

Spatial Trajectory of Land Names In Early Medieval Inscriptions of Kerala

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Abstract

This paper seeks to reveal the intersectionality of spatial production and social labour which made possible the production of productive spaces in the medieval agrarian world in Kerala. The socially mediated and engaged process of creation of various productive landscapes indicate the complex process of the entangled life activities and tenurial relations in which multiple forms of productive spaces were created and social power were entrenched on such spaces in accordance with the institutional control of tenurial hierarchies and rights over productive land spaces.

Keywords: Socio-spatial Relation, tenurial control, lived spaces, wetland, forested spaces, social labour, spatial control and laboring bodies.

This is an attempt to locate the historicity of land names appear in early medieval inscriptions of Kerala. It aims at, however, to reveal the connectivity entangled in geo-environmental domains and socio-spatial relations (Harvey, 1969). The socio-spatial terms appear in early medieval epigraphs show the natural geographical terrain on the one hand and habitation nodes and settlement localities of multiple life activities on the other. This is predominantly related to wetland paddy agriculture and laterite garden lands in addition to forested and mountainous valleys. It also reveals the ways in which the mechanism of institutional control in which the epigraphic documents were produced as part of the internal hierarchy in early medieval Kerala. This also makes sense of a complex spatio- social process in which the formation of different operational spaces related to alluvial and laterite lands were produced. This was, in fact, a complex process of human interaction with the animated and inanimate geo-spatial environ. The survival strategies related to multiple life activities and connectivity to labour process of resource generation are also reflected in the spatial terms appeared in inscriptions. These terms have its own trajectory to a long historical past as the embedded livedity of these spatial significations reveal a processual development of these

terms (Lefebvre,1992). Many a number of terms have antecedence and historicity to early historical past. These spatial categories have multiple meanings and connected histories to a larger historical process in early medieval Kerala. However, the historicity of these inscriptional vocabularies reflect upon the spatial history of early medieval settlements and cultivation spaces that would help us to delineate the spatial process of production of life activities and settlements in river valleys, water laden areas, marshy plains, estuarine terrain ,laterite areas and forested region .

There are two categories that appeared in the socio-spatial relations that manifested in land terms. One is the spatial terms related to natural geographical terrains including the water spaces and water harvesting structures which must have necessary connection to the early historical period. Second is the habitation and operational spaces manifested in number of land terms represented in the donative inscriptions. This was developed as part of the labour process in agriculture operations and also the structural and institutional mechanism of tenurial control developed by the dominating overlords. As far as the natural geographical diversity and its diverse location in the asymmetrical forms of locations are concerned, one can understand that perennial rivers and streams are originating in the mountains and hills, flowing through the hill slopes, connecting different settlements, reached either into backwaters or sea. Elevated terrains and hills are also located in the midland. The Ghats and its valleys, midland and its elevated areas, coastal plains and estuarine areas are important where we find multiple operational spaces like multiple millet zone, multicrop laterite and wetland agriculture that developed since the early historic period. The development and expansion of agriculture practices in midland and the estuarine lands made these places a surplus generating region of multiple economies and varied life activities.

Living Area and Place as Bordered Area

The study of society in relation to the habitat and environment is depended upon the geo-climatic conditions of a particular region, natural resources available, cultural stages and technological knowhow developed in that region . The place has become an important category in this study and place is treated as geographically bordered area. These spaces are being created by the human beings for their material and mental needs. Movement for suitable places in particular area resulted in making of locality as a first living area. The epithets *atimāri* (Narayanan 1972, A-8, 26 and B-24) and *kādēru* (Rao,1992) indicate the existence of shifting cultivation places. *Chirumuthaivēli* (Ramachandran,2007,No.154) is also meant for pastoral common land and the shifting cultivation spaces nearby. *Chiru-*

punaiyil thalai chāththankūru (Ayyar,1924) gives us the sense that cultivation on a punam land and the share called *kūru* of the cultivator called Chāttan. *Punam* means high ground, chiefly high land overrun with under wood and capable of irregular cultivation. *Punanellu* (mountain paddy or hill paddy) *punakrishi* (shifting cultivation), *punakandam* (marked field for punam cultivation) and *punamvāram* (a share of the produce given to the overlord as dues out of *punam* cultivation) are cases in point in the practice of shifting cultivation (Gundert,1892). *Ālakkāl punam*, *kallūrpunam*, *kīzhpunam*, *cheriyapunam*, *puḷivēlippunam*, *agrashālappunam*, *munday-ilagrashālappunam* and *nākanārpunam* are shifting cultivation tracts mentioned in the documents located in the midland region (Rao,1992).

The epithet *nākanārpunamum purayidamum* is important as it indicates the process of shifting cultivation practiced by tribal population in the historical past and it had been transformed into a multicultural operation space with compound site called *purayitam* in course of time. Certain *nelvāthilkādu* and *karavayalkādu* (Ayyar,1924) are mentioned to indicate the process that once these lands were shifting cultivation tracts and later it had been transformed into permanent agricultural areas. The term *punamidaikuyavanvayal* (Narayanan 1972,B-24) also reveals the process that *punam* tract might have been transformed into paddy field. *Mutha* means jungle ground brought for the first time under cultivation and *muthapunam* (Gundert, 1892) is old jungle where *tina-varaku* had been practiced in the shifting cultivation mode and the term *Chirumuthaimattamundakam* is meant for the practice of shifting cultivation *Aranjanmuthai*, *chirumuthai* (Rao,1992) and *mummuthai* (Aiyar, 1924.II) are indications to the practice of shifting cultivation.

Certain *pulaiyanmuthai* deserves attention as it indicates certain Pulayar groups engaged in the practice of shifting cultivation (Rao, 1992). They must have sustained the practice of *punam* cultivation in the midland region (the hill Pulayar who conducted slash and burn cultivation till the last century also attests this. *Elippunam* and *punanilam* reveal that the shifting cultivation practices that continued to remain in fourteenth century also (Aiyar, 1924, 160-61). These epithets denote a process that those shifting cultivators in the mountainous and hill slopes who migrated and started cultivation on the river valleys and reclaimed lands in the estuarine areas. They attributed their operational experiences of *punam* cultivation to the lands they newly found, reclaimed and cultivated. They continued to practice the *punam* cultivation in the elevated areas in the midland region as well. Certain tracts of *punam* cultivation must have been transformed into permanent wetland agriculture areas in the midlands. It was because

of this process that there remained *punam* related epithets attached to the lands for permanent agriculture operation and continuation of these terms thereafter. It is interesting to note that the terms such as *nadukallu* (Ramachandran, 2007, No.77) *kallarai nilam* (Aiyar, 1924,7) and *perunkallarai* are lands located near megalithic monuments that existed in different areas. These terms must have antiquity to early historical time.

The Lived Experience of Forest Landscape

It is interesting to note that the live experience and habitus of landscapes as spaces of life activities and settlement indicate the way in which these spaces had been developed by the early settlers and continued to exist as operational and habitation spaces. *Kuntram* and *malai* are appeared as general terms in inscriptions to denote the mountains and hills. Elevated landscapes in the midland are also mentioned as *malaipuram* and *venpamalai* (Rao, 1921-35 and 37) We also find references to *kunnu*, *mala* and *kuntram* (Aiyar, 1924,27) to denote elevated areas. There are certain *malaimēlpadakāram*, the *padakāram* land, a piece of land given to individual Brahman households in the Brahman ur, situated on a hill. Similarly we find reference to *venpāyamkuntranjīvitham*, *jivithamis* form of service tenure given to the temple functionaries, located on hill slopes. *Thazhuvankuntram* (Rao, 1992, 7 (L), 47) *malaiyum karaiyum*, *malaiyilkāzh*, *ālakkādu* and *malai* (Rao, 1992), are terms to indicate the entangled spatial connectivity of hill to the forest and forested space to the hill slopes. *Pukazhamalai* and *kuntram* are also used (AdhAram,2006) to denote hill slopes, the long stretches of mountainous terrain that we usually come across in Ghats regions of Kerala. Small hills and elevated areas also have natural geographical specificity located in midland region along with forested areas called *kādu*. *Kāduis* differentiated from *nādu* and *nādu* is also conceptualized as operational and settlement area whereas we find *kāduas* shifting cultivation region where the hunting –gathering and foraging activities were existed from very early period.

Forested area was represented variously as *kādu*, *kānal* and *irumpu*. The forested region in the mountains and hills are *kādu* and *irumpu* while coastal vegetation is *kānal*. Pasturelands are known as *itam*. *Kādu* is a term appeared in our epigraphical documents to denote the thick forest as well. A Hill slope forest, forested landscape in the midlands and the shrub vegetations in the coastal region are also mentioned in documents as *kādu*. *Kādu* terms appear to have indicated not only the forested region with its diverse resources related animated and inanimate world. It was also meant for fauna and shrub vegetation in the wet and marshy land. *Kādu* is also meant for to represent the slash and burn cultivation in the forested lands

and foraging activities. It also makes sense of expansion of cultivation in the midland river valleys and estuarine areas where the forested landscape was cleared and productive operational spaces were reclaimed for multiple cultivation activities and settlement nodes like *thara*, *kuti*, *pura* etc. *Kādēru* is a land term used to denote this process and certain *vayalkādu* (Rao, 1992, 2 and 3) is mentioned to suggest the process of clearing the forested area to create paddy field or such lands located near forested space were utilized for various purposes. Shrub vegetation in the coastal region can be seen in Kollam inscription and that must have been cleared and cultivation was started. Similarly, the term *kādumkarayum kazhiyum* indicates forested land space, paddy field and cultivable land lying adjacent to saltpan. The epithet *kādumkarayum* also indicates the arable lands near riparian area which were spaces of the multi culture operation. The location of this inscription in a water-laden area also points to the coastal vegetation and its transformation into permanent wetland agrarian tracts. This process had been started from the early historical period and continuation of such practice can be seen in inscriptions (Ramachandran,2007,No.8).

Land terms with prefix *kādu* also indicate the existence of productive spaces near the forest or the formation of such spaces out of forest clearance and slash and burn form of agriculture. A few *kādu* terms such as *māarakādu*, *cherumarakkādu*, *kayyikkāttu*, *kākkai kādu* and *chevvakkādu* (Narayanan 1972,A-8) can be cited as cases in point. Certain *puraiyidam* situated to the north of a *kulam* indicated the fact that *purayitam* as homestead had been developed in the settlement cum operational space in the multicrop production areas. *Achchikādu*, *kakkaikādu* and *chevvakādu* mentioned in Chokkur inscription reveal that forested area was being increasingly used for the creation of cultivation and settlements. Forested land space, vegetated terrain and floral wealth near settlements were considered as a protected ecological niche. This is also located in the multiple floral wealth indicative of the epithet *palāvunkalamili* and *viyaimili* indicating the protected vegetation near settlement spaces of the settler cultivators and the producing groups. Certain *chirupalāvinkulamili* i.e. the well and the land space covered by jackfruit trees and *valankālmili* (Aiyar,1932,173) meaning protected vegetation with water source. *Mili* is a protected vegetation area in the midlands including the wetland vegetated space. *Kaiyanaikalmili* (Aiyar, 1932, 172) shows certain form of small reservoir near protected vegetation indicating the micro irrigation and water harvesting structure. Certain *miliyapazhanvilankādu* (Rao, 1992,42), a cultivation area covered by shrubbed vegetation is also mentioned to make sense of the locational specificity of settlement and sub-

sistence pattern. It indicates the antiquity of an arable land, probably to early historical period, located near protected vegetated area where early settlement was formed and existed. The epithet *mannnchēri purayidamumathinukīzhmiliyālum* (Rao, 1992,Pt.III.187), is an epithet indicating the settlement and the diversity of local environs in protected vegetation area near a compound site of settler groups. This reveals the relation that had existed between the forested land space and the settlement area which made the cultivation and settlement specific to each locality.

Nedunkādu and *perumankādu* indicate the prefix called *nedum* and *perum* meaning large and extensive forest landscape in the midland show the relational spatial connection between *kādu* and *nādu* (Poduval, 1938, 43-4). This is more visible when we think of the term *Mukkālizhaikādu* reveals the relation of forest to the adjacent cultivable land space. This reveals the way in which the forested and vegetated land spaces related to the operational spaces which had crucial role in making livelihood forms. This would suggest a process that the floral wealth of forested landscape and the making of productive land spaces contributed for cultivation expansion in both wetland and laterite regions (Narayanan,A-20) resulted in the formation of new settlements. Certain *izhikādu* (Varier, 1990), and *vettikarikkātupūmi* (Rao, 1992,Pt.I.XV), indicate the process of slash and burn the forest for cultivation in the midland watered swampy areas with the help of permanent labour force called Āl and Atiyār groups and the lands so created. This must have been started in long historical past and continued to exist during the later *Chēra* period. Certain *kulakkādu* the land comprised of well and forested landscape used for cultivation also indicate the process by which the forested area became part of cultivable land space. Certain forested landscapes, *perumanankādu*,*marunkādu* and *perumbulam* (Poduval,1938,41-2) used for productive purpose. Certain *kuzhaikkādu*, *kurandimankādu*, *pirayamankādu* and *kudamanaikādu* are mentioned in Devidevisvaram plates (Aiyar, 1924,No.7) also indicate the same process.

Spatial Meaning of Social Labour and Spatial Control as Dominance

There developed a process in which lands were reclaimed from forested land spaces, vegetation in water laden areas and from estuarine region. Early migrant settlers and settler cultivators or those people who had been brought by the settlers must have cleared such vegetated areas. The utilization of labour activities and the control of laboring bodies of different ethnic groups and communities were made possible by the households of the landholding groups. We also find the process that the domination of *nattutayavars* and the Brahman settlements was de-

veloped over a period of time in which labour realization and tenurial control were actualized in an instituted form. This process is embedded in the spatial and social dialectics reflected in the labour realization process that is also inscribed in number of land terms. The Tiruvalla Copper Plate mentions a number of forest areas that had been cleared for cultivation (Rao, 1920,Part,III). It also mentions certain people associated with these forested area. *Neythattalaimēkkāttu*, may be a forested land space with cultivation located adjacent to riverbank or estuarine area and *punnukādu* points to the wetland vegetation (Aiyar,1929,189-90 and 192-3). *Talaipulam*, *kānjirakkādu* and *araikkādu* suggest the historic past of the term *pulam* (Poduval,1938,41 and 45) and arable lands near forest *Nelvāthilkādu* and *karavayalkādu* indicate the forested area where paddy was cultivated (Aiyar,1924,No.59) The transition of paddy cultivation from the hilly and mountain region to the elevated area in the midland and then it expanded to the riverine plain can be inferred from the spatial history of these terms. Certain *karikkādu* indicates the process of slash and burn the forested area (Rao, 1992,No.7.D) for cultivation and this land spaces later became a permanent agriculture spaces. *Mērumanaikāttu* might have been a forested space and cultivation began to be started along with formation of settlements (Rao, 1992,No.7.M) *Manaikādu* indicates the clearing of forest for cultivation as well as settlement. *Kōthaiyūr vayilkādu* (Rao, 1992,No.7.K) indicates the clearing of forested area and appropriation of floral wealth in laterite and wet land regions for cultivation and creation of settlements. *Kādumkaraiyumkaraipuraiyidavum* and *kādumkarai* (Aiyar, 1924,77-78) indicate the process which brought the forest under cultivation and formation of a compound site with the laboring groups and the settler cultivators. The term *karaipuraiyidam* also indicates the spread of multi crop cultivation and proliferation of settlements in the laterite areas in the hinterlands. Certain *kāttunilaththupurayidam,purayidam* situated near forested land (Rao, 1992,Part.III) indicates the spread of settlements of the settler cultivators in the forested region. *Mananchēri purayidamumathinukāzhmiliyālum* points to the protected vegetations and a compound site in such settlement areas (Rao, 1992,Part.III).

The spread of paddy cultivation from mountain and hilly region to the midland is very significant process in the spatial transformation in elevated *parambupuratitam* and riverine wetland areas in the midland of Kerala. The epithet *karayum vayalum kādum ulladanga*, the land consisted of *vayal*, *kara* and *kādu* reveals this transition process. The location of *Kizhumalainādu* was in the forested hilly region and the land term *nelvāthilkādu* suggests that the cultivation of *nel*/paddy in the *kādu* region,

the mountain paddy was cultivated in the mountainous-forested region/hill slopes. This area was brought under the *Kizhumalainādu* and became part of a *chērikkal* land when the natu formation in this high land region was consolidated under *kīzhumalai nāttudayavar* (Ayyar,1924,181-3). The process of clearing forest for cultivation was continued during the thirteenth and fourteenth century, *kadankādu palakkādu* (Aiyar 1924,145-6) *manankādu* (Poduval,1932,42) *pāthirikkādu* (Adharam,2006) *mayakkalkādu* and *pūthiyarkādu* (Aiyar 1924,160-1) are indicative of this process. *Pullēlpaduvana* (Rao, 1988,42) and *perumpullēl* (Aiyar 1924,22-65) indicate large grazing lands. The term *vēli* is also meant for pastoral common lands for grazing. The term stands for the people associated to it or lands lying near grazing lands. Tiruvalla Copper Plate mentions a few such land spaces (Rao, 1992). These spaces were also used for foraging activities and pastoral people might have used these spaces. Grazing lands were also important for agro-pastoral communities and we have *kīzhkuzhipāzhchelli* and *mēlkuzhipāzhchelli* (Narayanan,1972,B-24), indicating the pastoral activities in the mid land region. The land terms related to the productive activities and operational process indicate that the socially necessary labour must have been utilized for the production of such lands as part of the development of various subsistence and life activities. The spatial production and social labour are entangled process in which intersectional relation of spatiality of productions life activities and life embedded in spatial process are developed as connected process (Hopkins, 2017). This process must have been structured in various spatial domains as controlling process of spaces by dominating groups. It was developed by tribal chiefs and landholding settlers in the early historic period. the Utayavar of various natus, landed gentry, Brahmanical temples, Brahman villages and the Chera Perumals in the early medieval times. The spatial dominance was developed as tenorial control and the legal legitimization was developed by the brahmanical powers largely through the support of the political authority. Spatial control and social process indispensably developed in relation to the development of various overlords. Hierarchisation of spaces and social relations were developed in relation to an institutional control of material and cultural resources in terms of political power and cultural domination. Spatial control resulted in the dominance over spaces as distancing practices of enclavisation and exclusion and spatial and social hierarchies were homologous to cultural and power.

Waterscapes and Production of Irrigation Spaces

In early historic period, mountain streams were the main water sources of the people who inhabited on mountain slopes and hills. Chinai

was also a water source in rocky areas. Kuvam and kinar were other sources of water. Chirai was a form of permanent water source and it was constructed by making bund across the water channel. In the wetland region, the water sources were known as palanam, poykai and kayam (Ganesh, 2009). Puzha, thōdu, ār and aruvi indicate the natural water channels like river and streams in the documents from ninth century C E onwards. This also indicates riverside and riparian fertile lands were used for cultivation in the midlands. Kulam, kinar, and chirai are the most common water harvesting structures and storing spaces. In cultivable land and settlement area, whether it is in laterite zone or alluvial area, water sources must have played a central role to sustain the cultivation and the vegetation. Hence the habitation and settlement area like kuti, ūr, chēri, mangalam or palli must have been situated near natural water channels or artificial water spaces like kulam, kinar and chirai or other manmade water sources. Kulam and kinar were important water harvesting structures. Chirais are located in the confluence of settlements and agriculture lands. Kulams, kinar and chirai can also be seen near the purayidams, the compound sites of the settler groups and the cultivating communities. Epigraphical materials give us vivid description of waterscapes, water harvesting structures and water sources. Certain temple land is said to have located in between udarār, a small river, and kuttankōlanchira, a tank. (RVRBulletin. IX.I, 1973, 43). The land situated in between a river and a tank also reveals its importance as a large cultivating area naturally conducive for wetland agriculture. This also indicates that occupation of riparian area and large scale cultivation in water logging lands required arduous labour and technique and knowhow, this was largely developed and sustained by the producing communities and laboring groups. Kulamuruthai and kulamili are related to a purayidam to the north of a kulam or tank reveals the settlement cum operational process developed by the tenant cultivators called kutis (Aiyar, 1932, 72). There are references to mēlkāniyārkulam, kōvankulam, kālanērikulam and kadalumkulam that existed in the southern Kerala (Ramachndran 2007, 129-33) as settlement spaces and cultivated lands located near water sources like kulams (Rao, 1988, 15-34).

Vāy is used to denote the sluice and puthuvāy indicates newly formed water channel or sluices for cultivation purpose (Poduval, 1938, 43-5). Kanan Purayan, the udaiyavar of Kālkkarainadu granted the land known as vettikkarikkāttu and Pulaiyar attached to it to Trikkakara Temple shows that the labour process and the production of cultivation spaces is an interrelated activity. The productive lands and the producing groups were represented in the documents as one and the same and the productions of

the productive spaces were made by the primary producers. The land was located west to vāykālchirai and east to idaichchirai (Rao, 1992,161-9) , the two tanks developed for the purpose of tank irrigation. Vāykālchirai indicates vāykāl, a term meant for water channel, sluice, drawing water from tank to the field (Aiyar, 1924, 11-6). This also reveals that despite the abundance of natural water channels, certain forms of manmade irrigation structures were built to facilitate the expansion of agriculture. The labour activities and technic and knowhow were provided largely by the Pulayar under the condition of forced labour force. Certain puzhaimānjāmanu (Aiyar, 1932,71-2) lands near a river and chirai thalai, a land to the side of a tank, are also mentioned to make sense that wetland agriculture must have been developed with the process of water control and certain form of irrigation system in early and early medieval times. We also find reference to karaikādinulla kulamie karai, kadu and kulam indicating the expansion of cultivation operation on an elevated area near forested landscape where a water source called kulam is constructed (Rao, 1992, 176-7) Similarly land situated on a riverside called puzhakarai (Sastri, 1925,334 and Narayanan,1972,C-17), the riverine wetland agriculture that was expanding on the silt deposited river belt along with the formation of new settlements.

Devidevisvaram plates mention certain kulam called pūlaikulam, (Aiyar 1924 No.7) pūmannikulamilam, chenkulamnilam, cultivated lands situated near a kulam, suitable for wet land agriculture. Kulangaraipurayidam, a compound site adjacent to a kulam and kulamadikkunnavanjivitham, the land set apart for the well diggers indicate the importance given to the wet land agriculture and making of water sources like kulam. This is also meant for well diggers who developed themselves as particular laboring group. Certain chiramēlpurayidam, (Aiyar 1924 No.7), a compound site is located near a tank deserves attention. Mention may be made to kīzhthōdu, chiraikīzh and chadikulam reveal the process of agrarian expansion and creation of water sources. Thōdu (Rao 1992 Part.II.No.7(K)) was an important form of water channel and thōttōdu, thōttiyoduthōttidai indicating the importance of water channel like small streams in the case of wetland agriculture. Irappuzhai and karppuzhai were small rivers and tributaries. Karppuzhaikari, karppuzhaippallam and karppuzhaippanal (Rao 1992, Tiruvalla Palates) indicate the riparian lands near the tributaries of rivers. Sirumattapuzha (Rao., 1992, III.179-182), āttōdu thōttodu karaiyum (RVRIB Vol.9.Part.I, 51), mēlānjipuzha and thōttippu (Rao,1992, II.No. 7.(K),45-46) are indicative of water channels. Puzha, thōdu, ār and karai are river and streams indicate the water bodies and wet land spaces lying adjacent to water bodies. Painkulam

(Poduval,1938,45), kulam on a land space, also indicates certain habitation space near a field. Kāraikādudaiyārkulam (Rao, 1992, Tiruvalla plates), karaikādu is an agricultural tract where multi crops were cultivated. Therefore, the well in a multi crop land shows the existence of settlement. Certain chiraimēlpurayidam and chiraikumēl (Narayanan, 1972, C-2) also indicates this. (Aiyar 1924,No.7) The compound site located near a tank also makes the point that tank was an important water source in the midland area. Tirunelli plate mentions kīzhkātupozhaichērikkal, chērikkal land adjacent to forest and river (Pillai, 1963) indicating cultivated land on a river mouth located on hilly-forested area. Certain thōlanchirai (Narayanan,1972b) is mentioned and chira is important for both alluvial and laterite agricultural activities and for human habitation. It also shows the existence of habitation sites near a chira or tank. This area is very congenial to the formation of purayidams or compound sites.

Certain puzhakkaramattam and puzhaimānjāmannu indicating the land situated on a riverside. Aruvi ,a small river, and kuzi is a pit for storing water, are other forms of water sources. Vattachirai, anjanachirai and karpuzhai are water sources mentioned in the documents. Vāzhaip-pallipōttai is a wet and fertile land space and karpuzhaipallam, land situated near a river and lying in between two elevated region (Rao, 1992, Tiruvallaplates), are fit for wet land agriculture. Certain vuthumarkuzhi (Aiyar,1924,No.7) and thirunīlankuzhi (Narayanan,1972,B-24) are important as kuzhi and pallam are low laying land spaces surrounded by elevated area adjacent to water source. The epithet kādum karaiyum kulamum (Ramachandran, 2007, N0.103) indicate the agriculture operation on an elevated space watered by a kulam. Kulavarai (Rao, 1992, III.no.55) is paddy field near a kulam. Thannīrmukkam is a term denoting to the water source. (Aiyar,1932,69) Munainkadavu,kadavu is ford, lowest crossing point of a stream or river. Chirai is also mentioned in this document. Vanjippuzha is mentioned in a 14thcentury Sattankulangara inscription also indicates cultivation on riverside and riparian fertile lands, which was expanding in thirteenth and fourteenth century.

The term kōdu is a natural landscape meant for land situated between two elevated land spaces. Certain kodu terms are mentioned in Chokkur inscription (Aiyar,1932,No.173) There are references to kodu such as kummankōdu (Rao,1992,III.171-73), marakkōdu, chirukōdu' mundaikkōdu (Poduval,1938,41-2) and kattattikarikkodu (TAG Rao,1992,No.35). Kōdu is denoted here for an elevated land space adjacent to water source. The term kōdu also appeared asvadukikōdu and uthiyankōdu. (Aiyar,1924,No.9) Kollur Matham Plate mentions cer-

tain kōdu. (KVS Aiyar ,1924,No.7), Kodu is thus a term which shows a land space and extent of which is limited by water sources. This can also be applied to mūlai such as pariyādimūlai and nariyādimulai. (Aiyar, 1924,No.7,22-65) Certain kōnam can also be seen in the same document Turuttu /turutti as pantriturutti (Rao,1992,No.38) and ilamthuruththi (Rao,1992,161-69) indicate the reclaimed land spaces from a water-laden area also meant for the spread of wetland agriculture. Tiruvalla Copper Plate mentions certain reclaimed turuttu lands (Rao,1992.Vol. II.Part.III). There are a number of kari lands in the inscriptions of the area, μjāravēlikkari,vattakari kīrankadambanārkari siriyparyankari, padinjāyiruparayankari ,chēnnanchēnnanārkari. ūrālachēnnankari, ēttikkari, kumarakottakkari govinnanārkari, paravanārkari, indranīlankari, pattiarankari, thirunālganaththārudayakari and nedumkari (Ayyar, 1924 No.55 and part I.6-7 and 34-37, Rao, 1992No.4,No.4(A)and No.9). Tiruvalla Copper Plate mentions a number of kari lands (Rao,1992Vol. II.Part.III) The kari stands for the land spaces reclaimed from the estuarine and water logging areas. It also points to the expansion of agriculture to the estuarine areas and water-laden spaces. The reclaiming process required the utilization of skilled laboures and the invention of water management devices and techniques. The labour demands, the labour realization process and the water management for these purposes were done by the life activities and labour power of the subjugated primary producing groups whose social existence and lived experiences were embedded in epigraphical sources and orally communicated lived histories.

Spatiality of Labour and Labouring Bodies

Parambu as mixed crop cultivation space began to be developed in the laterite areas in the midland because of the proliferation of settlements and clearing of forest in this region. The laterite area in the midlands used for multi crop cultivation is known as parambu. Parambu and purayidams or compound sites in the laterite region also indicate the expansion of multi crops cultivation and spread of settlements in this region. This process was continued after the early historic period and the epigraphical materials pertain to the ninth century C E indicate the development of this process. The terms denoting to the mixed crop lands are parambu like pūyaththu parambu and perumparambu (Rao,1992,II,No.7(K). The appearance of parambus indicates multi crop cultivation and the compound sites; it also presupposes the existence of ūr settlements. Āttūtti-parambu and chethidanparambu (Rao 1992,Vol.II Part.III) also indicate the development of mixed crop cultivation. Thottams are mono crop gardens and we have references to thōranathōttam, āndilanthōttam (Naray-

anan, 1972AA-6), idaithōttanilam and punnaithōtam in the documents (Aiyar 1924, No.7). There are other mono crop cultivation spaces like chembakathōttam, pūnthōttam, perunthōttam, māvaliyālhōttam mentioned in Tiruvalla plates (Rao, 1992 Vol. II. Part. III). Arunkādan thōttam and vayirāvanar thōttam are mentioned in Tiruvannur and in Kollam inscriptions respectively. Podikkāttuvilai indicates the multi culture operation like pepper (Aiyar 1924, 22-65). The monocrop areas and multicrop spaces were produced by variety of labour activities in the production of multicrop produces in the wetland and laterite areas in Kerala. The laboring and cultivating groups were engaged in the production process and labour activities. Those groups who were directly engaged in the labour process were known as primary producers and they were represented in the documents as Āl and Atiyār or Pulayar. The settler cum operational groups in the agriculture production and allied service activities were known as kutis. The laboring bodies endowed with the knowledge, knowhow, technic and the skilled experience of Āl and Atiyār or Pulayar were mainly responsible for the production of productive spaces. The labour and life activities were creative pursuits which could produce socially necessary labour for the sustenance of the whole groups in the society. The kutis were the cultivating groups having the multiple identities in their settlement spaces as operational categories of agrarian production.

Production of Productive Spaces and Space as Property

Water sources like puzha, ār, thōdu, aruvi, chira, kulam, kuzhi etc indicate the availability of water for human habitation and agriculture operations. This water harvesting structures must have been existed in the ūr settlements shows continuous process of cultivation and habitation in these settlements. The terms such as mattam, mannu, pallam, potta, mūlai, kōnam, kōdu, kuzhi, vāy, vāykkāl indicate the wetland paddy fields and the water harvesting process and the irrigation activities involved. The terms like man, nilam, arai, vayal, pādam, karai, pottai, odi and kari are appeared in the epigraphical sources from the ninth century onwards indicating the expansion of paddy cultivation area in marshy, estuarine and wet land regions. These lands are located either in riverine riparian and marshy plains or estuarine regions. We find these lands in the midland and coastal / estuarine areas. The productions of these land spaces are important as these land terms indicate the labour process and the technology and the skill involved in the production of these lands but the producing and laboring groups. The kuti settlers and the primary producers called Atiyār / Āl and Pulayar were involved in the production of these lands. These productive spaces

were brought under the control of a tenurial system and producers of these spaces had been subjugated to a number of overlords. As social production of space involved the creation of tangible material wealth, the spatiality of this process indicates socio-spatial subordination of the producers along with productive spaces to the overlord who controlled these spaces.

The terms that we find in the inscriptions either suffix or prefix such as *kādu*, *kara* and *turuththuete* indicate the forest clearing, reclamation of estuarine lands and water-laden areas. This process would be clearer when we study the terms related to agricultural operations in the mid land and estuarine areas. These terms represent a process by which the forested areas, river valleys, marshy lands, flood plains, silted area and biomass formation in the waterlogged areas in the midlands and estuarine regions were being cleared, harnessed and reclaimed for cultivation. The forest was cleared for permanent agriculture operations for multi crop cultivation. The conjoining together of *kādu* to the terms denoting lands in these areas and terms signifying the agriculture practices in the flood plains, waterlogged areas and estuarine regions indicate the expansion of agriculture practices. Agriculture expansion in the mid lands and estuarine areas are attested in these terms. It indicates the process by which the forested area and marshy waterlogged wetlands and estuarine regions were increasingly being brought for cultivation.

Grazing lands were also located near the forested areas and was important space for agro-pastoral communities. Lands adjacent to water sources like rivers, streams bunds, canals and estuaries were mostly used for paddy cultivation. However, multi crop cultivation was also practiced in these areas. Water sources like *kulam* and *chira* were located near mono - crops and multi -culture lands. Flood plains, riverine and riparian regions, reclaimed lands, elevated areas, forested land spaces and shrub vegetation lands were mostly located in midlands and coastal plains. The conglomeration of these land types, both in natural terrains and operational spaces, formed the settlement pattern and production operations specific to the midlands. Existence of *vayalor* paddy field, *thottam* and *vila* (mono-crop garden) lands point to the growth of multiple economies developed side by side. This spatial specificity in the natural geographical region in the midland influenced the operational spaces for agricultural production in laterite and alluvial areas.

The terms appeared in the inscriptions indicate representational events related to lived experiences (Anderson, 2018.4) of the primary producers and the various producing groups show the spatial trajectory of social relations. The asymmetry of socio-spatial power relations were modulated

in both cultural systems and political power. One has to ponder reflexively over to what extent the epigraphical corpus reveal representational practices as a byproduct of an instituted process of meaning making and dominating system. This must have been developed as a representational system of an internal hierarchy that mediated the perceptions of people who had been positioned on multiple layers of socio-spatial categorization. These positionalities were internal to the system of social and cultural hierarchy which determined the lived experiences and everydayness of individuals and groups. Vocabularies of representational practices stood for imageries of socio-spatial categorization and divisions. This process is represented as a spatial event, a kind of geographical event or connected events in inscriptions. What is proposed is a need for geo-historical mode of inquiry that opens up to demystify the existing representational referential system largely followed in the dominant historiography in Kerala that anchored on positivist empirical facts derived for mono-causal explanatory frame.

Spatiality in a particular region is developed in accordance with the given geo-climatic conditions, natural resources, technological development and cultural transformation. Spatiality and social relations were developed within the larger process of socio-spatial matrix as well the mechanism of human adaptation to multiple ecosystems with varied modes of resource use (Gregory and Urry, 1985). This had been developed within the geo-climatic and socio-spatial process. This was evolved in accordance with social ecological consciousness of settler groups. The spatial dominance of a number of overlords was developed in relation to the strategies of struggle adopted by those who engaged in controlling the spaces and those who offered resistance to the domination of spaces (Shotter J, 1993). This is important in analyzing the spatial meaning of struggle and resistance as the spatio-social process of survival and dominance were developed over a period of time. The overlords tried to make control and transform the producing spaces as property imposing tenorial control and subjugating the producing groups and laboring communities. The settlements nodes were to be hierarchised in accordance with the subjugation of the cultivation and laboring groups like *kutis* and *atiyār*. The process of hierarchisation of settlement nodes was important as it is an outcome of the subordination of operational cum settlement spaces. The spatial control and social domination got its tenorial structure within the cultural and economic power relations that had been developed as an instituted mechanism of power by the chiefs of the *nādus* called *Nāttutayavars* and the Brahman settlements on the one hand and temples and the *Perumals* on the other.

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K. S. Madhavan

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