinayaraj, op.cit., pp. 96 off.

26 K.T. Rammohan, ‘Mentalities of Development. The case of Travancore, South West India’, *Social Orbit*, Vol. 1, No.1, 2015, p.55.

27 Joseph Mathew, *Ideology, Protest and Social Mobility*, op.cit., pp. 102off.

28 Vide, M.K. Kumaran, *Sree Narayana Guru Prabhavam*, Trivandrum. 1978, p.167; C.Abhimanya, *Ayyankali*, op.cit., T.H.P. Chentharasser, *Ayyankali*, (Mal.), Trivandrum, 1979, pp.10-13; T.H.P Chentharasser, *Ayyankali, Athasthitharude Padathalavan* (Mal.), Trivandrum, 2014 (2007), pp. 19-21.

29 N.K. Jose, *Pulayar Lahala* (Mal.), Kottayam, 1982, p.7.

30 J. Prabhash, *Policy of Reservation and Social Mobility of Scheduled Castes in Kerala. A Study of Trivandrum District*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, pp. 49-50.

31 For details see, Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital’ in J. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the Sociology of education*, New York, 1986, pp. 241-58; J.S. Coleman, *Social Capital in the creation of Human Capital*. *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 94, No. 1, 1988, pp. 95-120; J.Fan, *The Impact of Economic Capital, Social Capital and Cultural Capital. Chinese families, access to educational resources*, *Sociology Mind*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 2014, pp. 272-81; F. Fukuyama, *Social Capital, Civil Society and development*, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No.1, 2001, pp. 7-20.

the benefits of his people and his proposal to the government that elementary education be made compulsory for them.³² Moreover, not only did Ayyankali represent to the government to permit Pulaya children's admission to government schools he even took children to the schools and demanded the authorities to admit them.³³ But the government's efforts to make education more accessible to the lower castes did not come to fruition due to resistance of the high castes. Ayyankali and his men started a school at Venganoor in 1904. This school was set on fire on the 1st day itself by the Nairs³⁴ so agitation was the only option to the Pulaya strike by agricultural workers.³⁵

Retaliation, he thought, "if you won't admit our children to schools, your lands will lie fallow and grow weeds" declared Ayyankali, threatening strike on their farms.³⁶ His gritty words had the force of a vow that snapped all the so-called 'idyllic relations' between the Janmi and his adiyam (bondsmen).³⁷ Ayyankali addressed his people thus:

The country can progress only through us who was workers on lands. If we strike work, our masters will starve. We are used to starvation and we don't care. Let us strike work from tomorrow.³⁸

The strike was on. The landowners also took measures to counter the rebellion. They held out carrots and brandished sticks to encourage dissension and backsliding among workers. But Ayyankali pada defeated those stratagems by dissuading the workers from turning blacklegs.³⁹ The prolongation of the strike had its impact on both sides. Finally, Diwan P. Rajagopalachari took the initiative to bring about a negotiated settlement. The janmis conceded the demand for increase in wages and agreed to be lenient about school entry and freedom of moment. The year-long agrarian struggle ended in 1908 only when the government agreed to issue a notification throwing school admission open to Pulayas and it brought about an attitudinal change among the untouchables. They became less and

32 S. Girijatmajan, *Sree Ayyankali Smaranika*, Trivandrum 1982,p14.

33 K.Saradmoni, *Emergence of a Slave Caste*, op. cit., p-148, Proceedings of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, 1907, pp. 109-11; J.Prabhash, op.cit., p.49.

34 K.T. Rammohan, op.cit.

35 P.K. Gopalakrishnan, *Movements for Social Reform (Mal.)* in P.S. Velayudhan (ed.), *History of Kerala*, Vol.1, Ernakulam, 1973, p. 1272; T.K. Oommen, *From Mobilisation to institutionalization. The Dynamics of Agrarian Movement in 20th Century Kerala*, Bombay, 1985, pp. 62ff.

36 Andalat, *Charithrathil Vilayam prapicha Vikarangal (Mal.)*, Kottayam, 2012, pp. 39-42

37 T.K. Oommen, op.cit.

38 See, Alex George, *The Militant Phase of Pulaya Movement of Southern Travancore 1884-1914*, Amsterdam, 1990.

39 K. Sathyanarayana, Susie Tharu (ed.), *No Alphabet in Sight: New Dalit Writing from South India*, New Delhi, 2011, pp. 382-83.

less deferential towards their feudal lords.⁴⁰ It is significant to note that Ayyankali’s call for a labour strike occurred long before the arrival of Marxism and trade unionism. The Russian Revolution was still in its incipient stage. The strike was a weapon of struggle unheard of in this part of the world at that time.⁴¹

Though the nature of the strike was such that, government issued an order in 1907 admitting the Pulaya students to public school was denied by the caste Hindus,⁴² for which the strike was started. But the irony is that, as the resistance of the Upper castes persisted, the Government had to re-issue the notification in 1910 and 1914⁴³ respectively. However, this epic strike of the most oppressed among the oppressed that took place in an obscure corner of South Kerala deserves a niche in the pages of history.⁴⁴ Ayyankali thus succeeded in creating a new consciousness among the Dalits and could challenge the feudal relations in agriculture and showed his men that there was nothing sacrosanct in their relationship with the Janmies.⁴⁵

The teachings of Sri Narayana Guru based on humanistic values deeply influenced Ayyankali, who formed the Sadhujana Paripalana Sangham SJPS in 1907, four years after the formation of SNDP Yogam by the former.⁴⁶

The Sangham met on Sundays to discuss and reflect on their problems⁴⁷. The Sangham demanded a six-day week for workers and resolved to observe Sunday as a holiday, a revolutionary step in those days. Subsequently efforts were also made to challenge, caste restrictions on dressing⁴⁸.

Clothing, jewellery, Naming, hairstyle, use of language, food, signs, way of worship etc. are the symbols of caste differentiation. The spectacle of the body in public

40 Sanal Mohan, *Dalit Discourse*, op.cit., pp-35 ff.

41 K.K.Das, *Ayyankali Kerala Charithrathil*, (Mal.), Trivandrum, 2009, pp. 75-6.

42 K. Sathyanarayana, *Sadhujana Paripalana Sangam: The Story of a Freedom Movement* in K. Sathyanarayana, Susie Tharu (ed.), *No Alphabet in Sight New Dalit Writing from South India*, New Delhi, 2011, pp. 380 ff.

43 K.T. Rammohan, op.cit.

44 K.Sathyanarayana, op.cit., pp. 381-83.

45 Sanal Mohan, op.cit.

46 S.N. Sadasivan, *A Social History of India*, New Delhi, 2000, p.553; Pradeepan parampirikunnu, *Dalit Padanam: Swathwam, Samskaram, Sahithyam*, (Mal.) Trivandrum, 2007, pp. 56-7; K. Sreenivasan, *Sree Narayana Guru*, Trivandrum, 1989, p.73.

47 *Sadhujana Paripalana Sangam: The Story of a Freedom Movement* in K. Sathyanarayana, op.cit.; Sasidharan, *Sadbhu jan paripalana Sanghavum Samudayakodathiyum* (Mal.), Ayyankali Smaranika, op.cit., p. 19.

48 P.K. Gopalakrishnan, op.cit., pp. 1272 ff; T.H.P Chentasserri, *Ayyankali, Athasthitharude Padathalavan* (Mal.), Trivandrum, 2014 (2007), pp. 41.

spaces was replete with caste markers. The movement of the body in public spaces was regulated through a system of distance pollution; the sacredness of the space and the purity of the body being dependent on restrictions of access to other bodies in terms of visibility touch, hearing and clearly specified distances.⁴⁹ With the intention of break away the century's old customs, Ayyankali persuaded the Pulaya Women in South Tavancore (Perinad near Kollam) to throw away the bead necklaces. Amidst the storm of oppression by the upper castes, hundreds of Pulaya women publicly threw away their bead necklaces at the instances of Changanasseri Parameswaran Pillai, a Nair social reformer⁵⁰, Gopaladas Neeraj, a pulaya leader and a women stalwart, Aryapallam. This was a great victory for the Pulayas and other marginalized sects.

BODY

The social activism of Ayyankali owed much to the sheer physical force. His movement made use of the body as a potential site. Here we can see a transformation of an untouchable caste body in to a martial body which there by subverted the symbolic world of relations⁵¹. Body, according to Durkheim, is a Metaphor and a symbol.⁵² The body is man's first instrument like very instrument, it has technical and techno symbolic efficiency. Uses of the body are "signs, understood expression," they are a language through which participation in a collective reality is communicated⁵³ Says Marcel Mauss. The next theoretician who studied about the social body is Pierre Bourdieu who presents the body as a center of social regeneration or reproduction of society.⁵⁴

The new Dalit masculinity spearheaded by Ayyankali and others had a new force that organized and controlled the labour force is singularly significant in the history of modern Kerala as well as in the history of Subattem resistance.⁵⁵

49 P.Bhaskaranunni, Pathonbatham Nootandile Kerala, Kottayam,1988. For a theoretical approach see, S.Nettleton ,J.Watson,The body in Everyday Life, Routledge, London, 1998; Bryan .S.Turner, The Body and Society, Oxford, London,1984; Elaine Scarry , The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World, New York, 1985.

50 J.Prabhash ,OP.cit,p50.

51 K.S. Madhavan, 'Formation of Dalit Identity in Kerala' in Prabhakaran (ed.), Symposia on Dalits Life and Culture of the Marginalised, Kanhangad, 2012, pp. 30ff.

52 Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labour in Society, Palgrave, Macmillan, 1893.

53 Marcel Mauss, Techniques of the Body, *Economy and Society*, Vol.2, No.1, 1973, pp. 70-88.

54 Pierre Bourdieu, Outline of a Practice, Cambridge university Press, 1977,pp.124ff; Distinction : A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste, London, 1984,pp.384ff.

55 The Social activism of Ayyankali is based on physical strength, an unprecedented practice, which he applied in the caste ridden society of Kerala, His villuvandi stir, agricultural strike, Kallumala agitation etc were rare and unique in the social fabric of Kerala. For a theoretical approach see, Alexandra Howson,

When we analyse the bodily demeanour of Ayyankali, all his public appearance can say to be self-declarative – decorated headwear, earnings, sandal pack on the forehead, big moustache, long black coat, steady and upstanding posture distinguished him from others and would impress even in the first sight¹¹⁴. This physical appearance also a part of his assertion. Here the early mentioned subordinate black masculinity becomes a potential for Ayyankali's social activism. His villuvandi stir, agricultural strike, entry into the public street, Kallumala agitation, etc. are all the sign of negation.⁵⁶

Ayyankali continued his efforts, as a member of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly from 1912 onwards. His struggles in the Assembly were mainly concentrated around the grant of cultivable lands, admission of Pulayas to educational institutions along with grant of necessary concessions to continue education and employment, assignment of land to the homeless/landless poor etc.⁵⁷

Another of his demand, following his nomination in the Sri Mulam Praja Assembly was the right to enter temples. The constant effort of Ayyankali finally culminated in the opening of temples to all irrespective of caste and creed.⁵⁸ He also became instrumental in conducting inter caste marriage by saying that it helped a lot in eradicating the caste demon.⁵⁹

Conclusion

Though the marginalized were hitherto deprived of all opportunities, in the caste ridden society of Kerala, the strong current of change that swept across Kerala had its impact on the Pulayas and impelled them to break the chain of their century old submissiveness and misery. The Movement of Ayyankali was a model exclusively for attaining a social space. The social activism of Ayyankali owed much to the sheer physical force and therefore body was made use as a potential site in order to overcome the white masculinity. Here the

The Body in Society; An Introduction, Policy Cambridge, 2013.

56 Negation is a phenomenon of semantic opposition. The word 'negative' is negative in character. This is an act of dismantling or upsetting something which is existing in the society. It aims a total destruction of hegemonic society. Vide, L.R. Horn, A Natural History of Negation, Chicago, 1989; L.R. Horn (ed.), The Expression of Negation, Berlin, 2010.

57 57. Sri Mulam Praja Assembly Proceedings (SMPAP), 1912, p. 82; SMPAP, 1913, p. 20; SMPAP, 1913, p. 20, p. 164; SMPAP, 1919, p.20, SMPAP, 1920, p.22; SMPAP, 1924, p.38; SMPAP, 1925, p.18.

58 Appan Vanchiyoor, Ayyankali Padathalavan, (Mal.), Trivandrum, 1984, pp. 25-7

59 Ibid., p.28; For getting details of Ayyankali's speech in the Praja Assembly, see, Kunnukuzhy S. Mony, Ayyankaliyude Prasangal (Mal.), Trivandrum, 2016.

black masculinity plays a potential role in Ayyankali's radical activism. The relevance of his movement in effecting social changes in the 19th century is undoubtedly of paramount importance. His movement based on 'organic protest', Ayyankali sought to open a new way for Dalit liberation or at least tried to retrieve a Dalit identity and 'a self' ' as noted earlier. The novel resistance devices put up by Ayyankali earned him a permanent niche in the agitational history of Princely Travancore nay entire South India.
