

The Vydhanveetil Family

Preamble

It is a very difficult task to trace the family roots of the Syrian Christians of Kerala, as they have to be traced since the beginning of Christianity in Kerala, which is more than 2000 years old. The problem is compounded since there is no documentary evidence and most of the early history of Kerala's Syrian Christians has been constructed largely with the help of traditions and legends which have been passed on by word of mouth through generations. As the members grew, the early families moved out from their original places for brighter futures and divided into different branches carrying names of the new environment. In spite of all these difficulties, some have taken considerable efforts by spending time and money travelling across various places collecting oral and documentary evidences to establish their family lineage. Many of these are available in the public domain. Nobody from the Vydhanveetil family has ever documented their family history (might not have thought it worth the effort). What is given below is the Vydhanveetil family ancestry from church documents and data available on the net. I am also conscious about the fact that since what is given in the net is not peer-reviewed, the authenticity could be doubtful. (Even the arrival of St. Thomas and conversion of Brahmins have controversies amongst some historians.). I have made my observations based on many articles available on the net, however used only those that have some consistency within different reports. Some of the useful links are given under references. The Vydhanveetil at times spells differently: VydhanVeetil; Vydianveetil; VydianVeetil, which is not correct. I request all to use the same spelling i.e. VYDHIANVEETIL. (For those 'Vydhanveedens' whose feet have not touched Kerala soil, I have included the maps showing some of the important historical places of relevance to present study!) I have also received some data/information from Dr. George Jacob (Bappu) who has taken an interest in our family roots. I have suitably included them in the write-up. Koshy Koshy, IPS has provided some information which is suitably included. For continuity, I have started with a short account of Christianity in India, and the events which led to the formation of the Mar Thoma Sabha, though it is well documented in many articles.

Some of the missing links here are information on Vydhanachen's mother's name and family and the siblings of Vydhanachen. My age and health do not permit me to be more proactive to do something more. I may also point out that my interest is limited to finding out the roots of the Vydhanveetil family. I wish some of the younger generations would take interest to create a portal so as to have a directory of our family members. I have given an example for two branches up to the third generation.

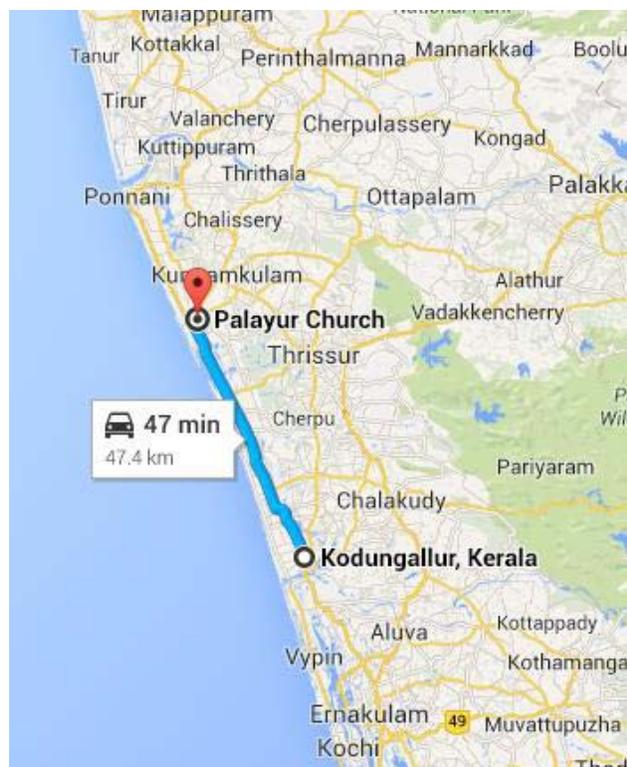
I want to put on record the initiative taken by Mrs. Binu Mathew (the great-granddaughter of MC Joseph, the eldest son of Vydhanachen) to start a WhatsApp group to bring together all family members related to the Vydhanveetil family. Binu also took initiative to generate the second generation information by contacting various members. Their contributions are thankfully acknowledged.

If there are any obvious mistakes or any addition is felt necessary, please let me know for updating, at gjvyd38@gmail.com

(George Joseph)
profgeorgej.com

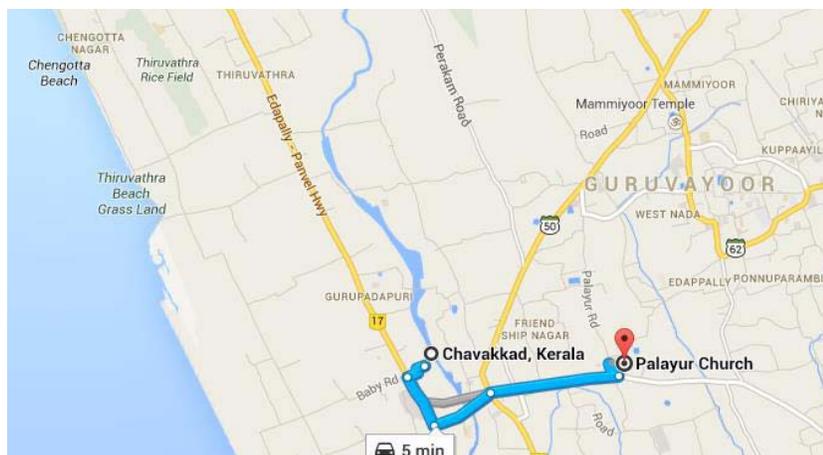
1. Christianity in Kerala

Before going into the details of the origin of the Vydhanveetil family, it is necessary to bring out how Christianity started in Kerala, though the story is well known. From very early times, India carried on a flourishing trade with the Middle East and Western countries, particularly with Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome by both land and sea. According to historians, the Jewish contact with Kerala dates back to 973 B.C. Muziris (other names: Cranganore, Muchiry, Maliankara), which is currently known as Kodungallur, was an ancient seaport and urban centre in south-western India, on the Kerala coast. St. Thomas, one of the disciples of Jesus Christ, came to Kerala in 52 A.D. on a merchant ship from Osselis in



Arabia and landed in Kodungallur. As per traditional belief, the second place of his visit after Kodungallur was Palayur, now a part of Trichur District. Palayur had Brahmins and Jewish colonies. St. Thomas might have used the help of the resident Jews to interact with the locals. As per the legend, St. Thomas saw some Brahmins doing worship at "Thaliyakulam" before

Palayur Shiva temple (Shivashetram), by throwing water upwards. The Apostle learned from them the meaning of this ritual and remarked: "If your performance is acceptable to the gods they could keep the water suspended in the air without allowing it to fall again and again". The Brahmins said that this was unthinkable as it was opposed to the laws of nature. Then St. Thomas asserted that the one true God he worshipped could do it, and he proceeded to perform a miracle on condition that the Brahmins accept his faith if he is successful. The Apostle, invoking the Holy Trinity, made the sign of the Cross and threw a handful of water up into the sky¹. After reaching a particular height the water stood still in the air, the particles glittering like diamonds. Looking down the Brahmins could see that the cavity made by the removal of the water was still there in the pond. The Brahmins present there got convinced of the power of the God preached by St. Thomas and immediately took baptism from St. Thomas to convert to the new faith. (The festival of Palayur Church falls on July 15th, the supposed day on which the Brahmins accepted Christian faith). Later several Brahmin families got baptized and converted to Christianity. (The word Christian was coined much later. The converts were called Nazarenes-meaning the followers of Christ of Nazareth. They are also known as Syrian Christians in view of the Syriac (classical form of Aramaic) liturgy used in church services during the early days of Christianity in India). The other Brahmins present cursed the place and left, thus in Malayalam, the place came to be called "Sapakad" or cursed land, which later became "Chavakkad".



Though not relevant for the topic we are discussing, for completeness let me summarize some of the major paths taken by the Syrian Christians since it was established. The early

Malabar Church (Thomas Christians) maintained a unique identity due to geographical, historical, and cultural factors. The Church is Christian in faith and Indian in culture and heritage. Early Christians followed the local customs of the Brahmins, which made them part of society except for their religious faith. Though there was some discord between Christians and Hindus during the second century; from the beginning of the third century the Saint Thomas Christians achieved a high position, and their status was fully recognized. In 230, Veera Raghava Chakravarty, the King Emperor, who had his capital at Kodungallor, granted to the Nazarenes a series of royal honours, by a proclamation engraved on a copper plate called "cheped"³(1225AD). In 1484 the Travancore King issued a n edict giving monopoly right for trade in Travancore to Christians. Mahapillai means Merchant, which was later shortened to Mappilai, a term used to denote Christians in South Kerala⁴.

The Nazarenes were an independent community under their head who was known as the Archdeacon (Jathikku Karthavyan- which transformed into Kathanar as the priests were known later) and he held the title of ‘ Archdeacon and Gate of All India’². It was with the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century in South India that the ancient church of St. Thomas for the first time began to undergo changes under the Portuguese colonial era⁵. When the Portuguese came, the Church of St. Thomas was following the traditions of the East Syrian Church. The Portuguese attempted to forcefully bring them under the authority of the Pope. To formalize this, the Portuguese called a synod (meeting) of all St. Thomas Christians in Udayamperoor on June 20, 1599 under the leadership of Aleixo de Menezes, Latin rite Archbishop of Goa. (Udayamperoor is a small town situated in Ernakulam district - PIN: 682307). Under pressure from the Portuguese, the Rajah of Kochi and local Hindu Chieftains threatened with dire consequences those who refused to attend the meeting as commanded by the Portuguese. The Rajah had even declared that all assets of Mar Thoma Nazarene Churches that stayed away from the synod would be forfeited². Thus the St. Thomas Christians were forced to meet in the infamous synod, known as the Synod of Udayamperoor (1599) which declared that they were under Rome from then on.

Thus the Church of St. Thomas Christians became a ‘Colony Church’ of the Portuguese, and a period of massive Latinization of the Liturgy and the ecclesial life of the St. Thomas

Christians began. However a large faction of St. Thomas Christians protested against the Latin rule. After many incidents of hegemony of the Portuguese, the frustration of the St. Thomas Christians reached its zenith on Friday, January 24, 1653 (M.E. 828 Makaram 3) with the 'Coonan cross oath' wherein a group of priests and laypeople led by the Archdeacon Thomas Parampil swore on the Bible kept on the high altar in the church of *Our Lady of Life* at Mattanchery near Cochin and took an oath that they would not be subject to the Portuguese Archbishop of Goa, Francis Gracia. The crowd outside shared in the oath by holding on to a rope tied to a cross in the churchyard. It is said that the cross bent as a result of large number of people pulling the rope. Hence the oath is known as Coonan (bent) Cross Oath⁶. While the majority of the St. Thomas Christians joined the Archdeacon Thomas in swearing never to submit to the Portuguese in the Coonan Cross Oath there was a small fraction who had allegiance to Rome. This was how the first division happened in the church of St. Thomas Christians. The part of the church that followed Archdeacon Thomas is known by various names- Jacobites, Puthenkoorukar (the new set), the Syrian Orthodox Church of India and Malankara Orthodox Church. Following the Coonan Cross Oath they felt the need to have an indigenous bishop. The parish elders (Idavaka Mooppens) of the church met together and elected Archdeacon Thomas as their leader. This was followed by a general meeting at Allangad on 22 May 1653, where Archdeacon Thomas was elevated to the status of a bishop with the title Mar Thoma I by laying on of hands of 12 leading priests of the church, thus being the first Indian Metropolitan.

Over the centuries unscriptural customs and practices had crept into the church. A nucleus of people envisioned the need of a reformation in the Church in the light of the Gospel, eliminating practices that are 'unholy'. Palakkunnathu Abraham Malpan from Maramon and Kaithayil Geevarghese Malpan from Kottayam spearheaded this movement. After a long legal battle for legal hereditary rights, the royal court of appeal in Trivandrum, in 1889 gave decree against the reformists. The reformed group is the '*Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church*'. Internal struggles in reformation ideologies between progressive and traditionalist groups in Mar Thoma Syrian Church led to a further division. The '*St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India*' was formally inaugurated on January 26, 1961. The Jacobites were further divided into two groups: the Syrian Orthodox Church of India, whose Catholicos or supreme

head resides at Devalokam, Kottayam, and the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church of India which acknowledges the Antiochean Jacobite Patriarch as its head.

(The account is not exhaustive. The intention is only to give some idea of how the Syrian Christianity in Kerala evolved over time)

2. Tracing the roots

The first task is to find out which is the ancestry (*kudumbum*) of Vydhianveetil family. Many Syrian Christian families have made extensive research to trace their lineage. These are based on whatever records they could get hold of, and information passed on through generations. Many of these investigations are available on the internet. However, there was no attempt to trace the family roots of Vydhianveetil family; probably this is the first such attempt. Fortunately, since the Vydhianveetil family had a priestly tradition one could depend on church records. The most authentic information one can get is from the Mar Thoma Sabha priest's Directory published in 1999. This directory has compiled, among other things, a short biography of all priests of Mar Thoma church since it has become a separate entity after the reformation started by Abraham Malpan in 1836. To quote from it, '*Vydhianveetil Koshy Kathanar was the son of Kaduvettoor Vydhianveetil Joseph Kathanar*'. The priests were earlier referred to as *Kathanar* in Malayalam, which is equivalent to what we now refer to as *Achen*. This shows that the family root is Kaduvettoor. So our first task is to trace the ancestry of the Kaduvettoor family.

2.1 The first believers

It is believed that the first four prominent priestly Hindu Brahmin families baptized by St. Thomas and accepted the Christian faith are⁷: -

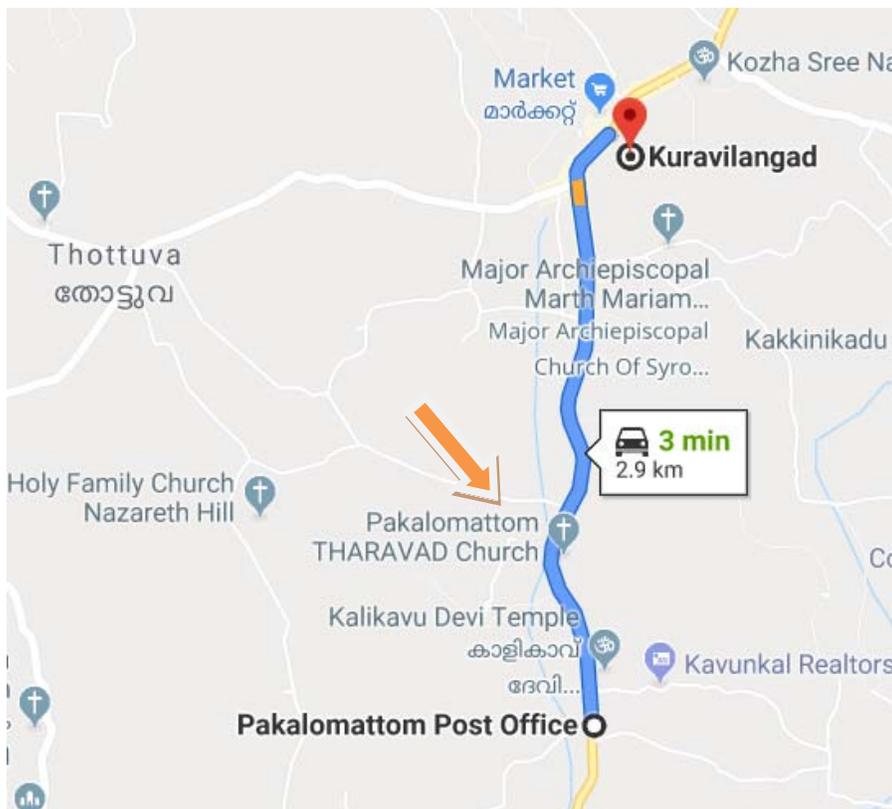
Pakalomattom (Pakalomattam)

Kalli,

Sankarapuri and

Kalikavu.

Two of the families among those who received Christian faith were bestowed upon with priesthood and they were Pakalomattom and Sankarapuri (Sabha Charithram Page 79, 81, written by Ittoop Writer in A.D. 1869)⁸. The Pakalomattom Brahmins were the traditional Vedic teachers. That may be the reason why they were given the chief priest position by St. Thomas. It is also worth noting that from the year 1653, starting with Bishop Mar Thoma 1, the Malankara Sabah was led by Bishops from Pakalomattom for more than 150 years. In the recent past, Abraham Malpaan(മല്പാൻ) the champion of reformation of the Syrian Christian church which led to the formation of the Mar Thoma Church and the first Metropolitan of the Marthoma Church, Mathews Mar Athanasius are both from Palakunnathu family which is a branch of Pakalomattom. It is believed that a major portion of the four Brahmin converted families migrated to Kuravilangad in the 4th century AD. They lived near a Kali Kovil (Kali Temple), which exists even today. They retained the same *illam* (family) name. The Kuravilangad church was jointly constructed by the four families. The Pakalomattom family moved to the northern side of the church and was referred to as Pallivadekedathu. (With reference to present geography the place was between the present Deva Matha college ground and the north of the church)⁷. Since this location was close to the church, the



Pakalomattom branch staying there was also known as 'Palliveedu'. (It should be mentioned that there is a controversy whether the Palliveedu are the descendants of Kalli family⁹). Some of the prominent branches of Palliveedu includes Panamkuzha, Puthenpura, Kudukachery, Panamkunnel, and Vettikunnel. These surnames are still prevalent amongst the Kerala Christians. The social prominence of the Pakalomattom family in and around the places they stayed is evident from the fact that a locality in Kuravilangad is named after Pakalomattom and now has a branch post office by that name (Pakalomattom PO PIN [686633](#)). From the 13th century onwards large scale migrations happened in the Pakalomattam family. It may be that they spread out for better economic prospects. Another theory prevalent is that there was a superstition prevalent in Kerala during the 13th century, that if a thing became impure by Theendal and Thodeel (the custom that if an untouchable (lower cast) touches anything it becomes impure), it can be purified by the touch of Nazrani Christians⁷. Hence all royal families and Brahmin families took a Christian family from Pakalomattam root and accommodated them near their houses. In this way, all important towns of Christian presence and the priests were from the Pakalomattam family. Now the Pakalomattom family is spread throughout Kerala as well as in almost all countries of the world and the family members can be found in most of the major Christian denominations.

As the number of branches of Pakalomattom increased and spread in different denominations (*sabha*) of Christianity, a consolidated list of all branches whose root is Pakalomattom is not available. In one of the encyclopedias¹⁰ (NationMaster.com) covering Pakalomattom family, there is a list of 98 sub-families. The 95th serial number in the above list is 'Pakalomattam Kaduvetoor Kudumbayogam, Chengannoor'. There is also a reference that the Founder of Kaduvetoor family in Chegannur is Vallya Oopen Panamkuzhakal Pakalomittom¹¹. It is believed that Vallya Oopen Panamkuzhakal Pakalomittom was born in Kuravilangade, and died before 1224 in Chegannur. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that Kaduvetoor is a branch of Pakalomattom. The Vydhanveetil family lineage can be stated as-

Pakalomattom– Palliveetil– Panamkuzhakal– Kaduvetoor- Vydhanveetil.

3. Kaduvettoor family

One of the legends on the origin of the Kaduvettoor family is as follows. One of the Syrian Christian monks was moving around Chengannur preaching the Gospel and doing miracles in the name of Jesus Christ. During this period, a child of one of the leading Brahmin families was very sick and no treatment, prayers or rituals could cure the child who was on the verge of death. Then hearing about the miracles done by the Christian sage, he was requested to save the child. The child was cured by the prayer of the sage and as gratitude, a large portion of landed property owned by the child's family was given to the Christian. The plot was full of bushes (in Malayalam-*kadu*) and had to be cleared (vetti) for living. Thus it was '*kaduvettiaure*' (ure means place of living) which has now become Kaduvettoor. This information is as I heard from some elders. A better researched account of Kaduvettoor family can be found as a part of a book giving the history of the Vanchithria Theverthundiyl family, which is a constituent of Kaduvettoor family. This book was brought out in 1965 jointly by Rev K T George Thazhil, a eminent researcher and historian and Mr. E G Mathew, a respectable scholar. What is given below is summarized from their book¹³.

“On the banks of the river Pamba, (which is an arterial river of Central Kerala) in the vicinity of Chengannur, there was an affluent Brahmin household (madham) by the name of Chithrannur Madham. According to history, this madham was once visited by a St. Thomas Christian (Nazrani) sage on his South Indian journey. The sage, who had exemplary spiritual prowess and the gift of prayer, was accepted at the madham as a transient guest by the invitation of the head of the madham who was a noble character with spiritual curiosity. It transpired during the sage's conversation with the head of the household that despite the enviable glories of the madham, there was a touch of sadness all over. On specific probing, the sage learned that the root cause of the grief was the absence of a progeny for the oldest son in the family, to whom the legacy of the family could be passed on. Absence of such a progeny, according to the then prevailing Brahmanical belief would result in the extinction of the madham. Realizing the intensely sad predicament, the sage fervently prayed to God to bless the madham with a much desired progeny. After the prayer, the sage had a divine revelation that his prayer would be ultimately answered. The sage foretold to the head of the

madham that in a year's time there would be a male progeny in the family. Responding to this positive news, the head of the madham promised the sage that if his prediction were to become a reality, he would be gifted with one half of the madham's ancestral property as a token of his gratitude. The sage continued on his journey and revisited the madham after one year only to be told that his prediction had become a reality and the promised male progeny had arrived. The sage was readily gifted with one half of the madham's estate, and what is more, the oldest son and his family readily accepted the Christian faith. Since the sage was celibate he brought his younger brother to live there. They cleared the bushy land given to them and started life. Thus the bush cleared land was referred to as Kaduvettoor.



Valiyaouppan's Tomb

Source:-<https://www.facebook.com/pandanadkaduvettoor>

The sage expressed a wish that after his demise, his mortal remains should be cremated at the estate gifted to him. When the sage passed away subsequently, his wish was fulfilled and a suitable memorial tomb was built where he was cremated. The sage is known as '*Kaduvettoor Valya Ouppen*'. It is believed that the tomb that one sees in the courtyard of the Kaduvettoor family's Church premises is the cremation site of the sage. Even today the descendants of the Chithrannur Madham and many others who belong to diverse faiths

regard the sage and his tomb with awe and reverence and perform religious rites like lighting lamps, offering flowers, and offertories. Every year during the last week of March (Malayalam Era Meenam 11, 12) a 'SRADHAM' (religious rites) is performed at the tomb.

These Sradham rites are attended by many members of the extended Kaduvettoor family, from far and near. The Kaduvettoor church still stands as a family church and priests belonging to the Syrian Orthodox branch of the Kaduvettoor families conduct worship service and perform religious rites.”

The book further states “The Kaduvettoor family is an ancient and renowned Christian Family in Kerala (India). The family has had a multi-faceted growth over centuries and branched into 12 distinct family offshoots”. These families again divided into many branches and its members migrated to various places within and outside India. A recent book –“Malankara Nazrani Antiquity & Kaduvettoor Parent Family History” written by Mr. Ninan Kaduvettoor identifies 24 branches of Kaduvettoor family. They are given below:

1. PALAMOOTIL KARIMBINKALAYIL
2. KEECHERIL KALLUZHATHIL
3. KEECHERIL PALLATH
4. KAZHUNAKKUNNEL KALLEEKAL THEKETHIL
5. PALLATH
6. MUNDOLIL PLANTHARAYIL
7. THARAVAD ILLETHU KOONANPARAMPIL
8. KOZHENCHERRY VANCHITHRA THEVARTHUNDIYIL
9. NIRANAM KADUVETTOOR SHAKHA
10. KADUVETTOOR MOOTHAMPAKAL SHAKHA
11. MUNDAKAYAM VALIYA PUTHUSSERY SHAKHA
12. THACHARU PALLATH-ELANJIMOOTIL PARAMPIL
13. KOCHETRA-MELETHETHIL
14. UZHATHIL-KARINGATTIL
15. NEYYASSERIL
16. MANTHANATH KOKKARATH
17. VADAKELETH
- 18. VYDHIANVEETIL**
19. KOTTARATHIL
20. NARIYAPURAM KADUVETTOOR SHAKHA
21. CHURUKOL MAVELIKARA SHAKHA
22. THEVERIPULLUPPADEVIL SHAKHA
23. THALAVADI KARRISSERIL SHAKHA
24. VENNIKULAM KADUVETTOOR SHAKHA

4. Vydhianveetil family

The only reference to Vydhianveetil that I could find is from the Church records. As mentioned earlier, the Mar Thoma Sabha priest's Directory published in 1999 mentions that *Vydhianveetil KoshyKathanar was the son of KaduvettoorVydhianveetil Joseph Kathanar*'. From this, it appears the family name Vydhianveetil is associated before Vydhianachen, since his father is referred to as *Kaduvettoor Vydhianveetil Joseph Kathanar*'. However this entry in the church document is questionable for the following reasons.

After the split of the Syrian Christians into Mar Thoma and Jacobites, there was litigation as to which faction the Chengannur '*Pazhaya Suriyany Pally*' belongs. The court ordered that the two parties should come to an agreement to share the church between them, on a weekly basis. Thus now the Chengannur Pazhaya Pally is co-owned by the Indian Orthodox Church and the Mar Thoma Church. The parish is governed according to the Trust Agreement signed by both parties on August 7, 1877. The signatories of the original agreement consisted of 8 priests and 4 laymen. The first signatory is '*Vicar Marakkanparampil Ouseph Koshy Kathanar*'.¹² The official records generally require the initials to be expanded. Therefore it is reasonable to deduce that Vydhianachen's official name in the records is M.O. Koshy. As the usual convention-M stands for family name and 'O' stands for Father's name. Joseph in Malayalam is colloquially referred as Ouseph and Koshy is the given name. It is possible Vydhianachen's parents might have been staying in a plot of land purchased from fisherman and the place of residence could have been referred to as 'marakanparambil'-meaning fisherman's plot. (This may not look very odd at that time, since when a family shifts to a new place, the house name is adapted from the local peculiarities. We have house names of well-known Syrian Christian families like Kollamparambil, Chelikuzheil, Chudukattil, Kollentayathu, Kollantevadakkethil, Kandathil, Kuzhiparambil and so on. A glance through the Mar Thoma directory shows that there are vicars from many of these families). Vydhianachen's children also have M as the initial, which stands for Marakkanparambil. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that the Vydhianveetil family name did not exist before

the time of Vydhanachen and is added during Vydhanachen's time. The following facts elucidate the conclusion.

Let me present some more entries in the church documents regarding Vydhanachen. The Mar Thoma (MT) Syrian Church directory published in 1969 under the chief editorship of Rev. Dr. C. E. Abraham has given a list of priests of Mar Thoma Sabha since 1836 AD. 11th in the list is 'Vydhan Koshy Achen, Vydhanveetil, Chengannur'. In addition, the inscription on the tomb of Koshy Achen reads as "REV VYDIAN KOSHY ACHEN, VICAR SYRIAN CHURCH, CHENGANNUR". These show that Koshy Achen did practice medicine. To put the background in correct perspective, let me point out that there were famous acclaimed Syrian Christians who were practicing traditional ayurvedic medicine. One such traditional well known family of physicians is the K. Olathu family, also known as 'Vydhan Kudumbam'. Many Christians practiced this noble profession more as a matter of philanthropic work than solely as a means of income generation. What I have heard is that Koshy Achen practiced traditional ayurvedic system of medicines as a means of helping the needy and was hence known as Vydhanachen. One of his sons MC Jacob (Chacko Vydhan) was a very successful ayurvedic physician. In those days such knowledge was transferred by family tradition; it is reasonable to assume that Chacko Vydhan carried forward his father's skill. Vydhanachen was living with his family near the Old Syrian Church. The people who come to Achen for medical help referred to the place as vydhanveetil (literally means where vydhan resides). *Thus, Vydhanveetil as a family name started with Vydhanachen, however was not carried forward as we see below.*

4. 1. The Initials

Before going further it will be useful to know how the children are named in a Syrian Christian family. The first male is named after his paternal grandfather; the second male is named after his maternal grandfather. The first female is named after her paternal grandmother, and the second female is named after her maternal grandmother. (There can be 'constitutional' breakdown when the paternal and maternal grandparents' names are the same!!). It is usual in official records that the name is preceded by initial, which generally

consists of two letters. There are several ways in which official name (as entered in school record) is represented.

1. Initials followed by the given name. For example

AB Xyzabcd. Here the first letter 'A' denotes the first alphabet of the family name; the second alphabet 'B' denotes the first letter of the father's name and is followed by the given name. The government records require the initials to be expanded.

2. Another way is to have the given name followed by the father's name. Women after marriage usually change the father's name to the husband's name.

Of course many other combinations are possible.

All Vydhanachen's children's initials are M.C. Since Koshy used to be spelled as Coshy (*coat*), the second letter fits well with the convention. What 'M' stands for the family name may be a mystery to many. As discussed earlier, following the initial of Vydhanachen his children are also given 'M' which stands for Marakkanparambil. Thus all Vydhanachen's children have initial as 'MC'. In the case of grandchildren of Vydhanachen, George Vakil also continued with the same initials for the first four sons. While his elder brother M.C. Joseph gave his new house the name Mavelil, to retain the letter M, in the initials. Apparently the Vydhanaveetil does not appear in the initials of the next generation also. I do not know whether any of the descendants of the other children of Vydhanachen use Vydhanaveetil as a surname. Thus unfortunately Vydhanaveetil as a family name has gone into oblivion.

5. Vydhianveetil Koshy Kathanar (1844-1911)

Vydhianveetil Koshy Kathanar is the son of Kaduvettoor Joseph Kathanar. After completion of theological studies, he was ordained as a priest. He was serving as vicar of Chengannur Pazhaya Suriyani Pally (old Syrian church). He worked very hard to enrich the reformation activities while he served in the Chengannur Pazhaya Suriyani Pally. During the period 1876-78, he organized prayer groups in places like Chengannur, Maramon, and Thiruvalla. Vydhian Achen was one of the 16 signatories who in 1878 written to the all the members of the newly formed church the rational and necessity of the reformation to hold the true Christian values¹⁴.



Koshy Kathanar married Achamma, of Chengannur Koodathil family. God blessed them with five sons and four daughters (chart 1). I have no information about the brothers and sisters of Koshy Kathanar, except that one of the sisters is married to Angilivelil, Maramon. Vydhianachen, who fought relentlessly with unfailing faith for the reformation of the church, even during the times of adversities, was called to heavenly abode on 19th January 1912 at the age of 67 years. His tomb can be seen next to the walls of Chengannur Pazhaya Suriyani Pally at the west side as we enter the church.



Location of Vydhianachen's tomb

Chengannur Old Syrian Church



In Loving Memory of
REV. VYDIAN KOSHY ACHEN
(ദിവ്യശ്രീ. വൈദ്യൻ വീട്ടിൽ കോശി കുഞ്ഞനാർ)
VICAR. SYRIAN CHURCH CHENGANNUR
DEPARTED 6.6.1087
AGED 67

Inscription on Vydhianachen's tomb

Images provided by Mr. Junu Thomas, grandson of MC Joseph

Vydhianveetil First Generation

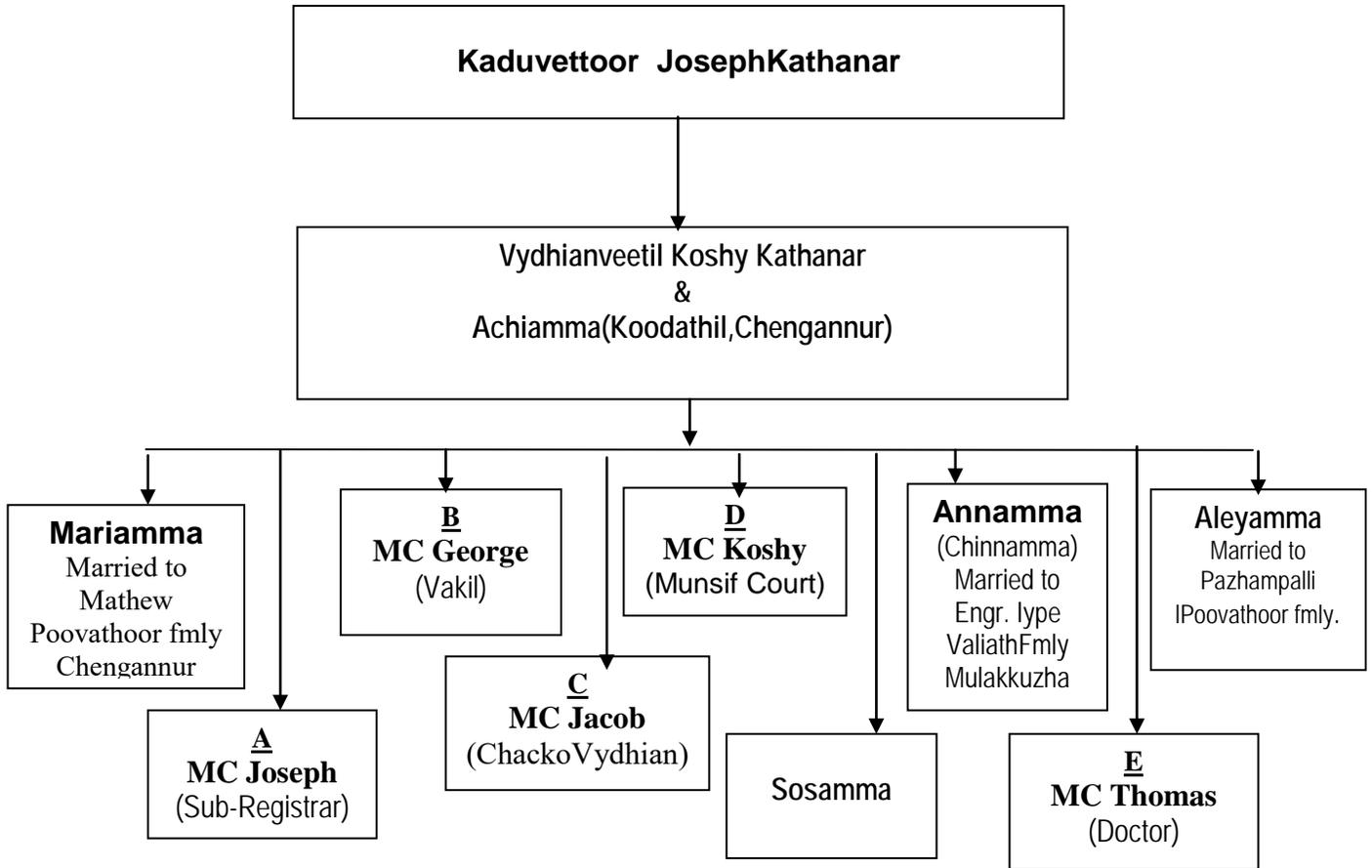
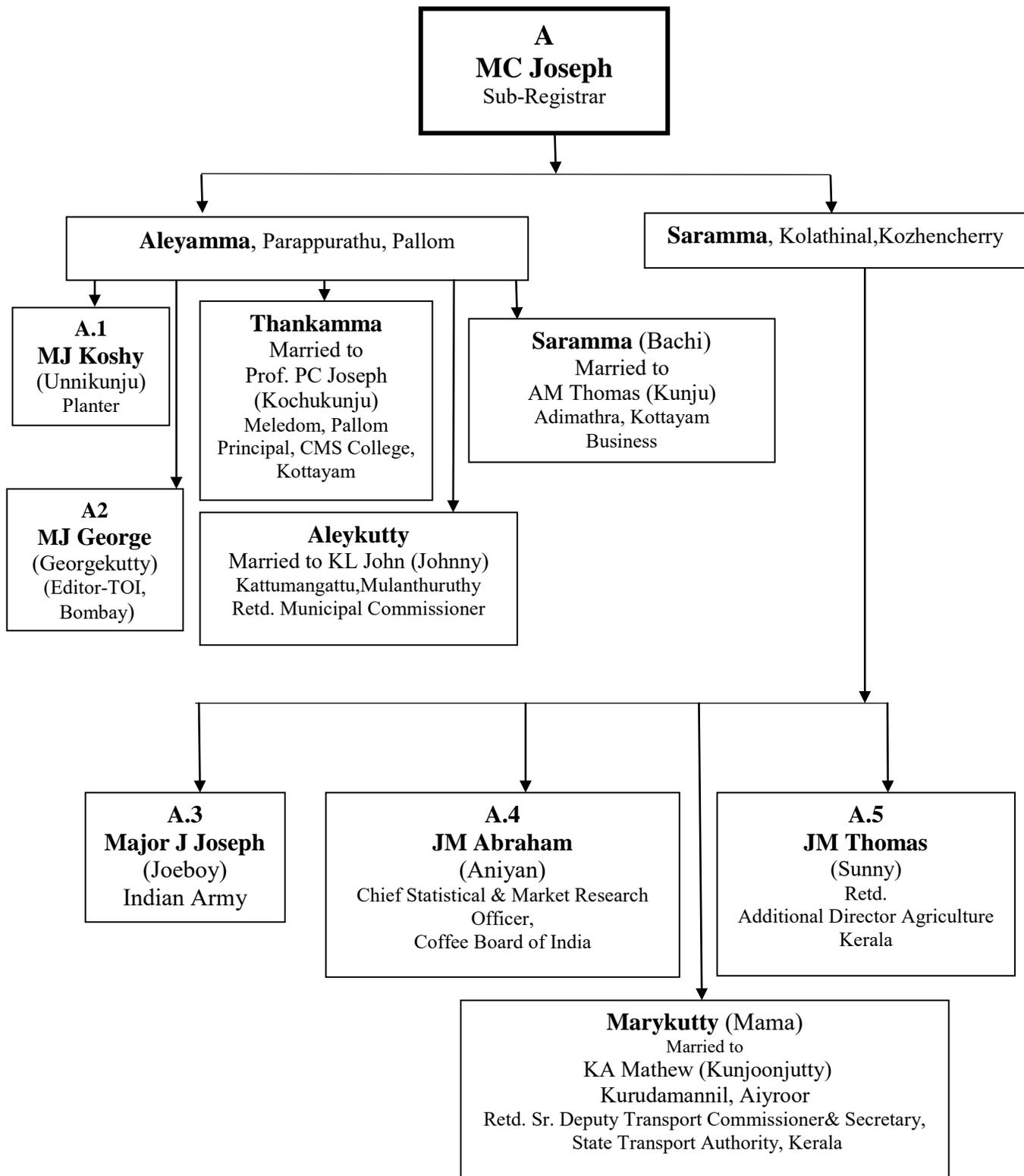


Chart 1

6. Vydhianveetil Second Generation

6.1 MC JOSEPH

MC Joseph the eldest son of VydhianAchen worked as Sub Registrar in the Travancore government. He was a respected and prominent figure in Chengannur. His official duties required him to travel to different places in Travancore. MC Joseph was first married to Aleyamma of Parappurathu, P allom. After Aleyamma passed away, he married Saramma from Kolathinal, Kozhencherry. He was blessed with nine children. MC Joseph built his house at Chengannur and named it Mavelil. This house was located in between the current ITI Junction and the Christian College. He passed away on 23.3.1944 at the age of 69. His youngest son JM Thomas now lives there with his family.



Information provided by Mrs. Binu Mathew, great granddaughter of MC Joseph

Chart-2

6.2. MC George Vakil

The second son of Vydhanachen, George (Kevareechen as he is known to his close friends and family) studied law and was practicing in Thiruvalla court. He along with other prominent lawyers like C. Thomas, Velayudhan Pillai, and others were instrumental in getting approval for a lower Court in Chengannur. He purchased a plot of land near the Court and made a house where he lived till his end. Gradually, other government establishments like Police Station and Sub-Registrar's Office came up near the Court premises. The Boys' High School (present Engineering College) was just in front and the Government Hospital just a few hundred meters south of the house. The house used to be a permanent 'rest house' for all the friends and relatives visiting these institutions.

George Vakil, after the untimely death of his first wife Annamma (Chengalathu family, Chathannur), married Achamma, from Pynumootil family, Perunthurithy, Thiruvalla. George Vakil was blessed with seven sons and one daughter (chart-2). George Vakil was in his mid-seventies when he died on 21st February 1958.

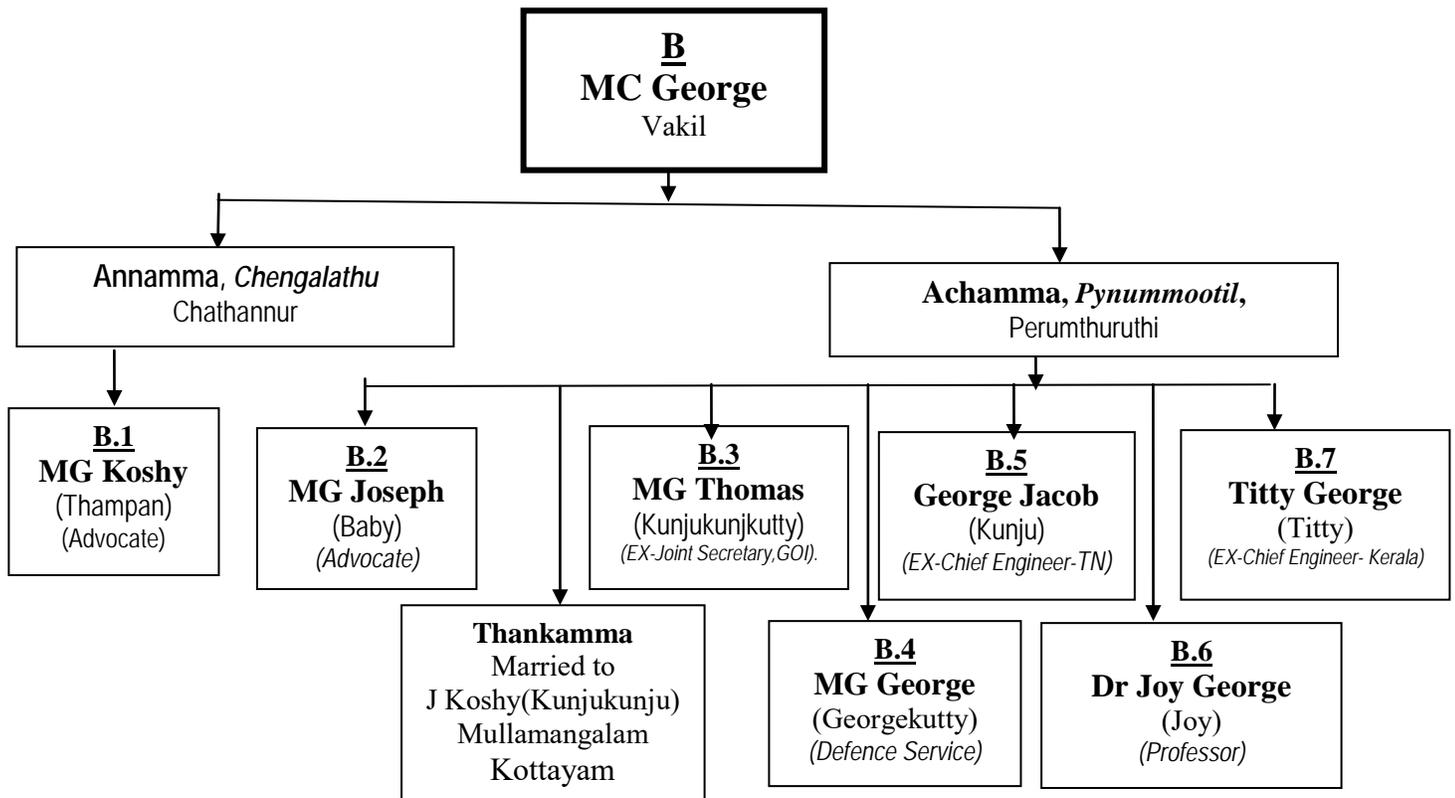
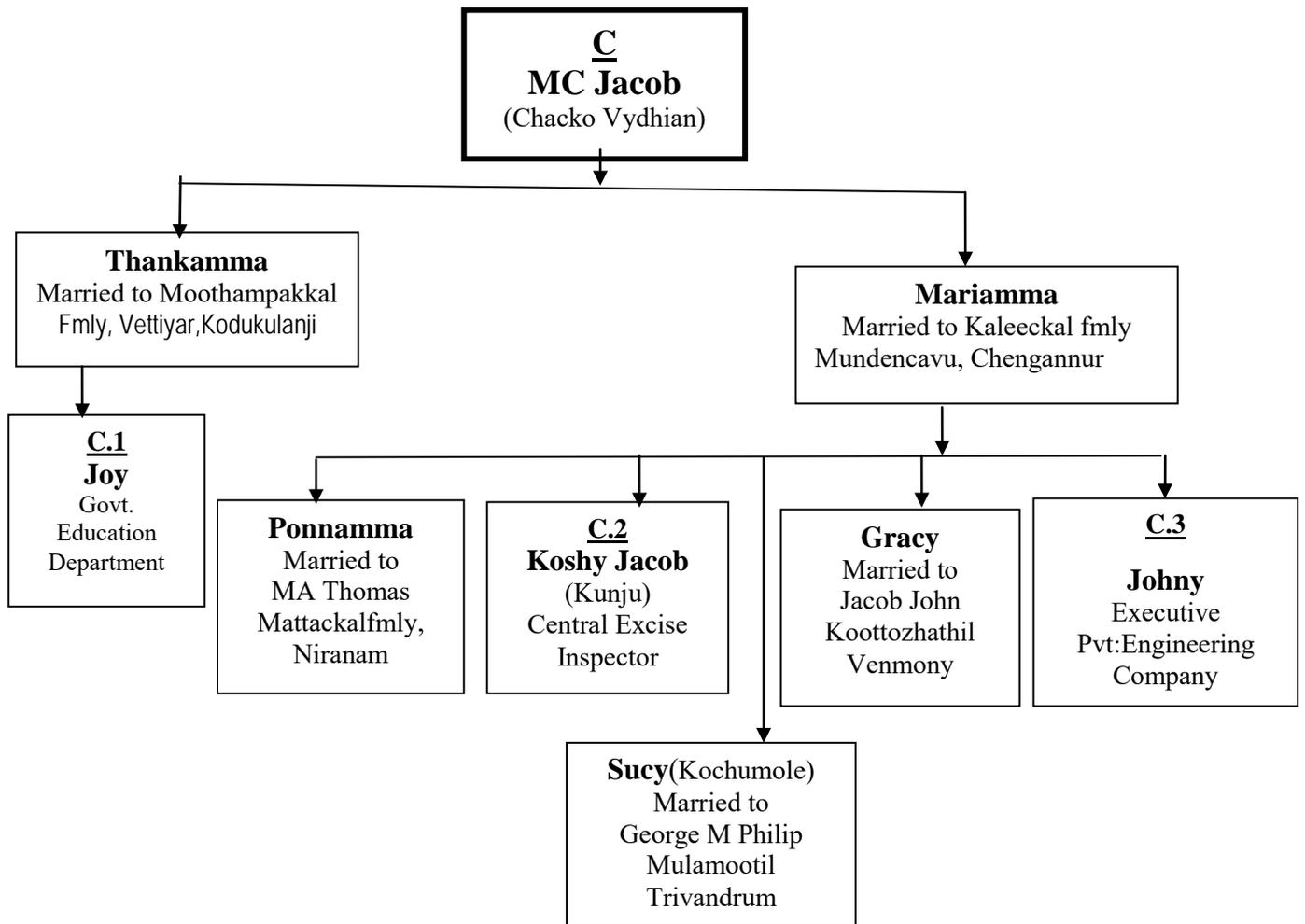


Chart-3

6.3 MC Jacob (Chacko Vydhan)

M C Koshy commonly known as Chacko Vydhan, was a very popular Ayurveda physician. He used to prepare various oils and other medicines at his home under his direct supervision. He has successfully treated many ailments using traditional Ayurvedic methods. One of the techniques used was Chavutti Thirumal or Chavitti Uzhichil, (literally meaning foot pressure in the Malayalam language) wherein controlled pressure is applied to the patient lying down on a wooden “Thoni” (boat) while herbal oils are applied and massaged with foot.

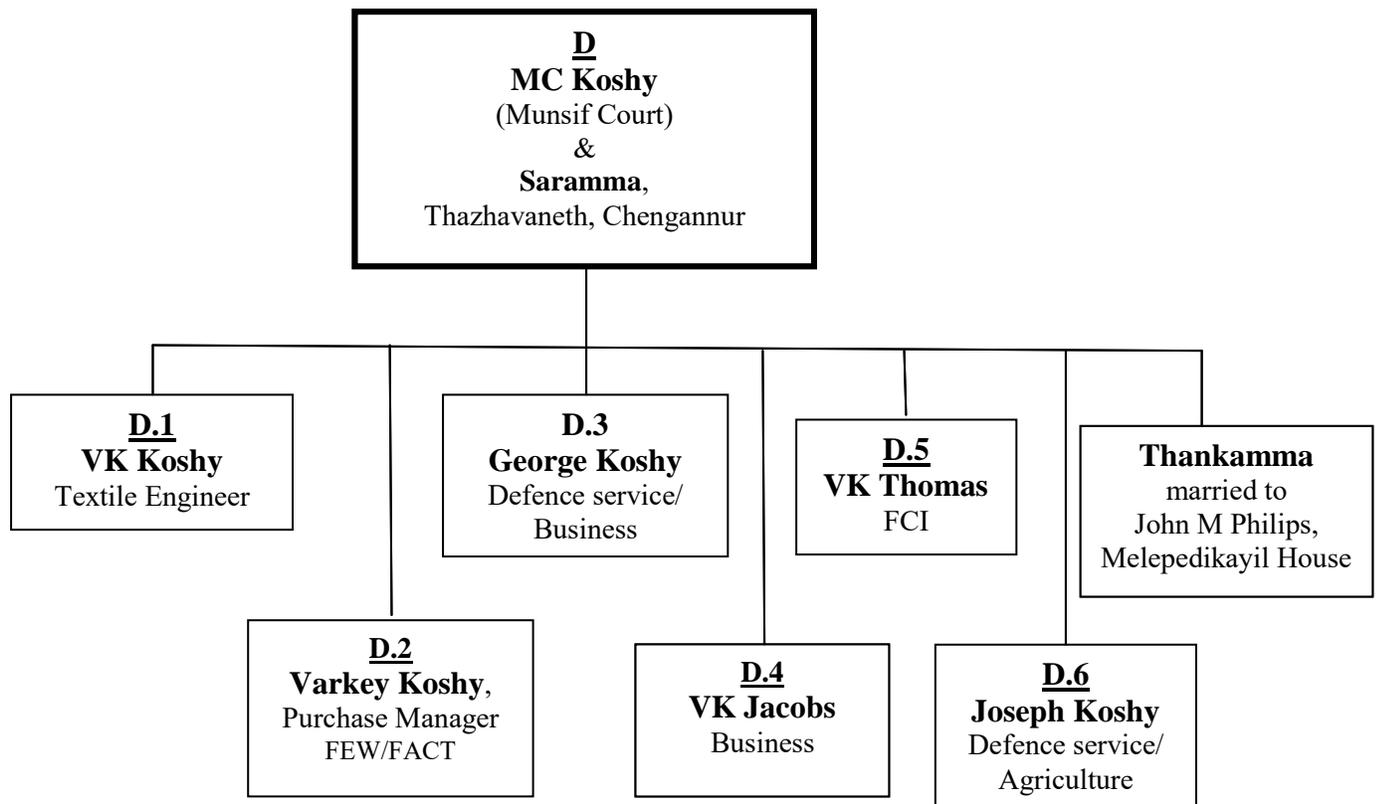


Data provided by Danie and Renjit grandsons of Mr.MC Jacob

Chart 4

6.4 MC Koshy

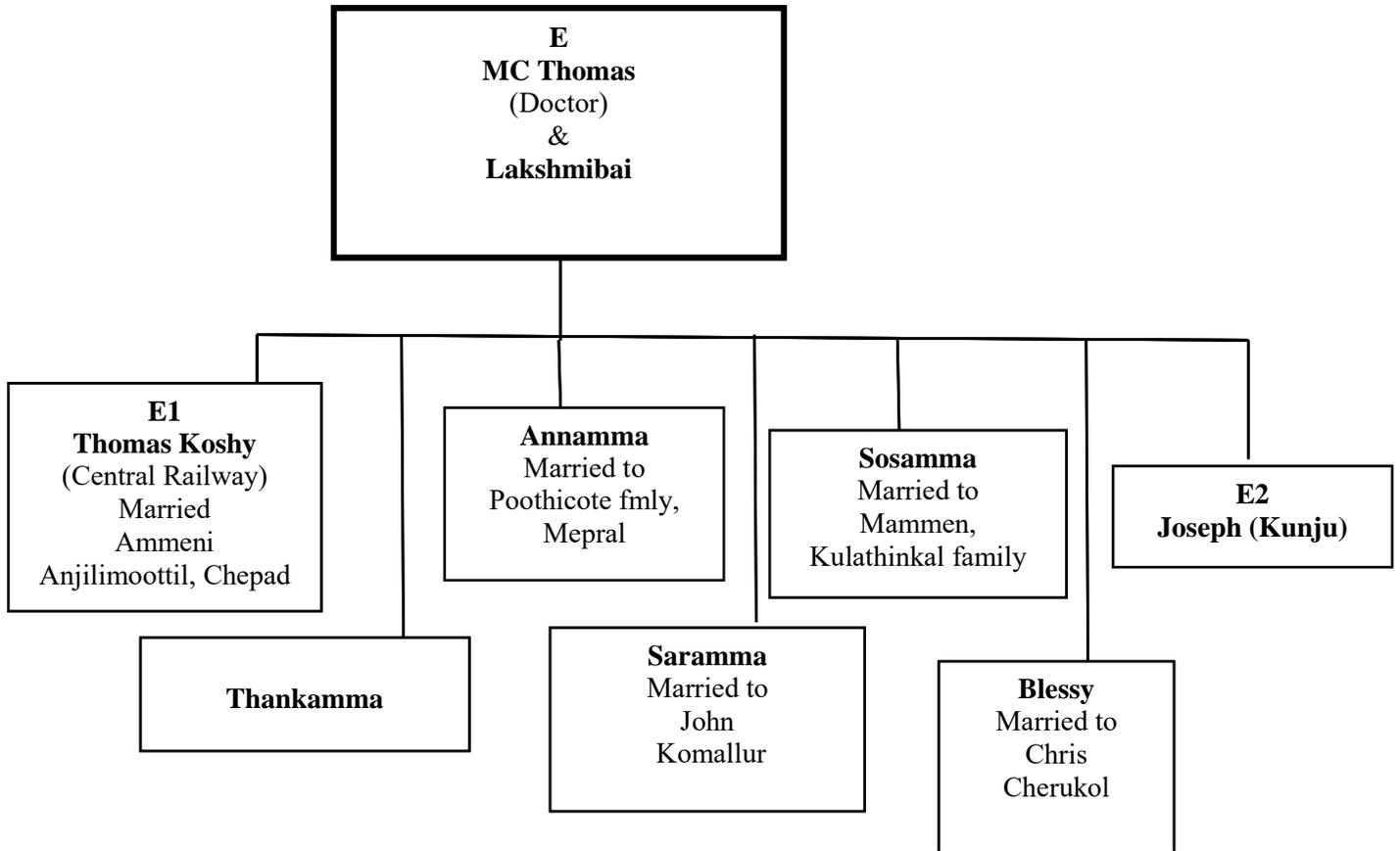
MC Koshy worked in the Chengannur Munsif's court. He married Saramma of Thazhavaneth family. They were blessed with seven children.



Data provided by Jerry Koshy, grandson of Mr. MC Koshy
Chart 5

6.5 MC Thomas

Dr. MC Thomas after his medical education spent most of his career as a doctor in Africa in the service of the British government. He also played a key role in establishing a Government hospital in Chengannur. He died in Africa. He married Lakshmi Bai, from Mangalore. They were blessed with seven children.



Data provided by Mrs. Nimmy Mathew, granddaughter of Dr. MC Thomas

Chart 6

7. Third Generation

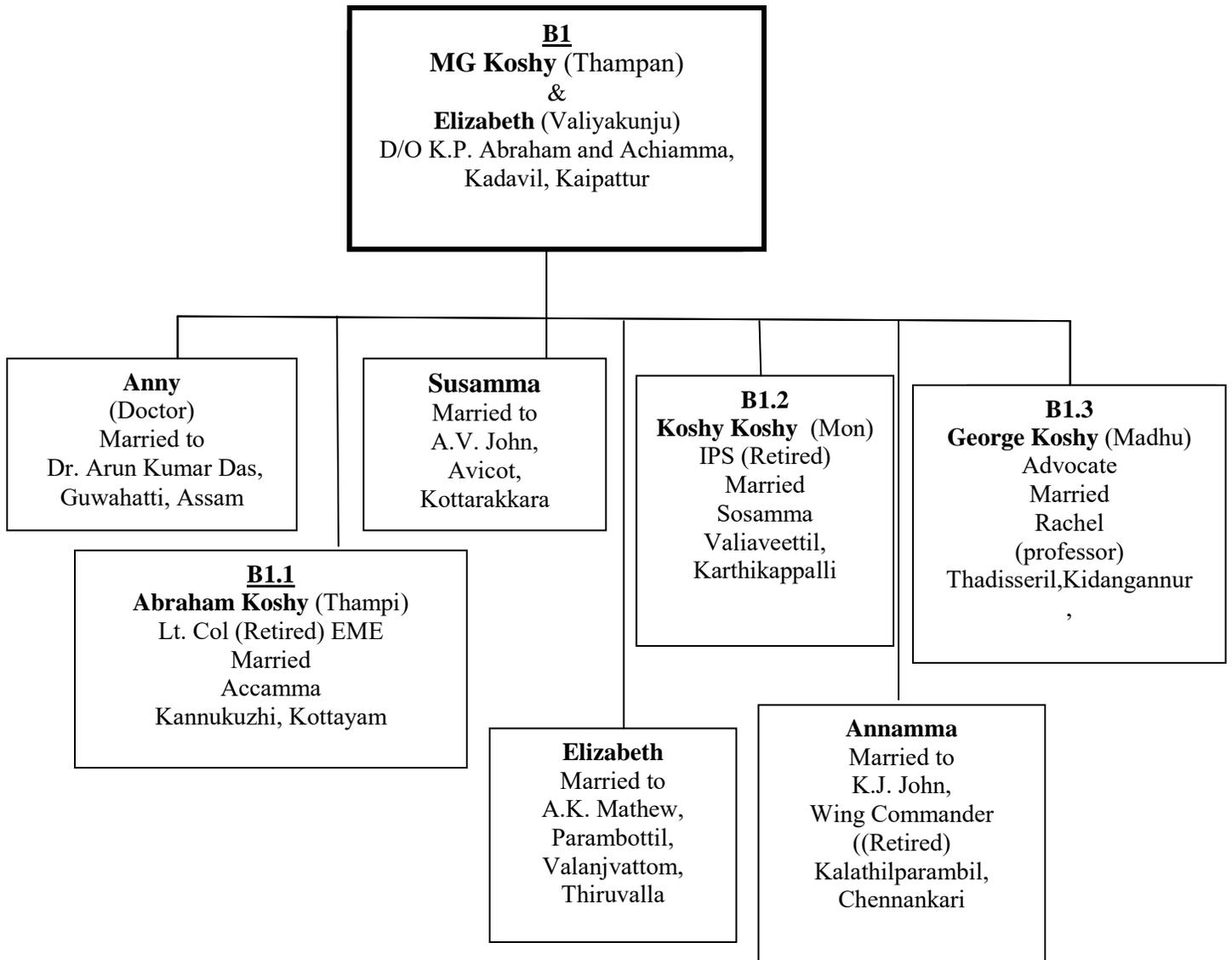


Chart 7

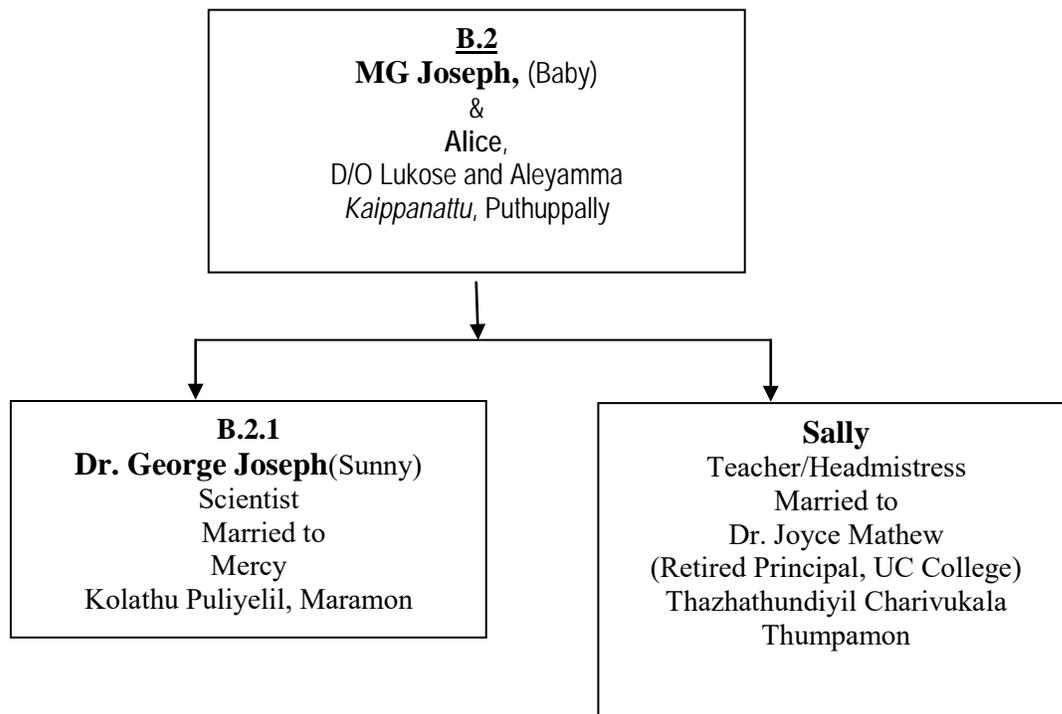


Chart 8

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