

EDUCATIONAL REFORMS UNDER A COMMUNIST
GOVERNMENT IN KERALA, 1957-59 .

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C E R T I F I C A T E

This dissertation entitled, 'Educational Reforms under a Communist Government in Kerala-1957-59', submitted by K. Francis, for the degree of Master of Philosophy has not previously been submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. We recommend that this dissertation should be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of M.Phil degree.



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INTRODUCTION

"Kerala, on the Malabar Coast, is one of the Smallest States of India, but no other part of that troubled country presents problems so numerous and so acute. The tropical beauty of Kerala masks the densest population and the highest literacy rate in India; mass unemployment and chronic food shortage combine with conflict between castes and creeds to produce turbulent politics*". Kerala is the only state in the whole world where communist party came to power through democratic process. Before 1957, the World did not pay much attention to the affairs of Kerala. But, in April 1957, the capitals like Washington, and Moscow, London and Paris, Peking and Vatican, Cairo and Jakarata started paying much attention to the radical politics of Kerala. Many of the foreign journals and magazines began to evince great interest in publishing Kerala news, particularly the matters pertaining to Kerala Politics. The Communist Party came to power on 5th April, 1957 with Mr. E.M.S. Nambudiripada as the Chief Minister. It was an event of historical importance.

* Woodcock, George; Kerala - A portrait of the Malabar Coast, Faber and Faber, London, 1967.

This desertation entitled, "Educational Reforms under a Communist Government in Kerala - 1957-59" consists of six chapters and the social determinance of political activity is the main focus of investigation in the first chapter. Basic issues and problems that necessitated the articulation of political ideas directly or indirectly through groups and sections of certain communities have been taken up for thorough investigation. The processes of formation of political parties to mobilize people for political action, their impact on the larger society itself and the impact of processes on the political developments in post-independent Kerala have been considered here. Finally, the main line of enquiry in the first chapter is on how the pre-independent political development affects the post-independent Kerala.

Chapter II deals with the historical development of Kerala's literacy progress and the system of education which had prevailed in ancient and medieval Kerala and also, the recent developments in education have been carefully sketched in this chapter. The main line of investigation in this chapter is on the situation and the development in which mass awakening took place in education in Kerala. Chapter III is concerned with the Educational legislation and its implications

and it analyses, one by one, almost all the provisions of the Kerala Education Bill and attempts have been made to study the constitutional implications involved in this Bill. Moreover, we have been very careful in studying and analysing the things, as impartial as possible.

Chapter IV is concerned with the liberation struggle and the fall of E.M.S. Namboodiripad's Communist Ministry. The mass movement and the issues involved in it are explained in this chapter. Chapter V deals with the interpretations of the C.P.I. on important issues particularly education. Chapter VI is conclusion and what is investigated in this dissertation can be found explicitly in the final chapter.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those writers who made a special study of the problems and affairs pertaining to Kerala politics. Finally, I can't leave unspoken my debt of gratitude to Dr. C.P. Bhambri, my supervisor, who has always taken great interest in guiding me this topic and without whose persuasion and guidance, this work would never have appeared at the present stage.

CHAPTER - I

KERALA - A PROFILE

The Aryans very well knew the existence of the land Kerala even in the dim distant past. Katyayana, (first half of the 4th Century B.C), a reputed Sanskrit scholar, and Patanjali (B.C. 150), another Sanskrit scholar, make mention of this name. Besides it, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and some of the Puranas also refer this name. Kerala lies in the far south - western corner of the country, "a long fish-shaped land squeezed between the ranges of the western Ghats and the beaches of the Arabian Sea. From its northern extremity, where it borders the Konkan district of Mysore, to the South, where a narrow spur of Madras bars it from Cape Comorin, the farthest promontory of India, it covers about 360 miles of coast line".¹

Modern Kerala came into being as a result of the States Reorganisation Act², 1956 and this part of the country has got an ancient history with its cultural contact and

1. Woodcock, George; Kerala - A portrait of the Malabar Coast, Faber and Faber, London, 1967, p. 25.

2. Central Act XXXVII of 1956, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 1956.

trade relations with the Mediteranean and Persian gulf ports. Till the coming of the Portuguese at the close of the 15th century, the history of Kerala lies almost in obscurity except certain pieces of information available in some ancient Tamil and Sanskrit works, remnants left behind by European and Muhammadan travellers and a few copper plate grants and inscriptions³.

Dr. Herman Gundert states that 'Keram' is a Canarese dialectical form of 'Cheram' and 'Keralam' means 'Cheram' the place between Cumari, and Gokarna. Bishop Caldwell comments that 'Kera' and 'Kela' are Dravidian abbreviations of 'Kerala' and they are Malayalam and not the Tamil abbreviations. According to the author of the 'History of Kerala', this land has been designated 'Kerala' in Sanskrit literature from the earliest times and hence, he comes to the conclusion that 'Kerala' is Sanskrit word. Another writer holds the view that the word 'Kerala' is related to 'Keram' which means the 'land of the Coccoanut⁴ Palms'.

3. Census of India 1961, Vol. VII, Kerala Part I, A(i), General Report, The Manager of Publications, Delhi-8, 1965, p. 1.

4. Malabar and Anjengo by C.A. Innes, quoted in census of India 1961, Vol. VII, Kerala, Part-I, A (i) General Report, op. cit.

The puranas have got a different story to tell regarding the origin of Kerala and accordingly, Parasurama, with the permission of Varuna, the god of the Sea, flung his weapon from Gokarna and it fell on Cape Comorin and he called it 'Keralam'⁵.

'Keralotpathi' states that the land so reclaimed was inhabited by the Brahmins to whom it was gifted by Parasurama and since the Brahmin oligarchy failed in administering the land satisfactorily, factions emerged among them. Hence, they brought Keya Perumal of Keya Puram from the country east of the Ghats and installed him as the first of the Perumals in 216 A.D. Cheraman Perumal was the last of the Perumals who ruled over Kerala for 36 years and he is said to have been a wise and liberal King. It is said that he finally became converted to Islam and left for Mecca. (This is a highly disputed version).

It is also stated that Kerala happened to remain divided into a number of small Kingdoms because the Cheraman Perumal, before making his departure, divided his Kingdom among the great nobles of the realm.

5. According to another version, Parasurama threw his weapon from Cape Comorin to Gokarna and another account states that it was a wooden spoon used for sacrificial purposes that was thrown.

According to 'Kerala Mahatmyam', Parasurama after completing his work of organising the sixty four villages and consecrating the temples between Gokarna and Cape Comorin invited a Somakshatriya, Bhanuvikrama by name, and installed him as the King of Kerala with Sree Vardhana Puram⁶ (Modern Padmanabha Puram) as the capital. One of the brothers of the King was installed at Gokarna and after doing all these things, he instituted a national ceremony called Maghamakam in which Kulasekhara Perumal, King of Travancore, was awarded the first seat and the second seat was given to Udayavarma of Kolathunad.

"Stretching in a Southerly direction from South Kanara along the West Coast upto about 35 miles north of Cape Comorin, the lands' end of India, Kerala lies between 8° 7' 30" to 12° 17' 40", N. latitude and 74° 5', 57" to 77° 24' 47" E. longitude"⁷. The total area of Kerala is 15002 square miles, just over 1 percent that of India as a whole and almost a third of Kerala consists of forests and mountain wastes.

6. Census of India 1961, Vol. VII Kerala, Part I, A(i), General Report, op. cit, p-2.

7. Ibid, p-9.

Kerala is the most over populated region in India, and being a part of Indian Republic, it is faced with the similar and familiar problems of India. Small but somewhat dark Dravidian people do not bear any resemblance in features and physique to the Indo-Aryans of Northern India. Their dressing and the language are different from that of the North Indians. Its geographical setting is unique and this in turn, being one factor, made isolated - to a very large extent - Kerala from the developments in peninsular India. In spite of it, Kerala had cultural contact and trade relations with many of the foreign countries.

"The mountain ranges - monsoon area with a high degree of rainfall, have at all times been covered with rich primaeval forests creating an impenetrable wall separating the plains of the East Coast from the hilly tracts of the West"⁸. But, at Aramboly near the Cape and at Palghat at the Centre, the Ghats provide natural openings to the eastern side.

8. Panikkar, K.M; A History of Kerala - 1498-1801
The Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, 1960, p-1.

Though the people of Kerala speak the same language - Malayalam - there are a good deal of social and temperamental differences between the South and North Keralites. Malayalam, the native language of Kerala, is a Dravidian tongue and it differs very much even from the related Tamil in so many respects.

Till the 3rd century B.C. we do not have any authentic record regarding Kerala. "The first direct allusion to the kings of this area is found in an inscription of Asoka mentioning Keralaputra as one of the borderland kings of the South. Apart from references in Tamil, early Sanskrit literature has also allusions to Kerala indicating that atleast by the 3rd century B.C. Kerala was fairly well known to writers in the north"⁹. Kautilya's Arthasastra describes the Kerala river ~~Kaxiti~~ Choornika as a place where pearls were available¹⁰.

K.M. Panikkar, a well known historian of India, states that Kerala became a recognised part of Bharata Varsha by the 2nd century B.C. but the record relating to its early history has not yet been discovered in Kerala

9. Ibid, p-2.

10. Ibid.

itself¹¹. Bhaskara Ravi Varman inscription of the 8th century A.D. is the earliest record discovered in Kerala relating to its own history. The prevalence of a monarchy in an advanced state of feudal disruption is one of the factors that reveals this document.

Since no authentic evidence is available regarding the history of Kerala before the 8th century A.D., the history of the period before the 8th century can be briefly summarised as follows:- It seems that some time before the third century, B.C. a small tricle of Brahmins had reached Kerala and the available historical sources witness that they were settled in the area by a powerful monarch. Since then, the Nambudiris or the emigrant Brahmins have formed the apex of Kerala society¹².

Before the advent of the Nambudiris, the historical sources witness that a fierce warlike tribe worshipping nagas, and deriving from them the eponymic of Nakar (later Nair) occupied the land. Many of the feudal chiefs of Kerala were Nairs.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

Ancient history has made its own impact in each and every sphere of modern Kerala. For instance, Kerala had, even in the dim distant past, close contact with Arabia, Egypt and the West that helped the Jews, Christian missionaries and others to come to Kerala and carry further their programme. Though we do not have evidence regarding the exact time of the arrival of the Jews and the Christians there is sufficient evidence about the flourishing of Christians in Kerala in the 7th century. According to reliable evidence, the apostle St. Thomas landed in India in 49 A.D., and he converted many local families to the Christian fold. Following him came many of the Christian missionaries from the west and realising that some of the communities like Ezhavas or Thiyas, Nadars, Fishermen, Pulayas, and Parayas etc. due to the suppressive tactics adopted by the ruling class remained backward in so many respects, the Christian missionaries began opening many schools and other educational institutions for them. In the words of George Woodcock, "The role of Christianity in shaping the special character of Kerala has gone far beyond its success in making converts. It was mainly

by the efforts and influence of 19th century protestant Christians that modern, western-style education was introduced into Kerala. It is largely owing to the efforts of victorian missionaries that Kerala has a literacy rate twice that of India as a whole, and a passion for education which seems unbounded"¹³.

Since the arrival of St. Thomas, many westerners came to Kerala with various aims. Some of them came for business purposes and others for missionary activities. Portuguese, Dutch, French and the English reached Kerala but only the English could establish a lasting impression in Kerala. Kerala also witnessed invasion from Mysore at the time of Hyderali and Tippu Sultan. The impact made by the west in Kerala is so great that it is reflected in almost every aspect of Keralan life.

Even at present, Kerala is 'socially heterodox' in Indian terms and Kerala was a caste-ridden society once upon a time. It was this state of affair which made Vivekananda to remark, when he visited the State, that Kerala was a 'lunatic asylum'. The common social life

13. Woodcock, George; op. cit, p. 34-35.

was only a dream and inter-caste marriage and inter-dining were regarded as something wrong. 'Untouchability' and 'unapproachability' were very common in the daily life of Kerala. The low caste Ezhava had to keep 36 feet away from the Nambudiri and 16 feet from the Nair. A Harijan, at any cost and under any circumstance, was not expected to come before the Nambudiri and a Harijan had to keep 24 feet away from the Nair, 12 feet from the Ezhava¹⁴.

Until a generation ago, the majority of Malayali Hindus lived according to a matrilineal joint family system which had the practice of polyandry. Even today, that system has not completely disappeared from the social life of Hindu Keralites and it legally governs the inheritance of ancestral as distinct from personal property:- a daughter and all her Children, under this system, inherit equal shares in such property, but the son only inherits his own share and his children inherit through their mother's family. "But probably the most important effect of the matrilineal system is that ^{it} has left Malayali women

14. Joseph, S.C.; Kerala the Communist State, The Madras Premier Co., Madras-I, 1959, p-31.

with an influence and an independence of outlook which one will not find anywhere else in India - South of the Tibetan - influenced regions on the Himalayan frontiers: in particular, by maintaining a position for the women within her own family, it has prevented widowhood from becoming the sordid tragedy which it was - and to a great extent still is - in other Hindu Societies"¹⁵.

These aspects of Malayali life make Kerala 'a back water of regional conservatism' and this conservatism is combined with new and foreign ideas. Moreover, the interplay between the western influence and local traditional conservative impact is clearly visible in Malayali life.

Two millenia of foreign contacts played a very vital role in giving shape to Kerala's way of life and its pluralistic Society and as a result of which, the changes which have taken place in so many spheres like economic, religious, cultural and political are immense. A careful scrutiny of the economic foundations of Kerala will reveal that it, economically, resembles Malaya because of the

15. Woodcock, George, op. cit, p-30.

fact that Malabar Coast has got a plantation system in the foothills and a form of agriculture based on cash crops even in the coastal areas. These cash crops are mostly exported. Pepper, ginger, cardamom, coir, copra, rubber, and tea dominate the farming economy of Kerala. Pepper and cash crops are grown in the rural areas abundantly and India earns a good amount of foreign exchange from rubber itself. Moreover, Kerala is having an elaborate system of inlandwater transport which helps it to bring export goods down to the little ports of the Coast.

The trade of the Malabar Coast has had a golden history of its own. In the past, luxury items were imported for the ruling class and many commodities like pepper and copra were exported even during that time. Keralites earn an eight of India's supply of foreign exchange by selling the products of plantations, cocoanut groves, pepper and ginger. Though the standard of living of the people is well below the level for India as a whole, Kerala, is still one of India's principal exporting and cash earning regions.

For centuries, Kerala has suffered from shortage of rice without which a Malayali born and brought up in the Malabar Coast^a would find it very difficult to live. It is a peculiar feature of the Malayali farmers to grow spices for foreign trade instead of giving more attention to produce food for themselves.

On the basis of physical characteristics, Kerala can be divided into three natural zones: (i) the Coastal low-land, (ii) mid-land zone of medium elevation, and (iii) the high-land zone occurring at higher elevations¹⁶. In many places, the low land is a narrow strip of territory mostly broken by broad and narrow lagoons and rivers. Agricultural mid-land lies to the east of this zone and mountainous highland with its plantations lie further east of this zone. These three physical zones are having their distinct economic and geographic features.

The coastal low land is the most industrialised and the most densely populated zone having its own industrial and commercial occupations besides the cultivation of rice and of cocanut palm and fishing. The mid-land zone has the major

16. Varghese, T.C.; Agrarian change and economic consequences (Land Tenures in Kerala 1850-1960), Allied Publishers, Calcutta, 1970, p-4.

share of agricultural production in the region and it covers the largest area among the three Zones.

Rice, which is the Chief staple diet of the people, is cultivated on wet-lands. Tapioca is mostly cultivated in rural areas and in mountain ranges and ^{since the} price of tapioca also increases day by day, the large land owners take initiative in cultivating it as a cash-crop. Particularly, in Travancore tapioca has become the most important crop after rice and coconut and "occupied an area of about 0.5 million acres or 22 percent of the total cropped area in 1946-47"¹⁷.

The growth of cash crops in Kerala has been highly responsible for the rapid commercialisation of the state's economy. Due to commercialisation and consequent monetization, there emerged in this region two local credit institutions known as 'Kuries' and 'Chitties'¹⁸ and one of the important aspects of the economy of Kerala has been that these credit institutions paved the way for the rapid development of commercial banking. They made a

17. Statistics of Travancore for 1946-47, quoted by T.C. Varghese, op. cit, p-110.

18. Kuries, Chitties:- These are the names of two credit institutions in Kerala and these are local names given to them.

very profound effect on the further growth of the economy of Kerala.

The following Table shows the distribution of the total cropped area between food-crops and cash-crops in 1956.

Table - I

Total cropped area and the percentage under food-crops and cash crops in Kerala
(Area in thousand acres)

Total cropped area	The area for which crop-wise data are available	Percentage of area under chief food-crops (Paddy and pulses) to total area for which crop wise data are available.	Percentage of area under food cum-cash crops tapioca and bananas	Percentage of area under cash crops.
5466	4743	44	14	42

*9. Source:- Basic Statistics of Kerala, Department of Statistics, Government of Kerala, 1957.

The British were the initial investors in plantations and they spent their energy and capital in establishing the coir manufacturing industry more particularly in Travancore. The natural factors conducive to the location of the coir industry were more favourable to Travancore

than to any other part of Kerala. The investment of foreign capital into plantations opened up new opportunities for agricultural and non-agricultural economic expansion.

The largest group among the agricultural population is agricultural labourers both in Malabar and Cochin, and tenants is the next important group. It is important to note that Cochin has a higher proportion of owner -cultivators than Malabar. "The fact that 20 percent of the population in Cochin and 21 percent in Malabar are accounted for by 'miscellaneous' occupations, compared to only 12 percent in Travancore, suggests that the capacity of the economy to provide relatively stable employment has been greater ~~in~~ Travancore"²⁰.

The proportion of owner - cultivator to total owned area is high in Travancore (0.8:1) and Cochin (0.8:1) and slightly lower in Malabar (0.7:1). But, the proportion of households which lease out land to the total land owning households is higher in Travancore (about 0.4:1) than in either Cochin (approximately 0.1:1) or Malabar²¹ (0.2:1).

20. Varghese, T.C; op. cit, p-131.

21. Ibid, p-166.

The number of households cultivating leased in lands in Travancore is about three-fourths of these cultivating owned lands. A large proportion of the households in Travancore possess also tenancy and rentier rights. The number of cultivating households in Malabar is four times the number of owner-cultivators and total cultivated area is eight times as high as the owner-cultivated area²². Majority of the Malabar cultivators are tenants.

In Cochin, the number of cultivating households is about double the number of households cultivating owned land. The rent-receivers are leasing out lands and here in Cochin, cultivators are almost evenly distributed between cultivators of owned land and cultivators of unowned land.

In Travancore also, the average area of owned land per household is largest and in all the three regions, rent receiving households own the largest area per household.

22. Ibid, p-167.

T.C. Varghese in his thesis 'Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences' analyses the occupational pattern in three regions of Kerala. "The percentage distribution of households (according to their main source of income), between agricultural and non-agricultural occupations is broadly similar in the samples from Travancore, Malabar and Cochin. 70 percent of the households covered by the Travancore sample derive their main income from agriculture and 30 percent from non-agricultural sources; the respective proportions in the Malabar sample are again 70 percent and 30 percent, and in the Cochin sample 67 percent and 33 percent"²³.

The major Communities²⁴ in Kerala are Brahmins, Nairs, Ezhavas, Nadars, Mukkuvas (fishermen), Syrian Christians²⁵, and Muslims. The Brahmins form the apex of Malayali Society and the Nambudiri Brahmins enjoyed the social pre-eminence and Azhuvanchary Tamprakkal was their spiritual head. They owned a good number of temples and a

23. Ibid, p-201.

24. A community can be defined as a social unit whose members share values in common.

25. In Southern Kerala, Syrian Christians are called 'Mappilayas'.

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considerable portion of land. The Nambudiris had a high literary tradition and scholarship and in the period between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, they made a good contribution to Sanskrit and Malayalam literatures. The Brahmins, at present, are mostly holding professional jobs and they are more advanced in education than any other communities in Kerala.

Below them come the Nairs and "they were not a caste; they were a race"²⁶. Many castes²⁷ and sub-castes with its different 'social pretensions' existed among them. The Samantas were the People who came at the top of the Nair race and Samantas were the ruling families of Kerala. Their titles differed from place to place and they were known as Nambiars, Kaimals, Mannadiars, Karthas, Panikkars, Unnithans, Valiathans, and Kurups. 'The Nair gentry consisted of mostly people who were engaged in warfare and their organisation was based on a system known as the 'Kalaris'. In every village, there were panikkars or Kurups who were the heads of 'Kalaris' and every Nair family was attached to

26. Panikkar, K.M; op. cit, p-10.

27. Caste:- According to the Encyclopedia Americana, "Caste is largely static, exclusive social class, membership in which is determined by birth and involves particular customary restrictions and privileges. The word derives from the portuguese casta, meaning "Breed", "Race", or "Kind", and was first used to denote the Hindu social classification on the Indian sub-continent, (Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 5, Americana Corporation, the U.S.A., 1969, p-775.

such Kalaris for the purpose of training in warfare. A good deal of information regarding the existance of 'Kalaris' and the training imparted on the Nairs come down to us from foreign authors like Duarte Barbosa. According to him, "when these Nairs were seven (7) years of age, they were immediately sent to school to learn all manner of feats of agility and gymnastics for the use of their weapons. First, they learn to dance, and then to tumble and for that purpose they render - supple all their limbs from childhood, so that they can bend them in any direction"²⁸.

There were various kinds of Kalaris which varied in size and importance. 'Kalaris' like the 'Kalari' of Dharmmothu Panikkar²⁹ gave training to a number of men; at the same time, about fifty families had been attached to village 'Kalaris'. The Nairs were a part and parcel of 'National militia'.

The social organisation of the Nairs was based on the marumakkathayam system or matrilineal descent. They

28. Barbosa, Duarte; A description of the coast of Africa and Malabar, Hakluyt Society, London, 1866, p-128.

29. Dharmmothu Panikkar was the hereditary commander-in-chief of the Zamorin.

lived in joint families locally known as 'tharavads' under the leadership of the oldest male member of the family and he was called 'Karanavan'³⁰. The so-called 'Karanavan' had absolute power over the family particularly over younger members and his word was regarded as the final authority in the family. Moreover, women under this system had sufficient social freedom. At present, the joint family system has almost disappeared from the social life of the Nairs. The Nairs are a pre-dominant community in Kerala in the sense that some of them are holding high professional jobs and a good number of them are land owners also .

Next below the Nairs come the Ezhavas otherwise known as Thiyas and they were a cultivating class, traditionally associated with the tapping of coconut trees. "Possibly of Polynesian origin they arrived in Kerala from Ceylon, as their name Ezhava indicates, and introduced coconut cultivation on the coast. In a copper plate inscription of the 8th century their privileges in regard

30. Even now the word 'Karanavan' is very popular in Kerala and it is used in the same meaning.

to tapping coconut trees and collecting pepper are specifically mentioned"³¹. Most of the Ezhavas follow matrilineal descent, though a good number of them follow patrilineal descent. The Ezhavas, before the middle of the 19th century were considered as untouchables and they had to undergo a good deal of social prohibitions.

In the North Kerala, Ezhavas are known as Thiyyas (in the extreme north) and in the Palghat district they are called Ezhava Panikkar. Iluvams, a Tamil speaking section of the caste, as listed in the census report of 1901 as Panikkans, but now calling themselves as Illatu Pillai, or simply Pillai, and defining themselves further as Siruvadi Vellan, are found in the Tinnevelly District of Tamil Nadu³². The traditional occupation of the caste is toddy-drawing, but in south Travancore weaving is also treated as caste occupation. At present, they are also advanced in almost every sphere of life.

Next major community is the Syrian Christian Community and it is said that they are the descendants of the Brahmins

31. Panikkar, K.M; op. cit, p-13.

32. Aiyappan, A; Social Revolution in a Kerala Village (A study in cultural change), Asia Republishing House, Bombay-1, 1965, p-115.

who were converted by St. Thomas. They are more advanced in education than some other Christian communities and it is to be noted that they feel themselves superior to other Christian Communities. The Syrian Christians are mostly confined to Kottayam in Travancore which is known as the 'Rome of the Syrian Christians'. There are Christians and Hindus among Nadars and they are said to be backward. Moreover, Mukkuvas or fishermen are also called backward community and inter-caste marriage among these different communities rarely occurs. There are Christians³³ in Ezhava Community in some parts of Kerala and inter-dinning is possible among all these communities. Even today, many of these Christian communities stick to the regulations of the caste to which they belong.

Next comes Muslims who form two distinct groups:

- (1) "the descendants of the Arab marchants who have been trading along the Malabar Coast since before the beginning of recorded history, and the Malayalis who were converted either forcibly during the invasions of Hyder Ali and

33. Christians from Ezhava community are mostly found in Trivandrum.

Tippu Sultan in the late 18th century, or voluntarily because they wished to escape from the social disabilities of belonging to low Hindu castes"³⁴.

Hinduism, Christianity and the Islam are major religions in Kerala. The Roman Catholics arrived under the aegis of the Portuguese state - controlled trading enterprise with its centre at Fort Cochin. It was Francis Xavier who laid the foundations of a flourishing Latin Catholic church among the low-caste fishermen of Travancore. Later, the Protestants of the church Missionary Society arrived in Travancore and the Lutherans of the Basel Mission began its work in Malabar. Religious harmony is one of the aspects of Keralan life. Moreover, the adherents of the non-Hindu religions now form important political interest groups and hence, no Keralan government has yet been able to stay in power without the support of either Christians or Muslims.

Kerala the land of radical politics coupled with conservative social system and uniquely complex system of Hindu castes is one of the most politically conscious states.

34. Woodcock, George; op. cit, p-33.

Non-Hindu religions have taken a new turn of becoming themselves a pattern of political pressure groups and its agricultural system had developed in the past in an era of mercantile economics and it had produced mostly for export rather than internal consumption. Its population has increased in numbers and density during the present century. Moreover, Kerala is a land where there is too little land with too much population which the state can't accommodate in any way and it is a state where there is too little chance of employment with too much literacy and enthusiasm for education. Finally, it is a place which earns a lot of foreign exchange but with too little food to eat. Kerala has got an educational system which creates expectations that under present circumstances, people would be in great difficulty to realise them.

Origin and Growth of Communism in Kerala:

Most of the rulers in the state made it a practice of suppressing different communities, particularly non-Hindus, Scheduled castes and other backward communities. This kind of tendency on the part of the rulers led to

the gradual growth of popular movements championing the cause of the suppressed communities.³⁵ Malayalee Memorial Struggle of 1898 was the first agitation launched against this evil practice.

The Malayalee Memorial was a memorandum signed by 10028 citizens of Travancore and submitted to the government demanding their rightful share in the administration of the state. During that time, the government jobs were open to the Tamils and hence, this memorandum demanded that government jobs should not be offered to non-Malayalees. It got the support of all communities including Nairs.

Since the government, apart from satisfying the Nairs, did not make any attempts in ameliorating the conditions of the other communities, the Ezhavas and the Christians united together for continuing the struggle against the government. The introduction of administrative reforms in 1932 gave birth to the Shri. Chitra State Council and the Sri Mulam Assembly. This was another important stage in the history of popular movement in Kerala. Even then, the Christians, Ezhavas and the Muslims did not get

35. Kerala under Communism - A Report, Democratic Research Service, Bombay, 1959, p-11.

adequate representation in the legislature. Hence, these three communities - the Christians, Ezhavas and the Muslims - united together to form the Samyukta Rashtriya Samiti in 1932. Later, the Samiti decided that these three communities should jointly boycott the ensuing elections. This is known as the Nivarthana (absention) movement. In 1933, they re-constituted the Samiti into the Samyukta Rashtriya Congress. "Its aim was to obtain proportionate representation for all the Communities in the Assembly, public service and state forces along with adult franchise and responsible government"³⁶.

In 1937, the Samyukta Rashtriya Congress was dissolved and in that place, these three communities - Christians, Ezhavas, and Muslims - jointly formed the State Congress with the cooperation of the Nairs. Mr. Pattom Thanu Pillai was elected president of the State Congress. Thereafter, it can be said that "the history of the popular movement in the decade, 1937-'47 was a long story of the struggle of the people, represented by the State Congress, within and outside the legislature against the repressive policies of the state government".³⁷

36. Ibid, p-12.

37. Ibid.

The Communist Movement in Kerala had been nurtured within the Congress Party and its early history is the story of the Congress. The Congress Party in Kerala entered the National Movement only in 1903³⁸. The outstanding feature of the Communist Movement in Kerala is its popular character. Founders as well as many of the leaders of the communist party of India had been the prominent members of the Congress Party and they had actively participated in the National Liberation Struggle against the British. A number of factors entered the politics of the Congress Party resulting in, in the course of time, the split of the party into a radical wing which was imbued with Marxist and Socialist ideas and a moderate wing which opposed this programme. The former wing pressed for a far reaching programme of Socialization even before the attainment of independence and the moderate wing, on the other hand, sought to root out British political domination from the Indian soil by leaving the problem of social reform for the future.

In 1935, the first All Kerala Trade Union Congress was convened by the radicals at Kozhikodum and Kerala Congress

38. Fic, Victor, M; Kerala : Yenan of India, Rise of Communist Power 1937 - 1969, Nachiketa Publications, Bombay.

Socialist Party was established in the same year. The next stage in the development of Communist movement in Kerala can be explained as a period of the 'Congress Communism'. It is to be remembered that the Communist radicals remained within the Congress party during the transitory stage. By this time, they were educating their followers in Marxism and they were also engaged in building the Kerala Congress Socialist Party through organisational effort among the working class, peasants, students, youth and intellectuals.

Moreover, the communist party in Kerala was anti-British and it earned a large measure of credit and respect from the people because of its refusal to compromise with the British when the war (II world war) had placed them in discomfiture in India. The Communist Party appeared to many as a more patriotic and anti-imperialist force in Kerala at that time.

The split within the Congress Party (i.e. radicals and moderates) finally resulted in the establishment of the Communist Party of Kerala in 1940.³⁹ The Congress

39. Ibid.

underwent further division resulting in the establishment of the Indian Socialist Party of Kerala in 1948⁴⁰. E.M.S. Nambudiripad was one of the founding members of the Communist Party and he had played a prominent role in the formation of the Party.

Untouchability was one of the characteristic features of Malayali Society till recent times. The rigid caste rules and the social behaviour of the people very well reflected in politics also and caste oppression was another phase of social behaviour in Kerala. In the words of K.M. Panikkar, "Some castes like the Pulayas, who constituted the main body of agricultural labour could not, it would appear, be seen by Nambudiris without polluting them. They could not approach a Nair, the proper distance for the Pulaya to keep was sixty feet away from a Nair. Old Portugusse records declare that when Nair noblemen came out in the streets, some one went in front of them shouting "po, po", get away, get away, so that they may not be polluted by the proximity of untouchables"⁴¹.

40. Ibid.

41. Panikkar, K.M; op. cit, p-14.

Moreover, people belonging to higher castes had sufficient opportunities of getting jobs than their lower caste brethren. "Even as recently as in 1941, Brahmins who formed only 1.6 percent of the total population in Travancore constituted 20.8 percent of the professional classes earning above Rs. 1200/- a year, while Ezhavas with a population, which is 17.5% of the total, got only 4.2% of the professional jobs of the same income group"⁴². Only very few of the low caste people got respectable jobs. Moreover, the people of high castes had to compete with their low caste brethren in schools, offices, factories, and markets. Thus, the low caste people did not get enough opportunities to rise up to the social ladder. These social conditions led to the emergence of the modern democratic movement in Kerala for social equality. One of the important aspects of communalism in Kerala was 'caste against caste' and not 'Hindu versus Muslim'. The non-caste Hindus of Malabar like the Thiyyas began complaining against the Congress saying that the Congress was an organisation of caste Hindus, particularly Nairs.

42. Travancore Economic Survey, quoted by Nambudiripad, E.M.S; The National Question in Kerala, Peoples Publishing House, Bombay, 1952, p-110.

It was under these circumstances that the Communist Party, along with the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji, came forward and gave enough backing for the struggles launched by the low castes against these evil practices of the state. It was done by the Communist Party to get their supporters at the lowest level also. The Paliyam Satyagraha was launched in order to assert the right of untouchables to walk along certain roads which were prohibited to them. It was, in fact, a big struggle of the peasantry directed against the biggest landlord in Cochin. Comrade A.G. Velaudhan, a notable communist leader of the labour workers of Cochin, ended his life at the hands of the police while leading a 'squad of working class volunteers' for satyagraha.

The next important struggle was the 'glorious struggle of the North Malabar Peasantry'. It was directed against the 'landlord hoarders'. This was launched by the poor people living in the rural areas of North Malabar. It was so massive an action that the government was forced to call out the military to crush it.

Thus, the places like Korome, Payassi, Thillengeri, Onchiyam, and Munayam Kunnu etc., became the embodiment of a new phase of the peasant movement in Kerala under the leadership of the Communist Party. Besides these, the Communist Party gave leadership to the September (1948) strike of Travancore students and various other struggles of the industrial and agricultural labourers.

On September 24th the Communist - dominated unions of Alleppey declared a general strike, and two days later the party militants led their followers to the large village of Punnapura where a bloody struggle took place with the police in which several police and workers were killed. The government was forced to proclaim martial law and after two days, the little island of Vayalar witnessed a bloody massacre which the history of Kerala has rarely seen.

The memory of the battles of Punnapara and Vayalar still awake the feelings of people in Travancore and this incident is regarded by the Communists as a symbol of heroism and martyrdom and they also consider the event as an epic day in the Party's history. When the communists came to power in 1957, the first thing Mr. E.M.S. Nambudiripad did was to pay a ceremonial visit to the mass grave at

Punnapara where the slain lay buried.

With the advent of India's political independence, the princely states acceded to India and the first general election in the State was held in 1948. Four parties - the State Congress, the Travancore Tamil Nad Congress (T.T.N.C), the Kerala Socialist Party, the Communist Party of India - put up candidates in this election. Out of 108 seats, the Congress won 93, the T.T.N.C. 14 and independents one. The K.S.P. and the Communist Party miserably failed in securing a single seat.

In the year 1948, (March 22) Mr. Pattom Thanu Pillai was installed as the Chief Minister of the first Congress Ministry. Mr. C. Kesavan and Mr. T.M. Varghese were his cabinet colleagues. But, after a few months, interal rivalries and factional quarrels sprang up inside the Congress and the Cabinet. A cordial relationship could not be maintained even among the cabinet ministers and this led to the fall of the ministry. Catholics, Muslims and Scheduled Castes raised their voice of dissatisfaction at not being represented in the cabinet. Due to these rivalries, the government was compelled to enlarge the cabinet in order to include three more members. In spite of

it, the rivalries continued and it gave way to a signature campaign. As a result of it, Chief Minister Pattom Thanu Pillai resigned his office and his membership of the Congress Party. Later, he organised the Democratic Socialist Party with the full support of 14 Congress legislators who prepared to walk out of the Congress along with Mr. Pattom Thanu Pillai.

By this time, regionalism and parochialism began to dominate the Congress Party. Communalism itself was another factor for the factional quarrels within the Congress and as a result of which, the Party underwent further division. The continuous struggle for the positions of power had a great effect upon the Party itself. Acharya Kripalini, a prominent leader of the All-India Congress Party, resigned and established the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (K.M.P.P) in 1950. The split on the National level affected Kerala where Gandhian leaders, K. Kelappan and K.A. Damodaran, left the Congress and founded the Kerala branch of the K.M.P.P. The unification of Travancore and Cochin was another important aspect of discontentment among the party men and this political development affected the already 'faction - ridden Congress Party' to a very large extent. The election of

T.K. Narayana Pillai to the presidency of the Congress Party of the unified state worsened the situation. Thus, the Congress Party was losing its image before the public and declining, in one way or the other, its own former strength. At the same time, the Leftist forces were emerging as a powerful alternative to the Congress Party because of the fact that they were able to exploit the situation. In the General Elections of 1951-52, K.M.P.P cooperated with the Communist Party to defeat the Congress at any cost.

Mr. Narayana Pillai was the next Chief Minister who succeeded Mr. Pattom Thanu Pillai and it was during his regime that the merger of Cochin State with Travancore took place in July 1949.⁴³ Another important political development in the state was the formation of a united front of the leftists in Travancore-Cochin area in 1952. This was the joint action of the Communist Party and other leftist parties of the state, like the Kerala Socialist Party (K.S.P.) and the Revolutionary Socialist Party (R.S.P.). In the Malabar area, the Communist Party formed a United Front with the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (K.M.P.P). The Congress men of South Travancore who had left the parent organisation of

43. Kerala under Communism - A Report, op. cit, p-13.

the Congress on the question of incorporation of the Tamil speaking taluks in Tamil Nadu stood in the elections as an independent party with the old name of the Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress (T.T.N.C). It was, in fact a big shake to the Congress Party and it had to face the combined assault of its opposition.

Table - II

The Ministries 1947-57		
Chief Minister	In	Out
1. Pattom Thanu Pillai	March, 1948	September, 1948
2. T.K. Narayana Pillai	Sept., 1948	September, 1950
3. C. Kesavan	Sept., 1950	February, 1952
4. A.J. John	March, 1952	September, 1953 (Continued in office till election in 1954).
5. Pattom Thanu Pillai (P.S.P) Ministry Congress support without coalition)	March, 1954	February, 1955
6. Panampalli Govinda Menon	March, 1955	March, 1956
7. President's rule	March, 1956	March, 1957
8. Communist Ministry E.M.S.	April, 1957	

44. Sources:- Joseph, S.C; op. cit, p-39.

With the integration of Travancore-Cochin, The Praja Mandalam, the representative political organisation in Cochin merged with the State Congress. The years between 1948-1956 witnessed three general elections, six Ministries and the rise and decline of the Congress Party in Kerala. All this time, the Communist Party was very keen in building up its bases among workers, students, frustrated people and unemployed youth.

All the six ministries had to go out of office before the term because of group politics and personal or communal rivalries within the Congress Party itself and the Congress, knowingly or unknowingly, was sowing the seeds of its own fall.

The establishment of more factories by foreigners as well as by Indian capitalists increased the number of workers and this gave them an opportunity to achieve collective strength for bargaining with the owners. In 1900, the number of industrial workers in Kerala was very limited and, in the course of time, their number increased. For instance, in 1955 there were 160562 factory workers in 1402 factories and by this time, their bargaining capacity had increased.

In 1950, Narayanan Pillai's government also fell out of power as a result of bitter feuding within his cabinet between the Travancore and the Cochin leaders, and Kesavan, Ezhava by caste, was now picked as a compromise Chief Minister and he was in power until 1952. The elections for the state government on this occasion showed that the prestige of Congress had almost fallen in Travancore-Cochin as well as in Malabar. The opposition, though divided, was more powerful and persuasive than ever before. Pattom Thanu Pillai's Democratic Socialist Party of Kerala became a part of the Nation wide Praja Socialist Party led by Acharya Kripalini and Jayaprakash Narayan and most of the progressive-minded Nairs followed him. Kerala Socialist Party gained control of the Trade Unions of Quilon and established a local electoral following. The communists formed a left-wing united front with the Kerala Socialist Party and the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

In the elections of 1952, the Congress Party emerged as the largest single party, but with only 44 seats out of a total of 108, and its popular vote was

reduced to 36 percent. The communists had won 25 seats, while 7 were held by independents and the three Socialist Parties won 18 seats. For a good majority, the Congress leaders in Travancore-Cochin depended on a small group of 4 Catholic independents and on the 8 regionally-minded Tamil Congress men from the Southern districts around Nagercoil and Cape Comorin.

In Malabar, which was still part of Madras state, the defeat of Congress was horrible; it gained 4 seats out of 30, and the majority went to a Communist-Socialist Electoral Coalition. In the same year, a new ministry was formed under A.J. John and within two years, it also had to go out of office defeated by the desertion of the Tamils because the Travancore leaders were not willing to agree to the secession of the Southern districts of Madras.

In the new election held in February 1954, the Praja Socialists entered into an electoral arrangement with the united front of the Communists, the Revolutionary Socialists and the Kerala Socialists. The popular vote showed a sentiment back towards Congress (46 percent as against 36 percent in 1952), but the proportion of seats

it gained 45 out of 118 - was lower than ever. The communists went down to 23 seats, and the various Socialist Parties between them gained 31, so that, with the support of independents, it would have been possible for the left-wing electoral alliance to form a coalition government in the state in 1954. As the largest individual party, the Congress attempted to gain support for a minority government of its own members; having failed, its leaders broke up the left-wing alliance by offering to give support to a government of the Praja Socialists who, with 19 seats, had gained only third place in the election. Mr. Pattom Thanu Pillai was once again installed as the Chief Minister of Kerala in 1954. Mr. Pattom Thanu Pillai by breaking his pact with the other left-wing groups and with three of his party colleagues, formed a ministry which lived out its short life at the mercy of Congress.

Panampalli Govinda Menon, an influential person of Cochin and a prominent member of the Congress, induced some of the Praja Socialists to withdraw their support to the government of Pattam Thanu Pillai and formed an alliance with the Tamil Congress men. Pattom Thanu Pillai's ministry fell with a non-confidence vote and immediately after this, Panampalli Govinda Menon was

called to form the Ministry. A revolt broke out among the Travancore-Congress men, who accused Panampalli of corruption and of favouring the Cochinese. He also fell from office in 1956 and in March 1956, President's rule was imposed in the state.

It was in 1956 that Modern Kerala came into being as a result of states' Reorganisation Act. Modern Kerala was formed out of a number of political units, "with varied histories, all of which had been in existence for atleast a hundred and fifty years"⁴⁵. Kerala never remained as a unified state and it remained divided into so many kingdoms and principalities ruled by the kings and chieftains all over Malabar. The most important aspect of the conquest of Malabar by the Dutch was that it gave a new shape to the political character of Kerala. As a consequence of which, by the end of the 18th century, Kerala became divided into three political units - Travancore, Cochin and the Zamorin territory (later known as British Malabar). These three divisions continued untill when the princely states of Travancore and Cochin were integrated to form the Travancore-Cochin state. It was only in 1956, at the time of of ^{reorganisation} /

45. Woodcock, George; op. cit, p-26.

of states in India, that the Malabar district, which was a part of the Madras state, was added to the Travancore-Cochin state. Kerala, on November 1956, became a unified state for the first time in its history.

The general election took place in 1957 and the Communist Party was able to form the ministry with the support of the independents. The Communist Party came to power on 5th April, 1957 with E.M.S. Nambudiripad as the Chief Minister and Kerala is the only state in the whole world where Communist Party came to power through democratic process. It was, really, an event of historical importance. There were so many reasons which led to the victory of the Communist Party in 1957.

There were 114 constituencies in the state. One Hundred two (102) were single-member ~~xxxxxxx~~ and 12 were double-member constituencies. The party-wise distribution of candidates who contested the elections was as follows:-

Table - III

Congress	-	124
Communist	-	100
Praja Socialist Party	-	62
Revolutionary- Socialist Party	-	28
Muslim League	-	19
Independents	-	56
		<hr/>
Total	-	389
		<hr/> <hr/>

46. Source:- Nair, Ramakrishnan, R; How communists came to power in Kerala, The Kerala Academy of Political Science, Trivandrum, p-13.

Conflicts and rivalries within the Congress Party was one of the reasons for the success of the Communist Party in 1957. The fall of successive Congress ministries prior to 1957 made the people to think in terms of a strong and stable government. It was at this time that the Communist Party approached the people with appealing promises. Another important reason for its success, according to some writers, was the States Reorganisation of 1956 and it led to the victory of the Communist Party because of the fact that Malabar, where the Communist

Party had decisive influence, has been included and the south Travancore where they did not have much influence, has been excluded from the state as a result of the states reorganization. The election manifesto of the Communist Party itself had a great effect among the masses.

The following table shows the results of the 1957 Elections.

Table - IV

Party	Seats tested	con-Seats won	Seat un-contested	Deposit forfeited
Congress	124	43	0	5
Communist	100	60	0	4
P.S.P.	62	9	0	28
R.SP.	28	0	0	22
Muslim League	19	8	0	0
Independents (supported by the Communist Party)	19	5	0	0
Other independents	37	0	1	31
Total	389	125	1	90

47. Source:- Report on the General Elections 1957,
Government of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1957.

Some other writers hold the view that disunity that had existed among all the non-communist parties helped the Communist Party in strengthening their organisation. "The top Congress leaders' attack on the Muslim League alienated Muslim sympathies in south Malabar and Palghat districts of Kerala".⁴⁸

Elections to the Legislative Assembly-1957.

Table - V

The Electorate and Votes polled					
State	Number of votes in contested constituencies				
	Single Member		Two Member		Total
	Men	Women	Men	Women	
Kerala	3083285	2970916	1400152	1397090	8851443

49. Source:- Report on the second General Elections in India, 1957, Vo. II (Statistical) Election Commission, Govt..of India.

Poverty is one of the causes of the growth of communism in any educated society. The acute poverty with mass literacy helped the people particularly intellectuals to think in terms of a political system in

48. Nair, Ramakrishnan, R; How Communists came to power in Kerala, The Kerala Academy of Political Science, Trivandrum, p-29.

which he can solve poverty for his existence in society. Writers and men of letters began spreading the Marxist ideas and it had a great effect in convincing the masses about Marxism. Thoppil Bhasi's "You made me Communist" (in Malayalam), O.N.V. Kurup's (he is known as 'Balamurali') poems, Vayalar Rama Varma's Songs and Kesavadev's novels represent Marxist ideas and all these writings had played a vital role in spreading Marxist ideas.

The workers of the Communist Party began to create great peasant following and moreover, their organization has always been country-based. They were working with energy and devotion for the purpose of mobilising people. "By the outbreak of war in 1939 there were communists in every rural area, in every trade union, in every student body, and at every level of the Congress organisation: They even infiltrated the social organisations such as the SNDP and the Pulaya Mahasabha"⁵⁰. The educated unemployed youth and other communist activities reach with their programme in every remote village and try to persuade them with their talks. In 1957, when the

50. Woodcock, George; op. cit, p- 245.

Communist Party came to power, a pro-congress daily newspaper, Mathrubhoomi said:- "deep-rooted in the soil of Kerala and tended by the constant care and attention of its activists is the Communist Party of Kerala. In every remote village, there are communist activists who are closest to the most down trodden of the people, and have identified themselves with these sections. In his village, he keeps daily contact with all individuals. And he takes the message of the party to every heart. To achieve his objective he devotes his self-sacrificing endeavours"⁵¹. This kind of their hard work was one of the major factors for the growth of the Communist Movement in Kerala.

Finally, they maintain and expand their links with the masses. "From trade union work to popular dramas, from the distribution of political pamphlets to the mass circulation, we use every means of speaking to the people and, as best we can, carrying back the reactions and experiences of the people to the party leadership itself"⁵².

51. Mathrubhoomi, quoted by R. Ramakrishnan Nair, op. cit, p- 26-27.

52. Gopalan, A.K; Kerala past and present, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1959, p-73.

CHAPTER - II

INITIAL PHASES OF EDUCATIONAL GROWTH:

Modern education in Kerala has offered perils and promise at the same time. Majority people in Kerala are literates but all parts of Kerala do not have the same rate of literacy. Comparatively, some places in Kerala are still very much backward in education. In Malabar, a part of Kerala state, the educational standards are far below those of southern Kerala and this is clear from the fact that only a small number of students have been attending institutions of higher education. Moreover, literacy rate among women is less in Malabar compared to that of Travancore and Cochin. Malabar always remained backward in education, partly because of the relative inactivity of the British in providing state education and partly, because of the cultural backwardness of the local 'Moplah' population, particularly the Muslim women. As a whole, Kerala has got a good percentage of literacy among all states in India. This will be very clear from a study of the account of the population and percentage of literacy as it is given below.

Table - VI

Total population of Kerala in 1957

Population - 13549118

Literates in Kerala in 1957

Persons	Males	Females
5538975	3365778	2173197

53. Source:- India, 1957, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, The Publications Division, Delhi-8, 1957, p-84.

Table - VII

Percentage of literacy in Kerala in 1957

Persons	Males	Females
40.88	50.37	31.65

54. Source:- Ibid.

Historical sources witness that Kerala did not remain backward in education even in the past and, it is a fact that there was a high level of literacy even during the Sangam epoch⁵⁵. The Sangam works make clear that Panas,

55. Pillai, Elankulam Kunjan; Studies in Kerala History, National Book Stall, Kottayam, 1970, p-267.

Vedas etc. were prescribed as the courses for higher education. Women education was encouraged and the result was that a good number of women could develop their talent. The inscriptions and the works of Sangam age testify the names of fifteen poetesses who had contributed much to the cultural life of the Sangam age.⁵⁶

Pallikkudams or Kudipallikkudams as formal indigenous schools were common in Kerala and Tamil Nadu till recently and the teachers taught in these schools were known as aacaan, vaattiyaar etc. Ancient and medieval literature refer to Palli in the sense of a lower common school. A lot of references can be found regarding the sound of learning kanakku and kanakkayar or the primary school teacher. "Village without a kanakkayar is useless"⁵⁷. This clearly shows that even in the past people of Kerala gave much importance for the education of their children.

56. Ibid.

57. Dr. Manuel, Vedamani, N; Studies in the Cultural History of Education in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, University Department of Education, Trivandurm, 1973, p-32.

Five was regarded as the conventional age for admitting children to school. These Pallis were day schools. Medieval literature and inscriptions mention the term kidais as centres of Brahmanical learning and vedas were taught in these institutions. It seems that scheduled castes were not allowed to study in these institutions.

Generally, temples became the centres of all 'cultural activities after the 8th century, and educational institutions formed part of temple establishments⁵⁸. Sources available witness that there were schools and colleges in all important temples of Kerala. It is also said that in some places there were post graduate institutions to impart higher education in special subjects. Chalas⁵⁹ or Salas were the names given to these institutions. Even now there are places like chala, pazhayasala, vilapilsala, chalappuram, valiasala, aryasala etc.⁶⁰.

58. Pillai, Elam Kulam Kunjan; op. cit, p-267.

59. T.A. Gopinatha Rao and S. Desivinayagam Pillai explain the word chalai "as a charitable institution where Brahmins are regularly fed". In Tamil Nad the word may denote a feeding house. But in Kerala agrasala is used in that sense and sala is a common word for kalasala (college) and Padhasala (school) in ancient Malayalam.

60. Most of these are the names of places in Trivandrum. Elam Kunjan Pillai concludes that these names might have been derived from the salas which had been in existence in the early centuries of Kollam era.

Saalai is used in Tamil to denote any higher educational centre. The early epics mention the term saalais in the sense of Budhist and Jain centres of higher learning. Very frequently, the term saalai was used in the sense of Brahmanical centres of learning. It is said that a Paandya king had instituted a number of yaaga saalais. Cilappadigaaram mentions the term oottin saalai (they were halls of chanting) at Madurai.⁶¹ Historical sources testify that some Jain schools were instituted for women education. Very important early epics like Cilappadigaaram, Manimeekalai, Nilakeesi and Kundalakeesi mention the contribution of Budhist and Jain schools for the cause of women education both in Kerala and some places in Tamil Nadu.

Pattar or pattas were the professors of the salas. Pattathanam or professorship was regarded as the highest honour of the day and this honour was conferred only on Nambudiri scholars who proved their capacity in learned debates. The temple was the forum for the debate and

61. Dr. Manuel, Vedamani, N; op. cit, p-62.

from Sources available⁶² it can be understood that they were expert swordsmen also. In the words of K.P. Padmanabha Menon:- "It will be remembered that the patron saint of the Nambudiris, Parasu Rama, was himself a Brahmin of the militant type. That the study of vedas and the practice of religious austerities are not incompatible with the profession of arms is clearly indicated by the fact that the instructors in arms of both the Cochin and Travancore Rajas are Brahmins of the vedic class, and these enjoy to the present day the emoluments and privileges attached to their office, though the Rajas have left off the exhilarating study of the use of weapons. In Cochin, the office is hereditary in the family of peramangalath Nambudiri who is officially styled Peram Patta Panikkar It is said that, in former times, every Peram Patta Panikkar had to vindicate his title to his office by having an open fight, sword in hand, with a Royal Tiger"⁶³.

Education in the past was the privileged possession of the Higher Castes. The sources available witness that

62. Unniyachchi Charitam describes that they were expert swordsmen also.

63. Menon, Padmanabha, K.P; History of Kerala, Vol. III, Ernakulam, P-59, (4 vols. 1924-1937.).

the people belonging to low castes did not have access to these educational institutions⁶⁴. Those who got education were highly respected people of society.

There had prevailed, in the British Kerala, a system of education which instituted Sanskrit Academies for Brahmin boys and kalaris or gymnasia for the young men and women of Nair caste. The girls of Nair caste not only had the privilege of learning and practising military arts but they had the advantage of receiving a general education which helped them to be the students in the first English schools.

Duarte Barbosa admired, when he visited the Malabar Coast, in the 16th century, the way in which the Nairs had been trained in the Kalaris in their early youth. The Nairs sent their children to school at the age of seven to learn all manner of feats of agility and gymnastics for the purpose of warfare. The young Nairs learnt Malayalam, Sanskrit and Tamil in those schools which were attached

64. Church, Society and State in Kerala (Papers and findings of the Alwaye consultation, October 1959), The Christian Institute for the Study of religion and Society, Bangalore, 1960, p-7.

to the 'Kalaris' and the study of the great Hindu epics and of other classical literature was encouraged in those schools. Women had an equal share in education even in the past.

The advent of the Europeans marked a turning point in the history of education in Kerala in the sense that modern liberal education was started in the state by the Christian Missionaries of Europe⁶⁵. In the early stage government had little to do with the conduct of schools and one of the motives behind the establishment of educational institutions by the Christian missionaries was the propagation of religion. They began founding educational institutions sometimes with the support of the rulers of Kerala. W.T. Ringletanbe, a German, who arrived in Trivandrum in 1806 with a land grant given by the Rani Gouri Rakshmi Bai-founded a school in order to give elementary education to poor children irrespective of caste, religion and race. Many of the missionaries who had arrived in Kerala followed his example and soon afterwards, the two native rulers of Kerala, with the

65. Kerala Education Bill, Facts and Fancies, Department of Public Relations, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1957, p-10.

help of the British resident Colonel Munro, entered directly into the field of education.⁶⁶

The next stage in the development of liberal education was marked by the eagerness of government in granting aid to schools run by private agencies including missionaries. In the mean time, Government also established and maintained schools as model educational institutions.

The next stage in the process of educational development in Kerala was the establishment of a regular grant-in-aid system and with the emergence of this new scheme, a good number of private agencies came forward to set up schools. In the course of time, the number of schools by the Private Agencies increased and under such circumstances Government sought immediate steps for standardising courses of studies and insisted on matters pertaining to the appointments and qualifications of teachers, etc. The system of giving grants differed from place to place and in Malabar, the system of lump sum grant ~~xx~~ had prevailed till recently and in Cochin,

66. Woodcock, George; ~~xxxx~~ op. cit, p-224.

salary grant and maintenance grant etc. were instituted ^{instead} of lump sum grant scheme. More or less the same scheme had prevailed in Travancore also and this kind of governmental aid which was being extended to schools under private Agencies created three different traditions in the field of education under the private sector.

The English schools played a very prominent role in the development of higher education in the state and the English Elementary school in Trivandrum, which was founded by the Maharaja Swathi Thirunal in 1834 became the University College later on. The school which was established by the ruler of Cochin in Erⁿakulam in 1845 became the Maharaja's College.

Communities like Ezhavas and Nadars etc. were still educationally backward. The attempts made by Sri Narayana Guru⁶⁷, a social and a religious reformer, for the upliftment of the Ezhavas are noteworthy. Though the Travancore Ezhava Sabha, an organization founded for the uplift of the

67. Sri Narayana Guru: A social and a religious reformer, was born in 1856 in the village of Champazhanthi, not far to the north of Trivandrum. Early in life he decided to adopt the way of the renunciate and work for the spiritual and social regeneration of his people - the Ezhavas.

Ezhavas under the leadership of Dr. Palpu, had already prevailed in 1896 it could not be successful owing to the fact that its principles and arguments appealed only to the small educated upper layer of the Ezhavas. Only when Dr. Palpu⁶⁸ came into association with Sri Narayana and with Kumaranasan⁶⁹, a popular Malayalam poet, he felt the need for an effective caste organization for the uplift of the Ezhavas. Dr. Palpu's association with these two eminent people led to the creation of Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam in 1903 and this organization soon became known as S.N.D.P. It spread all over Kerala uniting Ezhavas from the North of Malabar to Trivandrum in the South. Since this Organization aimed at raising the social level of the Ezhavas, it gave main stress on education and, it began establishing its own system of schools and colleges.

The other important caste groups like Nairs began setting up their own schools and colleges and in 1914 the Nair Service Society came into being under the leadership of Mannath Padmanabhan. The Nair Service Society,

68. Dr. Palpu was the leader of Travancore Ezhava Sabha which had been founded in 1896.

69. Kumaranasan was a popular Malayalam poet who contributed much to the modern Malayalam literature, Fallen Flower ("Veena Poovu") is one of his famous works.

like the S.N.D.P, began establishing its own schools and colleges and the educational activities of S.N.D.P. and N.S.S, finally, resulted in strengthening many Hindu sponsored educational institutions.

In the course of time, education became widespread and it reached even to the people belonging to rural areas. Even the poor people began sending their children to schools and colleges and it led to the increase in the number of graduates coming out of the Universities every year. The high percentage of literacy coupled with mass unemployment throws away the expectations of educated youth. "Kerala, like many other parts of the world, is undergoing an education explosion"⁷⁰.

Kerala has a high percentage of literacy partly because of the humanitarian and social activities done by the private management and partly because of the encouragement extended by the government. But, in the course of time, corruption entered into the administration of the schools under the Private Management. They began

70. Woodcock, George; op. cit, p-282.

running the schools with business motive⁷¹. "Appointments to schools became a sort of an auction, the job going to the highest bidder"⁷². The sources available witness that even the persons without proper qualifications were appointed provided they were able to satisfy the monetary demands of the managers.⁷³

By this time (57-59) there were about 10000 schools in the state and out of them, as many as 6000 to 7000 were under Private Management⁷⁴. Of these Private Schools, 2200 were under the Church and rest of them were under social organisations and Private individuals⁷⁵. The evils and corruption which had crept into all these institutions were comparatively similar to each other.

In Malabar, which is, at present, a part of Kerala, most of the private schools belonged to private individuals and they were, mostly, motivated by business interest. The Managers of these schools could appropriate for themselves a considerable sum out of the lump sum grant

71. Malaviya, H.D; Kerala - A Report to the Nation, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1959, p-23.

72. Ibid, p-24.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid, p-23.

75. Private individuals here means that the schools belonged to the individuals who did not become a part of the church organisation, N.S.S. or S.N.D.P.

given by the government by paying only a pittance to the teachers⁷⁶. It is also said that the Managers tried to satisfy the officials who went about for annual inspection.⁷⁷ They used to get the lump sum grant on the basis of the report submitted to the government by these school inspectors.

In the Cochin area, the behaviour of the managers was intolerable and they, after taking their own share, claimed a small portion of money, for the maintenance of the school from the amount which the Manager wanted to pay to the teacher every month⁷⁸.

The service conditions of the teachers were horrible in the sense that they had no security of service, no provident fund benefit, etc. A teacher could be dismissed on the flimsiest of grounds even without giving any notice to him in advance⁷⁹. The Teachers were paid out of the government grants-in-aid given to the managements and the government did not have any voice either

76. Kerala Education Bill, Facts and Fancies, op. cit, p-10.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid, p-11.

79. Malaviya, H.D; -----, op. cit, p-24.

in their appointment or in their service conditions.

The Government of Kerala received a good number of cases from the teachers working under private management complaining that the managers had not paid the full amount of salary due to them. It has been the habit of many of the Managers to receive illegal gratification from those candidates appointed by them⁸⁰. They have been claiming that there is nothing wrong with such practice and this practice of the Private Managements has been, very systematically, keeping out of employment a good number of educated youth having low income.

The following table will be useful for an understanding of the rate of literacy the state had prior to the coming of this ministry to power:-

80. Kerala Education Bill, Facts and Fancies, op. cit,
p-13.

Table - VIII

Type of Institution	No. of institution	No. of pupils		No. of teachers	
		Boys	Girls	Men	Women
Total	6245	1069694	923393	31307	19789
High/Higher Secondary	614	202312	160240	10557	5716
Middle/Senior Basic	922	107018	76422	4815	2447
Primary/Junior Basic	4267	745433	675319	15177	11328
Nursery	10	473	492	Nil	49
Schools for professional education	341	10737	9264	628	184
Schools for special education	91	3721	1656	130	64

81. Source:- Government of Kerala, Second Five Year Plan, Kerala, S.G.P. Govt. Press, Trivandrum, 1958.

School Education in Malabar Region, 1955 - 56.

Table - IX

Type of Institution	No. of Institution	No. of Pupils		No. of Teachers	
		Boys	Girls	Men	Women
Total	4392	446498	332826	20156	8298
High Schools	130	47861	22317	2114	852
Senior Basic	84	16589	10690	749	344
Middle	214	37506	28595	1658	1096
Junior Basic/ Basic	340	29488	23712	1253	548
Primary	3286	298440	244828	14377	5440
Nursery	2	62	58	5	18
Schools for Professional education	31	3476	1673	Nil	Nil
Schools for special education	305	13076	953	Nil	Nil

82. Source:- Government of Kerala, Second Five Year Plan Kerala
S.G.P. Govt., Press, Trivandrum, 1958.

Under such circumstances an educational legislation to minimise these corruptions and safeguard the interests of teachers working under Private Management without affecting the educational institutions run by the minorities became a necessity. The corruptions which had crept into the administration of the schools under Private Management gave an opportunity for the communist Party in 1957 to introduce an Education Bill for the political indoctrination of education in the name of safeguarding the democratic rights of teachers working under Private Management.

CHAPTER - III

EDUCATIONAL LEGISLATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS:

The election manifesto of the Communist Party appealed to the voters that the main programme of the Communist Party was to develop Kerala into a democratic and prosperous state. The last section of the manifesto outlined detailed programmes of economic, social and administrative reforms. The programme of the re-organisation of the entire educational system and the system of government subsidies to schools was one of the items included in the election manifesto.⁸³ They had pre-planned the way in which education in the state was to be re-organised after coming to power. When they came to power, election promises were there in their minds. Prof. Joseph Mundassery was made the Minister for Education and he had 27 years of teaching experience in a Catholic College at Trichur. Moreover, the Minister had the privilege of teaching E.M.S. Nambudiripad in his intermediate classes at St. Thomas College. There were a number of his students in the state assembly both in the Communist and the

83. Fic, Victor, M; op. cit; p-69.

opposition benches. The Finance Minister C. Achuta Menon was one among them. Prof. Mundassery had been a participant in the teachers movement of the State for more than 25 (twenty five) years. Besides his experience as a teacher, Mundassery was also a legislator of ten years standing. He was a member of the Cochin Assembly when it was formed in 1948, and was also consequently a member of the State Assembly of the integrated Travancore - Cochin State. Moreover, he is a classmate of Panampally Govinda Menon, who got him to stand on Congress ticket for the Cochin Assembly. Since he could not agree with the ways of Kerala Congress Assembly Party, he resigned his seat later on and in 1954, he was elected as an independent with communist support.

The Kerala Education Bil was introduced in July 7, 1957 and later, on the basis of the report of the selected committee, several concessions were made to the opposition points of view. The Bill was passed by the legislative assembly on the 2nd September, 1957.⁸⁴

84. Kerala Education Bill, Facts and Fancies, op. cit.

The Kerala Education Bill, 1957 consists of three parts and thirty six (36) sections. Part I is concerned with the General aspects of Education such as establishment and recognition of schools, the problem of constituting State Education Advisory Board, and the salary and service conditions of teachers etc., etc. Part II deals with the matters pertaining to the compulsory system of education, Local Education Committee and penalty for employment of children or interference with their attendance at school. Part III consists of miscellaneous aspects and it is concerned with indemnity, delegation of powers and the rule making powers of the government.

Clause 1 and 2 are concerned with the title, extent and commencement of this Bill and clause 3 deals with the establishment and recognition of schools. It is stated that the "Government may regulate the primary and other stages of education and courses of instructions in government and private schools"⁸⁵. The fact was that the

85. The Kerala Education Bill, 1957, The Government Press, Trivandrum, 1958, p-2.

government wanted to bring about a uniformity in the educational system in the state and such a uniformity was sought to be realized not only in the course of studies pursued but in the service conditions and salaries of teachers also. It is certain that this provision was added to this Bill because it has been the practice of many of the private schools under christian management to impart religious education. The christian management felt that this Bill made it impossible for christian schools "to carry on as such and strive to relise their distinctive moral and spiritual ideals"⁸⁶. The Christian authorities came to the conclusion that the Bill was nothing but an attempt to prevent "the church and other voluntary agencies from running educational institutions with state aid under mutually agreed conditions"⁸⁷. This ~~xxxx~~ clearly shows that one of the political motivations of the Communist Government was to change the courses of instruction into a new line.

86. Church, Society and State in Kerala, op. cit, p-30

87. Ibid, p-31.

The Private Management rendered their service in spreading education in Kerala but at the same time, corruption, bribery, communalism, and religious differences had crept into the Private Management in the course of time. The Private Management made it a practice of appointing teachers in their schools by receiving a huge sum of money which they call 'donation'. Academic merit was not the only criteria of getting a job in these schools and in the schools managed by the syrian christian authorities only the syrian christians had a better chance of getting a job or admission than the christians belonging to other communities. Even among syrian christians, differences had existed between Jacobites, Marthomites and Catholics. The schools managed by the Jacobites or Marthomites, the preference was given to Jacobites or Marthomites and not to Catholics. The same was in the case of the schools under Catholics also. In the schools and colleges managed by the S.N.D.P., the Hindu Ezhavas had a far better scope and in the educational institutions managed by the Nair Service Society, the Nairs had a good chance. At the same time, if one was ready to give a huge sum of money, the

communal and religious considerations were not regarded as very important. One of the results of all these things was that the poor people who could not pay a huge sum of amount as donation had to remain unemployed.

The teachers did not get adequate salary and they had to sign for more and receive less. They did not enjoy pensions but their friends in the Government schools had the privilege of pensions and security of service which a teacher in a private school could never expect.

The Managers⁸⁸ went after riches not in the absurd form of a heap of perishable goods but in the very convenient and mobile form of money. In the course of time, the possession of wealth became an end itself and this transformation of the attitude of the managers was a turning point in the educational field. These periods witnessed the subjection of educational talent of the teachers for money making purposes.

This Bill became "historical^{ly} as a mode of transition"⁸⁹.

In other words, the introduction of the Bill became really

88. Managers here means the Managers of the schools under Private Management.

89. The transition from feudalism to capitalism - A symposium, Fore Publications, London, 1954, p-5.

revolutionary transformation of education in the sense that it put forward the rules and regulations which the history of Kerala did not experience by that time. Moreover, the Bill wanted to reduce the control of the Private Sector over education and to bring about uniformity in the educational system.

Many rulers of the state even before independence had made a good deal of attempts in eliminating these evil practices and in bringing about the departmental control over the powers of the Private Management. In 1817, Her Highness Parvathi Bai of Travancore issued rescripts stating that the entire cost of education of its people should be undertaken by the state and even the schools under private management should also be supervised by the state. But, it was only in 1910 that the departmental control over the powers of the management was introduced and five years later, the old policy of encouraging private schools without much departmental control and supervision was restored.

In 1933, an Educational Reforms Committee was established and it came to the conclusion that, "such a

policy would largely increase the cost of education, would do serious damage to long standing vested interests and would not necessarily ensure better and efficient education"⁹⁰. Again in 1946, the Government of Travancore had come forward with educational legislation but due to the opposition of the church, this educational legislation did not deliver any worthwhile results. The next attempt in this field was made by the E.M.S. Nambudiripad's ministry of 1957.

Clause 4 of the Kerala Education Bill gave the government the power of establishing state education advisory board in order to advise the government on matters pertaining to educational policy and administration of the Department of Education and this Board was supposed to consist of a Chairman and not more than fifteen members including the Chairman. The Director of Technical Education and the Director of Health Services, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kerala and the Director of Public Instruction were expected to be ex-officio members of the Board

90. Zachariah, E.K; Contribution of the Church to the progress of Education in Kerala, Unpublished Thesis, 1960, p-49.

and it was also stated that the other members of the Board would be appointed by the Government. As far as the appointment of non-official members of this Board was concerned, the government would select those persons who were reputed educationists or who had rendered great service to education. One of the aims in constituting this Board was to guide the government in framing educational policies.

Clause 7 deals with the Managers⁹¹ of the private schools and it was stated that "An educational agency⁹² may appoint any person to be the manager of an aided school under this Act, subject to the approval of such officer as may be authorised by the government in this behalf"⁹³. The Manager was to be responsible for the management of the school according to the provisions of this Act and it was also his responsibility to maintain the properties of the

91. Various kinds of management existed under Private sector. In some cases, schools belonged to certain individuals and the management of the school or schools was entrusted with those individuals. In some other cases, schools belonged to certain institutions like church, N.S.S., S.N.D.P. etc. and the management of such schools was with the institutions. In other words, it can be called collective management.

92. "Educational Agency" means any person or body of persons permitted to establish and maintain any private school under this Act. "Aided school" means a private school which is recognised by and is receiving aid from the Government.

93. The Kerala Education Bill, 1957, op. cit, p-4.

school in a proper way. Moreover, the Manager was expected to maintain records and accounts of the school and afford all assistance and facilities necessary for the inspection of the school by an officer authorised by the Government in this behalf. If the Manager wanted to close down any school, it could be done only by giving one year's notice to the officer authorised by the government for this purpose. One of the implications of this provision was that the government wanted to have a Departmental control over the powers of the Private Management.

The Bill stipulated that the Government would, either directly or indirectly or through the Headmaster of the school, pay the salary of all teachers in aided schools and it could be applicable to the non-teaching staff also. It was also stated that the Manager would be given a maintenance grant by the Government at such rates as might be prescribed and grants-in-aid would be given to an aided school for the purchase, improvement and repairs of any land, building or equipment of this school. It was stated under clause 10 that the government might prescribe the

qualifications of teachers to be appointed both in government and private schools. This idea of direct payment of salaries to teachers working in Private schools was most welcomed by the teaching profession and by some of the citizens of the state and this method raised the self respect of the teacher to a very large extent.

According^{to} clause 11, the Public Service Commission would select candidates for appointment as teachers both in government and aided schools and a state Register of such qualified teachers would be kept for the information of management and government. The person whose name does not appear within the perview of this list would not be appointed in any case. Selection of candidates would be made for each district separately and the list of such selected candidates would be published in the Gazette. The conditions of service relating to scales of pay, pension, provident fund, insurance and age of retirement applicable to teachers of government schools should apply to all teachers of aided schools. It was very specifically stated that a teacher of an aided school should not be dismissed, removed, reduced in

rank or suspended by the manager without obtaining the sanction of the officer authorised by the Government for this purpose.

Clause 14 gave the government legal justification for the take over the management of any aided school at any time incase the manager of an aided school appeared to be very negligent in performing the duties placed on him by this Act but the government could take over management of the school for a period not exceeding five years. In such cases, the government would be ready to pay the persons affected such rent as might be prescribed by the District Collector. The Government under clause 15, had power to take over any category of schools and this clause mentions that it would be done only in the interests of standardising general education in the state or for ~~px~~ improving the level of literacy in any area or for more effectively managing the aided educational institutions in any area or for bringing education of any category under their direct control in the interests of public good. The government would be ready to pay compensation on the basis of the market value.

Regarding this clause, doubt may arise whether they intended the nationalisation of education by doing so and Prof. Joseph Mundassery re-affirmed that it was not the policy of the government, as far as the present Bill was concerned, to nationalise education. The provision of giving power to the government to take over the private schools affects the minority rights mentioned in clause (i) of Article 30 of the Indian Constitution which guarantees protection of all religious and linguistic minorities, the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. Without taking over of a particular private school, the government could improve the conditions of a school if it wanted to do so. At the same time, clause 3 states that the government might permit any person or body of persons to establish and maintain aided schools or recognise any school established and maintained by any person or body of persons. This itself arouses doubts as to the real motivations of the government behind these two provisions.

With a view to associating people with the administration of education and preserving and stimulating local

interest in educational affairs, the Bill gave power to the government, by notification in the Gazette, to establish Local Educational Authorities. The framers of the Bill included this provision for the purpose of giving more powers and responsibilities to the Divisional Education Officers and to introduce decentralisation of powers in the field of education. One of the aims of this provision was to bring about a situation in which teachers, the representatives of those people having interest in education and the representatives of the people work together in cooperation with the District Inspector of schools. In the course of time, the government expected that the representatives of the people would be able to perform the needs of the local people very effectively by working in close co-operation with these officers. The power of administering private schools was also entrusted with this Local Education Authority. One of the functions of this Local Educational Authority was to prepare each year schemes ~~in the~~ for the development of education on the basis of the assessment being made regarding the educational needs of the local

area and the Local Authority was expected to submit a report of their assessment and schemes to the Government. Supervising the matters pertaining to the implementation of the scheme of nonn-day feeding of school children and encouragement of conferences and exhibitions also came within the jurisdiction of this Local Educational Authority.

It was specified under clause 20 that \neq no fee would be payable by any pupil in the primary classes both in government and private schools. Clause 23 states that the government would provide for free and compulsory education of children, upto the age of 14, throughout the state but it would be in force only within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Act. Discussing this provision of the Bill in the Legislative Assembly, one of the prominent Congress M.L.As said; "It is a serious matter of our concern to think whether the responsibility of educating children is entrusted with the state or with the parents. I am of the firm belief that the responsibility of imparting education of children aging between 5 and 14 is entrusted with the parents"⁹⁴.

94. Proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, (spoken by Shri Joseph Chazhikkadu), First Session (Third meeting) Vol. I, Official Report No. 19, S.G.P. Govt. Press Trivandurm, 1958, p-1965.

According to clause 24, the Government would constitute Local Education Committee and one of the aims of which was to implement the provisions of this Act in regard to attendance at schools. This Local Committee might delegate some of its powers and duties to any sub-committee or member. It was stated under clause 26 that 'in any area of compulsion', the guardian of every child was expected to send his ward to school either run by government or private agencies and once a child was sent to school, the child, under this Act, would be forced to complete the full course of primary education or to attend school till the age of fourteen. Clause 28 gave warning to the guardian that in case he failed in discharging this responsibility and social necessity of sending his child to school and instead, the guardian utilised his ward's time in connection with any employment or otherwise, the Local Education Committee, under this Act, was authorised to warn him in writing that within one week of the receipt of the warning he should cause the child to attend school or stop utilizing the child's services. In case a guardian failed in causing his child to sending school or interfering with

the attendance of a child, even after the guardian had been warned as aforesaid, the Local Education Committee or any member authorised by the Committee would file a complaint, against such guardian, with the Magistrate having local jurisdiction. After a thorough investigation of the matter, the Magistrate would pass an order directing the guardian to cause the child concerned to attend school regularly or to refrain from interfering with the attendance of the child. If the guardian failed to comply with such order, the Magistrate would, on conviction, be liable to fine not exceeding five rupees for the first offence and twenty rupees for every subsequent offence. It was also stated under Article 30 that providing noon-day meals, clothing, books, and writing materials etc for poor students free of cost, was regarded as the duty of the Government.

Part III of the Kerala Education Bill is concerned with miscellaneous aspects. Clause 32 states that no suit, prosecution or other legal proceedings could be taken against the government or any authority or any officer for anything done in the course of carrying out the provisions of this

Act and clause 36 gave ample power to the Government to make rules for the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of this Act. The Bill specified that the administration of education under private management could be carried on by the management but inspection, control and supervision of their schools would be done only by the Education Department. "In a Democracy, the ideal is that the administration of education should be a non-partisan public affair done with the co-operation of the community with funds provided by the government, that is to say public funds. In educational policy, therefore, the public should have a say"⁹⁵.

The Government of Kerala published Kerala Education Bill on 7th July 1957 and it was referred to the Select Committee on 20th July, 1957. The Select Committee made certain important amendments to the Bill and the Committee held eleven sittings of which three were at Alwaye and the rest at Trivandrum. The three sittings at Trivandrum were entirely devoted to the collecting of evidence from representatives of Educational Organisations and individuals who were experts in the field of education. The Legislative Assembly on a

motion extended the time for the making of the report till the 24th August, 1957 and the Kerala Education Bill as reported by the Select Committee was taken into consideration by the Assembly on the 27th August, 1957.

There was provision in the Kerala Education Bill that if any of the provisions of this Act was violated by the Managers of the private schools, strict legal action would be taken against them. The Select Committee had slightly amended this aspect of the Bill, Secondly, after deciding the number of teachers required for government as well as private Schools for one academic year, the Public Service Commission might publish a list of such candidates. The Managers of the private schools might appoint any candidates they liked out of the list published by the Public Service Commission and the rest of the candidates who had not got appointment in the schools under Private Management, might get jobs in government schools. If this policy was followed, there would be little chance of complaints being made against the government and this was one of the important amendments being made by the Select Committee. It was also stated that

those teachers who would be appointed in the Private Schools would be enjoying the same privileges, service conditions and facilities as enjoyed by the teachers in government schools.

The Select Committee concluded that the Kerala Education Bill, 1957 should not, in any way affect the rights of the minorities under the articles of the Constitution and hence, this Education Act should not apply to schools other than government schools, and those aided by the government. The Church in Kerala accused the government of making this Bill which, according to them, was a planned attempt to drive away the private managements from the field of education and they argued that it was contrary to the rights of the minorities as guaranteed by article 30, of the Constitution.

The Bill had been reserved by the governor of Kerala under Article 200 of the Constitution of India for the President's assent to the Bill. While the State Government was waiting its approval by the President of India, an official delegation of the anti-Bill agitation reached New Delhi and their argument was that the Bill was anti-Constitutional. Attempts were made to convince the Central Government their plea that this Bill was purely

anti-constitutional.

Since doubts had arisen with regards to the validity and constitutionality of the Bill, the President of India, on 15th March, 1958, in exercise of the power conferred on him by clause (1) of Article 143 of the Constitution, raised the following four questions and they had been referred to the Supreme Court for a thorough investigation of the provisions of the Bill. The President raised the following four questions:-^s "(1) Does sub-clause (5) of the clause 3 of the Kerala Education Bill read with clause 36 there of or any of the provisions of the said sub-clause offend Article 14 of the Constitution namely the rule of law and equal protection of all. (2) Do sub-clause (5) of clause 3, sub-clause (3) of clause 8 and clause 9 to 13 of Kerala Education Bill or any provisions thereof offend clause (1) of Article 30 of the Constitution which guarantees protection of all religious and linguistic minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. (3) Does clause 15 of the Kerala Education Bill or any provisions thereof offend Article 14 of equal protection mentioned above. The clause 15 of the Bill makes provision for the acquisition of any

school under private management. (4) Does clause 33 of the Bill offend Article 226 of the Constitution. Clause 33 restricts the power of the Court of any injunction in order to restrain any proceedings taken against this Act. Article 226 of the Constitution confers extensive jurisdiction and power on the High Courts in the States"⁹⁶. The Supreme Court ruled that clause 33 is subject to Article 226 of the Constitution and it pointed out that the right to administer schools does not mean the right to administer them inefficiently. Since the state aid was given to them, the state should have statutory rights to control and supervise the schools under Private Management. The President of India gave his assent to the Bill and it became an Act in February 1959.

The Kerala Education Bill became a subject of much heated discussion all over the state and some people began criticising the Bill and some others were in favour of it. L.M. Pylee, the former Education Minister, evaluated the Bill as a "blatent manifestation of totalitarianism", and the KPCD and the Legislative Congress Party condemned it

96. Comments of the President of India, quoted by Joseph, S.C; op. cit, p-159.

as "ill-conceived, ill-drafted and totalitarian in its approach". Homa, a journalist and biographer, comments the Bill as follows:- "It is a camouflaged attempt to introduce a complete course of Marxian education to the People as also to oust the Christians from the Education field. Here, it may be said that Christian education institutions from time immemorial had played a vital part in providing literacy to the people of the state. It would be an assault on the fundamental rights of the citizens as also on the freedom of religion, guaranteed by the Constitution. The grand idea of the Communist Government is to deprive the youth of the country a free education- free from dialectical materialism"⁹⁷. The Statesman commented the Bill as follows:- "What is dangerous is the prospect that Government might interfere with the teaching and re-organization of schools on ideological grounds. Should that ever be the Government of Kerala's intention, the Education Bill gives it ample power to regulate the course

97. Homa, Thoughts for Lowbrows", The Hindustan Standard, 11th July, 1957. "Homa" is the pen name of Shri K.P. Thomas of Kottayam.

of instruction in aided schools of all categories (and even take them over), determine who will be appointed as teachers"⁹⁸.

Prof. Joseph Mundassery said:- "The Bill~~was~~ simply and purely a piece of protective legislation intended to secure and safeguard the interests of teachers employed in schools under Private Management in Kerala"⁹⁹. He also said that one of the main objectives of the Bill was to protect the democratic rights of the teachers and the teachers should not fully depend on the private management. At the same time, there were people who vehemently criticised the Bill and some of them called this Bill as a "revenge" taken by the communist regime against the Private Agencies. While discussing the Bill in the Legislative Assembly, Shri C.H. Muhammad Koya said:- "If there is any model in this Bill, it is a Nazi Model. The method of education adopted by Hitler to rule Germany according to his whims and fancies had been copied by Prof. Joseph Mundassery"¹⁰⁰.

98. The Statesman - 11th July, 1957.

99. Prof. Joseph Mundassery, Education Minister's Elucidation of the Bill, 11th July, 1957, quoted in Kerala Education Bill, Facts and Fancies, op. cit, p-4.

100. Proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, (spoken by Shri C.H. Muhammad Koya), First Session (Third meeting) Vol. I, Official Report No. 19, The Govt. Press; Trivandrum, 1958, p-1660.

The fact that the programme of the re-organisation of the entire educational system was pre-planned by the Communist Party even before coming to power can be understood from the Election Manifesto of the Party itself. The Communist Party had its own political aims behind this Bill. From the Bill itself it can be understood that the political indoctrination of education was one of its motives. It is stated in the Bill that, "Government may regulate the primary and other stages of education and courses of instructions in government and private schools". If the government wanted only to improve the conditions of teachers in Private Schools, it could have been done without regulating the courses of instructions. It is a question of doubt and further deep investigation on the motives behind the interests of the government in regulating the primary and other stages of education and courses of instructions. In the educational institutions run by the Hindus, Christians, and Muslims, religious education was also imparted to their own students. The Communist Party which regards 'religion as the opium of the masses' had pre-planned of introducing communist literature into schools and colleges by replacing the traditional education.

Without taking over of a Private School, the government could improve the conditions of a school if it wanted to do so. To be more clear, as this provision indicates, one of the aims of the government was to nationalise education. At the same time, clause 3 of the Kerala Education Bill states that the government might permit any person or body of persons to establish and maintain aided schools or recognise any school established and maintained by any person or body of persons. This itself arouses doubts as to the real motivations of the government behind these two provisions.

There were so many reasons behind the intention of the government in re-organising education. One of its aims was to turn education into political indoctrination. On November 21, 1957 the government issued order appointing various committees to prepare the syllabus and text-books for primary classes. The text-books published by the Kerala Government contained communist versions about China and Russia. Lessons on China and Russia were so included as to give the students a high opinion about them. Materials from communist propaganda pamphlets had been copied into the text Books¹⁰¹.

101. Pillai, Kainikkara Padmanabha; The Red Interlude in Kerala, The K.P.C.C., Trivandrum, 1959, p-119.

The Secretary of the Kerala Students' Union, in a statement on July 12, 1959 said that the educational policy of the Communist Government had "gone to the extent of preparing Russian model text-books, and though this could be seen in all the text-books for standards 5 to 11, it was most evident in the text-book on social studies for standard 11. We wish to learn equally truthfully about Russia and America. When we learn about the Volga Dam, we want also to learn about the suspension bridge in Washington. When reading about the Negroes of America, we want also to know about the prisoners in Siberian concentration camps If the text-book for standard 11 is not re-written, and if the achievements of India are not correctly evaluated, we shall be compelled to boycott it"¹⁰².

"in Chapter X, Resurgence of Asia and Africa, in social studies for standard VIII, appear the following statements: "The internal history of India is hidden by an iron curtain". "There appears to be nothing remarkable except the foreign policy of India".¹⁰³

102. Kaumudi, July 13, 1958.

103. Pillai, Kainikkara Padmanabha; Op. cit, p-122.

The text-books contained a detailed explanation of the revolutions in France, America, Russian, China and ~~India~~ India. The Post-Revolution progress of Russia and China were described with gusto. There were eloquent compliments to the Russian Five Year Plans and her achievements in Science, Economy and Armaments. Even the story of how Russia astonished the world in 1957 by sending up satellites was described.

In one of the text-books the Russian Revolution was described as follows:- "What a glorious revolution it was! An agrarian revolution, an industrial revolution, a psychological revolution and the magic which put these into one revolution and lifted a huge nation to a new world in a mere forty years! The first experiment in the world ~~in the world~~ at social regeneration on a scientific basis!..... By implementing a scientifically planned programme, the Soviet Government have succeeded in raising the living standard of her people to an astonishing level. The story of this period is the story of the rise from poverty to plenty and from ignorance to knowledge"¹⁰⁴.

104. Quoted by Kainikkara Padmanabha Pillai; op. cit, p-123.

The description of the Chinese revolution in the text-book ends as follows:- "China is progressing fast under the Communist Government. The Chinese people who had no peace or progress for many years have begun to enjoy peace and prosperity since 1949. Agriculture, Industry and Education are being expanded according to plan. There are now no beggars and no unemployed in China. Corruption has been eliminated from public life. Women work on the same conditions as men. All have love for country and respect for self. The standard of living has improved as a result of the universal progress"¹⁰⁵.

The Government re-organised the administration of education department also. The directorate of the Education Department was re-organised in February, 1958. In the place of one Director of Public Instruction, five places of Directors were created—a Director of Collegiate Education, a Director of Technical Education, a Director of Primary Education, a Director of Secondary Education and a Director of Text-books and Examinations. The Desabandhu,

105. Ibid.

a paper very friendly to the Government wrote: "It is said that the purpose of this re-organisation is administrative decentralisation. Though it may be possible to find some work for all these five Directors, it is not clear as to who will do the work of co-ordinating their functions and decisions. If it is that the Education Secretary or Minister will do the job, the entry of such a super-director into the scene will only further confuse matters. This re-organisation will only help to unsettle and upset things".¹⁰⁶

The Government tried to influence education from the primary level upto the university stage. Attempts were made to re-organise education academically, organisationally and administratively in conformity with communist objectives. New lessons regarding the Communist China and the Soviet Union were included in the text-books. Provisions were also included to protect the rights of the teachers working in schools under Private Management. Decentralisation of administration in the Education Department was one of their

106. Desabandhu, (A Malayalam Newspaper), February 18, 1958.

main objectives. Provision regarding the compulsory system of education for all children up to the age of 14 was one of the important features of the Kerala Education Bill. Taking over of a Private School by the Government even without giving any notice in advance to the Manager concerned affects the minority rights mentioned in the Constitution of India.

In a Democracy, 'the administration of education should be a non-partisan public affair done with the co-operation of the community with funds provided by the Government'. In other words, in educational policy the Public should have a say because education is not meant for government but for the state, i.e. people. There should not be a situation in which the state versus the individual. On the other hand, the state should provide enough opportunities for the enrichment of individual because the state exists for the individual.

CHAPTER - IV

LIBERATION STRUGGLE AND THE FALL OF E.M.S. NAMBUDIRIPAD'S MINISTRY:

When Mr. Panampally's Ministry fell in 1956, Jawaharlal Nehru thought that it was very difficult for Travancore-Cochin to be ruled by any party and hence, he made up his mind to get President's rule imposed for a year until the General Election in March 1957. The imposition of the President's rule continued till the General Election and as soon as the Communist Party came to power in 1957, they concentrated their attention on the re-organisation of education and some other essential legislations. The non Communists and the opposition parties were very keen in watching the activities of the Communist Government and the Kerala Education Bill became the main target of attack before them.

Arriving at the assumption that this Education Bill led to the mass awakening resulting in the liberation struggle which was highly responsible for the ouster of the first Communist Ministry in Kerala would be somewhat vague. This liberation struggle witnessed the biggest mass awakening in which even the common people actively participated. It is a matter to be investigated of how education which affects

only the upper layer of society awakened the consciousness of common people to come out and participate in this struggle against the government. Education Bill was the important aspect around which many other issues and problems affecting the people from hut to the mansion had helped for this mass awakening.

Moreover, the Liberation Struggle witnessed the biggest mass mobilisation Kerala ever experienced since independence. People were mobilised on different grounds. The discriminative, anti-religious and undemocratic policies of the Communist Government forced the Bishops of the Syrian, Catholic and Marthoma Churches to issue instructions to their priests for preaching against the Communist Ministry and the Latin Catholic Churches also began following the example of these churches¹⁰⁷. In the church premises, the parish priests began mobilising the people by convincing them that their religious beliefs and the interests of the Christians were in peril if the Communist Government

107. Woodcock, George; op. cit, p-269.

continued their discriminative, anti-religious and unjust policies.¹⁰⁸

Over emphasis made by the Communist Government on classification of people on the basis of caste and community for purposes of priorities in employment and admission to educational institutions and lesser importance given to the economic background of people aroused suspicion in the minds of the traditionally well off but presently declining¹⁰⁹ communities like Nairs and Brahmins etc. The organizations and people who had been in possession of the schools and colleges experienced that an ideologically orientated administration used every means to turn education into political indoctrination. They had also a "genuine fear of authoritarian manipulation of the schools (a fear strengthened by the communist plan to introduce politically acceptable text books into the public schools)"¹¹⁰.

The Land Reform Bill made the land owners feel that their income would vanish if the Bill actually came into operation and the Nairs were dissatisfied with the Communist Government mostly because of its intention of

108. For more details see Appendix - I.

109. Declining in terms of wealth.

110. Woodcock, George; op. cit, p-269.

favouring the Ezhavas. Shri Mannath Padmanabhan, a prominent Nair Leader, appealed to his community to come out and fight against the regime which purposefully acted against the interests of the Nairs. He also said that the communist government not only neglected the Nair but tried to harm the Nair by introducing so many Bills and in most of his speeches, he was attacking the communal reservation.¹¹¹

State of insecurity under the communist rule became the war cry. From the press, the pulpit and the platform, this was one of the common complaints. 'The communists are out for the kill', 'the communists are subverting the constitution', 'lawlessness and insecurity of life and property is the order in Kerala' - such was the cry rising gradually with a mass appeal not only in Kerala but in the whole of India.¹¹²

Moreover, children, women and even old people came out and participated in this Movement and tried their best

111. For more details see Appendix - II.

112. Malaviya, H.D; op. cit, p-46.

to make the Movement successful even at the cost of their lives.

113 Some accounts reveal that as soon as the communist party came to power in 1957, they established, in many areas, local communist cells¹¹⁴ which assumed quasi-governmental powers. Inter-trade union disputes was one of the causes of violence and murder and a minor terror came up in some parts of Malabar and northern Travancore¹¹⁵. The same account says that, "by the summer of 1958 many villages had lapsed into lawlessness; violence and robbery had increased dramatically, and a number of political opponents of the communists were murdered without any action being taken against their assassins"¹¹⁶.

One of the reasons for this sort of lawlessness was the police policy adopted by the Ministry. The police policy they adopted was different from that of the former days and the attempts were made to make the police the party instrument. A.K. Gopalan, a well-known Marxist leader, said that the police existed "not for suppressing the peoples' struggles,

113. George, Woodcock; op. cit, p-267.

114. For more details see Appendix - V.

115. George, Woodcock; op. cit, p-267.

116. Ibid, p-267.

but for safeguarding their rights". The Chief Minister E.M.S. Nambudiripad said the police were only the servants of the people and hence, "their attitude and behaviour towards the people should have this basic outlook". He also added that, "in all cases of worker - capitalist or peasant - landlord disputes, police intervention should only be at such a stage of the dispute when there was an actual threat to peace"¹¹⁷.

There were occasions when the government made attempts to prevent the opposition from conducting meetings and holding processions etc. Even before the Bill became Act, there were a number of demonstrations and jathas organised by the opposition. An anti-Education Bill demonstration was one such event organised by the opponents of the ministry on 26th August 1957 and Trivandrum, the capital of Kerala, witnessed, on 26th August, one of the biggest demonstrations Kerala had ever experienced since independence.¹¹⁸ While passing through the

117. Nambudiripad, E.M.S; Kerala - Yesterday^{day} and Tomorrow National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1968, p-212.

118. Press Trust of India, 22nd August, 1957 (A press release issued on the 22nd August 1957).

streets of the city, they voiced their protest against the Communist Government's Education Bill. Near about 3000 blue-uniformed 'christophers'¹¹⁹ were present in this massive demonstration and after marching for three miles, they held a public meeting at which resolutions were passed demanding the withdrawl of the Education Bill and requesting the Central Government to take "strong and effective steps to prevent the deterioration of law and order situation"¹²⁰ in the state. It was the Education Bill Protest Demonstration Committee which organised this demonstration in Trivandrum and this Committee consisted of congressmen, members of the Praja Socialist Party and Muslim League. While marching through the streets in Trivandrum, the processionists shouted slggans like "withdraw Education Bill" and "End lawlessness",. This kind of demonstrations and processions were a daily affair in Kerala during this time.

119. According to the Encyclopedia Americana, Christopher was a Roman cardinal priest of St. Damascus who led a revolt against Pope Leo V, whom he imprisoned, The word Christopers derive from the word Christopher. ~~The word Christopers derive from the word~~
Source:- The Encyclopedia Americana, vol: 6, Encyclopedia Americana Corporation, U.S.A, 1969,,p-671.

120. Press Trust of India, 22nd August, 1957.

The opponents of the Ministry particularly the Catholic church were organising seminars and conferences. In December, 1958, a Catholic Congress was held in Kanyakumari and it gave a call to defend religion against communism, "dedicating their life to the cause of religion"¹²¹. Bishop of Kottar who inaugurated the Congress asked the believers in Christ "to cast their petty differences and try to stand united dedicating their lives to the cause of their religion against various opposing forces such as communists, D.M.K. and D.K."¹²².

Though the processions, demonstrations and the move against the government were the daily affair in Kerala, but, it was only in 1959 that the liberation struggle in a highly organised form was started. The organisations of the Nairs and the Christians along with the political parties like the Indian National Congress, the Praja Socialist Party and the Muslim League took firm stand in their fight against the Communist regime. The liberation struggle was a reaction of those who had believed in Democratic ideals against those who did not have faith in such ideals.

121. Opposition Preparations for violent overthrow of the Government (Facts placed before the Prime Minister) Govt. of Kerala, Govt. Press, Trivandrum 1958, p-7.

122. Hindu, December 8, 1958.

The opposition particularly the Catholics tried to mobilise the people through democratic channels. A Kerala Catholic Bishop's conference was held at Ernakulam in March 1959 and they prepared a programme of how to launch the struggle against the policies of the Communist Government and accordingly, soon afterwards a convention of Christian and Nair leaders was held at Perunna on March 20th and this convention led to the formation of an Action Council with Mannath Padmanabhan as President, Fr. Mannanali¹²³ as Convener and V.O. Abraham as Treasurer. The aim of this council was to fight the Education Act and close down Schools. It was also decided to organise Volunteer Corps to defend the schools and on 6th April, the Christan Education Action Committee took the firm step that they would not, at any cost, reopen their schools, after the summer recess until the amendment of the Kerala Education Act took place. Even if the schools had been opened, the students were also ready to participate in the movement launched by the opposition.

123. Fr. Mannanali was the Secretary of the Private School Manager's Association.

The church in Kerala roused the feelings of Christians on grounds of religion and society. "Deepika", organ of the Catholic church, in an editorial on April 28, 1959, gave an open call to the Catholics to rise against the policies of the Government. It said:- "The Communist Government in Kerala, when it deals with their opponents should remember that the constitution, the Central Government and the laws of the Country are binding on them. The communists have the responsibility of conducting the Government according to Constitutional methods"¹²⁴. Again it said in its editorial on 29th April:- "To run schools as at present and give instructions to students with the Government prescribed text-books would be a deed against religion, society and the country"¹²⁵.

During this time the opposition made several accusations of the Communist Ministry's dubious dealing in connection with a rice deal with the Andhra Government, and on March 11th leaders of Congress, of the Praja Socialists and the Muslim League called for mass agitation

124. Deepika, (A Catholic Newspaper) 28th April, 1959.

125. Deepika, 29th April, 1959.

against the Government. They observed April 5, 1959 as Anti-Corruption Day and all those public meetings and demonstrations held by the opponents called for the resignation of the ministry. By this time, Mannath Padmanabhan, the formidable Nair leader, took the leadership of his community and led them into the struggle against the Communist Government by joining hands with the leaders of the Catholic church and other opponents of the Ministry. As a consequence of which, from 1 to 3 May, 1959, under the leadership of Shri Mannath Padmanabhan, a convention of Muslims, Nair and Christian leaders was held at Changanacherry and this convention appealed to the people concerned to take firm and sudden step for launching mass action to overthrow the communist regime and save the State from the communist danger. Moreover, this conference led to the formation of War Council, the Vimochana Samara Samiti, under the leadership of Mannath Padmanabhan. This marked the organised efforts of the opponents to wage Liberation Struggle in order to overthrow the communist regime from power at any cost. They mobilised people at every level particularly students,

fishermen, peasants, women and school children also. The Muslim League leaders who participated in this conference agreed to join the mass action but later, they announced their final decision of not taking part in the school closure movement. Besides these people, the leaders of the Indian National Congress and that of Revolutionary Socialist Party also participated at the Changanacherry meeting.

By this time, the Private Schools had been closed under the instructions of the Private Agencies. The Government wanted to open them and conduct classes and the Government was ready to do it even by force. The Kerala government gave a warning to the school closure agitation volunteers¹²⁶ that if they prevented from conducting studies by closing the schools that ~~remained~~ remained opened, the "Police will not stand by idly"¹²⁷. The Government added that the Government would make alternative arrangement or would extend "all possible help" for those people who were interested in conducting education as before. This warning was a reply to the agitation leaders' threat that they would picket schools,

126. Agitation Volunteers consisted of students also.

127. Hindustan Times, May 29, 1959.

whether private or government, that would remain open. By this time, a meeting was held in which Mr. Mannath Padmanabhan, Leader of the Movement, Mr. Sankar, President of the State Congress, and Mr. K.P. Madhavan Nair, former General Secretary of the A.I.C.C. participated and they discussed the ways ^{and} / means by which more active participation by political parties could be achieved in the Movement.

In May 1959, the State Congress deputed Mr. K.A. Damodara Menon, one of its former Presidents, to Ooty in order to meet late Mr. Nehru and conveyed him of the latest developments in the State and Mr. B. Rama Krishna Rao, then State Governor, was already there. Meanwhile, the Kerala Government announced its intention to provide police protection and full support for those institutions which were interested in conducting education by opening the schools. The State Government expressed its apprehension over the large number of Volunteers recruited by school closure agitation leaders.

Mean-while, P.T. Chacko and Pattom Thanu Pillai called for a United anti-Communist front and it was declared at a student meeting.

The Communist Party was training a private militia for utilizing them in order to enter other's land forcibly. The opposition raised its voice against the communist regime as never before by saying that the Government of India should intervene in the political situation taking place in Kerala. This demand for Central intervention continued till the imposition of the President's rule on 31st July, 1959.

In the course of the Liberation Struggle the Chief Minister E.M.S. Nambudiripad gave warning of a civil war situation. But, the Government of India was not ready to accept this civil war threat declared by the Chief Minister. In his speech delivered on 1st June at Coimbatore, Nambudiripad also requested the opposition to co-operate for creating a friendly atmosphere.

Volunteers were recruited on a mass scale so as to strengthen the movement¹²⁸. Lakhs of volunteers had been recruited in every district under the leadership of the church. The organised Volunteers were provided with all transport facilities. Those mobile units could reach

128. According to Catholic paper 'Deepika' 2½ lakhs of Volunteers had been organised in Quilon district and 50 thousand in Trichur district.

Source:- Opposition Preparations for violent overthrow of the Government, op. cit, p-10.

any place and deal with the situation at the shortest notice.

There was a popular demand for the resignation and the re-election of the government. But, their position was that, in so far as they had a majority in the legislature, they would on no account quit office before the expiry of the full term of five years.

The Communist Party had also made their arrangements at government level and party level, to meet the agitation. Under the Education Protection Committee, local defence groups were formed in every place and meetings and demonstrations were organised under their auspices. In addition to the regular local police, the Armed Reserve and the Malabar Special Police were kept ready. The workers and the sympathisers of the Communist Party were mobilised into a second line of defence and posted as guards to the police force.

Since the schools would be the storm centres of the agitation, Government postponed the opening of the schools from June 15. They hoped that in the meantime,

the morale of the people participating in the movement would weaken but, the effect was just the reverse. Earlier, the Government and the Party had declared that the schools would be re-opened according to schedule and if any school failed to follow this line, classes would be conducted in sheds erected with the co-operation of the local people.

Emotions of the people particularly Christians were aroused in the name of religion in danger. Catholic newspaper 'Deepika' appealed to the people:- "We have to face arrests, repression and criminal cases. Dozens of Bishops, thousands of clergy men and lakhs of disciples may be thrown into prison. Those who can not face this with dignity and self-respect, hereafter can't be called Christians. We should not create the misfortune ourselves being condemned as degenerates in a forgotten corner of India on account of our cowardice to struggle and inability to move due to the weight of our body. Get ready to sacrific everything. Let us fight as those who have nothing to lose"¹²⁹.

129. Deepika, April 29, 1959.

The Bishops were ready to court arrest and thereby arouse the feeling of the Christian Community. Addressing a meeting in connection with the school closure agitation at Thiruvalla, his Grace Metropolitan Mar Dinysius characterised the agitation as a "Liberation Struggle" and said that "the fight against the Education Act is really religious"¹³⁰.

In June and July 1959 the Liberation Struggle reached its climax and on June 12th a state-wide hartal was organized and many of the shops and institutions remained closed on that day. At the same time in front of the Public Schools a good number of children picketed and they also stopped the normal service of the state operated buses.

Many of the Panchayats, Municipalities and almost all the Bar Associations demanded the resignation of the Ministry. All Trade Unions except those affiliated to the A.I.T.U.C., all student organisations except the Communist led student Federations and all the non-Communist Political parties demanded it.

130. Opposition Preparation for violent overthrow of the Government, op. cit, p-13.

In June, a prohibition campaign, quite unconnected with the Liberation Struggle, had been going on at Ankamali. The Police opened fire against a procession taken out in connection with the agitation. More than thirty persons were seriously injured.¹³¹ Five died on the spot and two died in the hospital. In a press-note Government stated that the police had to resort to firing in self-defence to disperse a violent mob which attacked the police station with stones and lethal weapons.

On the third day of the firing at Ankamali, Pulluvila, thirteen miles from the city of Trivandrum, witnessed the police firing, at about 12 noon and Vettukad also experienced the police firing. Two persons died at Pulluvila and three at Vettukad and many others were injured¹³². The Government stated that violent mobs resorted to stone throwing at the police and they were forced to open fire in self-defence.

The next firing took place at Cheriyathura, a beach area near Trivandrum city inhabited by Catholic fisherfolk,

131. Pillai, Kainikkara Padmanabha; op. cit, p-185.

132. Ibid, p-187.

on July 3. It was not even a scene of action connected with the agitation but, a large number of Volunteers, who came to picket the Collectorate on the previous day, belonged to that locality. Without any provocation, at about mid-day, the time when most of the fishermen went to the Sea, two vans of armed police reached Cheriyathura. Seeing the Police jump out of the Vans with loaded rifles, frightened women and children ran crying in all directions. Without giving any consideration to human sympathy the police opened fire on these women and children. A fisher woman Mrs. Flory, who was the mother of five children and expecting the sixth, was hit by a bullet and died instantly.¹³³

U.N. Dhebar, the ex-President of Congress who was deputed to study the political situation in Kerala reported back to the Congress High Command that the movement could not be regarded as a communal agitation or one artificially created by the political opposition. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the President of the Congress, stated on June 12, that what was happening in Kerala was really a mass upsurge. J.C. Chatterji, and M.P. Banerji, Members of Parliament from

133. Ibid, p-188.

West Bengal, after an extensive tour of the State, expressed the view that it was wrong to characterise the movement as communal and added that it was the product of the wrong policies ~~enforced~~ pursued by the Government. Other All India leaders like Rajabhoj of the depressed classes league, Asoka Mehta of the P.S.P, V.P. Menon, Masani and K.M. Munshi of the Swatantra Party and Vajpai, M.P. of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, supported the principles for which this movement was being launched. Tridib Chaudhari, M.P., leader of the R.S.P. said that it was wrong to characterise the movement as reactionary merely because of the participation in it of certain vested interests. He added that the movement in Kerala was the gigantic expression of the disappointment, disillusionment and frustration arising from the policy pursued by the Communist Government.

Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan, the Sarvodaya leader, said at Mussorie on June 22, that the "mass upsurge" in Kerala could not be considered as "communal or a movement engineered by opposition parties as a part of the struggle for power" and he added that, "when all the communities feel aggrieved and rise in protest, then it is not communalism".¹³⁴

134. Ibid, p-198.

Mr. R.K. Khadilkar, M.P from Maharashtra, after an extensive tour of the state, said at a press interview at Trivandrum, on July 1, 1959 that the Government could have avoided the firings and he added that the practice of democracy demands respecting the will of the people.

Addressing a public meeting in Patna in observance of the Kerala day, Sri Asoka Mehta said that the situation in Kerala was one of conflict and fear. He added that it was for the first time in India that all the opposition parties, forgetting their political differences, united together on the conviction that the party in power was violating the spirit of the Constitution. He also said that the agitation in Kerala was not communal or linguistic but a real political agitation against the misdeeds of the Government.

In its initial stages, the Communist Party condemned the mass upsurge as an agitation by the Catholic church and Nair aristocracy. Later, they called it a struggle of the vested interests against the progressive legislations introduced by the Communist Government.

The Congress High Command in New Delhi, on July 7, 1959, scrutinised the charge-sheet against the Ministry and later, it was presented to the President of India. Corruption, rigging of by-elections, repression of the mass movement by high-handedness of the police, curtailing of educational freedom, increase of criminality and victimisation of non-communists at every level were some of the charges levelled against the Communist Party and the Ministry.

The Liberation Struggle by the middle of July, 1959, reached the climax of its activities and the Vimochana Samara Samiti decided to launch a final round of struggle and on July 26, the first jatha (procession) headed by the leaders of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, started marching South from Cannanore. Late Mr. Pandit Nehru was thinking of what to do at this juncture and Congress leaders from all over the Nation, including the Congress President Mrs. Indira Gandhi, requested him to act decisively.

The Congress President Mrs. Indira Gandhi was then touring the state and she reported back to the A.I.C.C. that the communists, in one way or the other, were exploiting

communal tendencies for the purpose of serving the Party (Communist Party) ends.

The Governor of the state reported to the Government of India that constitutional administration in the State had broken down. On July 31, 1959, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, dismissed the Communist Government and thus, Kerala, once again, was placed under President's rule.

Even today, there are people who recollect the Liberation Struggle and the fall of E.M.S. Nambudiripad's Ministry as an epic and exhilarating event. This Government had its own merits and demerits. The immediate cause of the fall of Nambudiripad's Ministry was the passing of Kerala Education Bill which affected not only the Private Agencies but interests of certain minority communities like Christians and Muslims who were interested in educating their children according to their social values.

The meetings and demonstrations even in remote villages were astonishing as much in their size as in their emotional intensity. The unending columns of people that kept standing on the two sides of the road from the Trivandrum aerodrom to the Rajabhavan, the thousands upon thousands who

had come to the capital from all parts of Kerala, to convey their grievances to the Prime Minister, late. Mr. Nehru, was a sight surprising even to him. Never before in the history of Kerala or even of India had there been a popular agitation which so completely rallied the entire population into its ranks. In the history of India, there had never been a fight in which such large numbers of women took an active and decisive part. That these women, not interested in active politics and living all along in the quiet seclusion of domestic life, should march into the thick of the fight, was itself clearly indicative of the extent and depth of the public feeling against the Communist Government.

CHAPTER - V

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE C.P.I.

"In its Election Manifesto and in its immediate programme the Communist Party had made it clear that through its ministry it wants to alleviate the misery of the people, introduce and implement such agrarian reforms as are in accord with the constitution and the recommendations of the Planning Commission, adopt other measures - political and economic - for democracy, efficiency and incorruptibility in the administration of the state, and raise the living standards of the people as far as possible"¹³⁵. The leaders of the Communist Party made it clear that they would work within the letter and spirit of the constitution. The contradictions between the promises based on the programmatic ideology before election and the implementation of their election promises after coming to power are matters to be investigated and thoroughly examined. The rich people who held high positions at the top level of the Communist Party acted sometimes in favour of certain castes and some other occasions they paved the way for communalism. Inner contradictions which had crept into the Communist Party

135. Nair, Govindan, M.N; "Challenge of Kerala" New Age, Vol. VI, No. 1, April 1957, p-9.

in power was itself an important aspect which aroused doubts among the people. The party in power headed by E.M.S. Nambudiripad acted on many occasions, not on the basis of communist ideology but on the communalist ideology.

The C.P.I. claimed that the main motto behind introducing the Kerala Education Bill was to safeguard the democratic rights of the teachers employed "by Private Managements and generally for liberating education from the tentacles of communal or sectarian interests"¹³⁶. They further said that bringing about uniformity in the educational system was another important aim behind this Bill. Liberation of education, by the Communist Party in power, from the 'tentacles of communal or sectarian interests' led to the political indoctrination of education on the one side and the communal reservation to some communities in giving admission to the educational institutions and in recruiting candidates, on communal basis, to educational institutions and government jobs on the other side. Over

136. Kerala Education Bill, Facts and Fancies, op. cit.

emphasis made by the Communist Government on classification of people on the basis of caste and community for purposes of priorities in employment and admission to educational institutions and lesser importance given to ~~the~~ economic background of people aroused suspicion in the minds of the traditionally well-off but presently declining communities like Nairs and Brahmins etc. The organizations and people who had been in possession of the schools and colleges experienced that an ideologically orientated administration used every means to turn education into political indoctrination. They had also a "genuine fear of authoritarian manipulation of the schools (a fear strengthened by the communist plan to introduce politically acceptable text books into the public schools"¹³⁷). The Nairs were dissatisfied with the Communist Government mostly because of its intention of favouring the Ezhavas.

Education Minister's Elucidation of the Bill, the following press release was issued on the 11th July, 1957:-

137. Woodcock, George, op. cit, p-269.

"The Kerala Education Minister, Shri Joseph Mundassery today (July 11th, 1957) re-affirmed that the Education Bill proposed to be introduced in the ensuing session of the State Legislature Assembly (opening on 13th July) was not a nationalisation measure as was being wrongly interpreted in certain sections of the press and on public platforms. The Bill was simply and purely a piece of protective legislation intended to secure and safeguard the interests of teachers employed in schools under Private Management in Kerala. The Minister, who was addressing a press conference at Trivandrum this morning (July 11) re-affirmed that it was not the policy of government so far as the present Bill was concerned, to nationalise education. . Nor was it the government's intention to eliminate Private Agencies from the educational field. On the other hand, government acknowledge with gratitude the services of all agencies which have been working in the field for the last so many years and which intend to work in the future also with a spirit of service. At a time when government had not come forward to take up social service activities direct, this role had been

fulfilled by charitable and such other institutions.

Government activity in such fields was restricted to the extension of help in a small measure, to such organizations and institutions. But, today, the Minister added, the outlook had changed and it was the duty of the government in a welfare state to take over social service activities under their direct responsibility. Government hoped that the Bill would be source of encouragement to all sections whose object was selfless service in the field of education"¹³⁸.

The Education Minister said on this occasion that the Kerala Education Bill was not a nationalisation measure. But, the clause 15 of Kerala Education Bill gives ample power to Government to acquire any category of schools. Hence, the statement of Prof. Joseph Mundassery that the Bill was not a nationalisation measure and the clause 15 of Kerala Education Bill become contradictory.

138. Quoted in Kerala Education Bill, Facts and Fancies op. cit, p-4-5.

The Minister further added that, "it was the policy of government¹⁰ duly acknowledge the services of all parties and encourage them accordingly"¹³⁹. While discussing the Bill in the legislative assembly, Prof. Joseph Mundassery, the Minister for Education, said: "Government do not consider managements to be an indispensable factor in the educational system in this state"¹⁴⁰. It is very difficult to understand the meaning of these contradictory statements.

Prof. Joseph Mundassery asserted that the provision regarding payment of salary direct by government was intended to bring about a change in the "master and servant" relationship between the Managements and teachers and to help them to work on an equality basis in the educational field. He also stated that one of the important motives of the Bill was to give the teachers statutory recognition as a servant of the state. The C.P.I. interpreted that government should have necessary power of control over educational institutions under private managements.

139. Education Minister's Elucidation of the Bill, the following press release was issued on the 11th July, 1957, quoted in Kerala Education Bill, Facts and Fancies, op. cit, p-4-5.

140. Kerala Education Bill, Facts and Fancies, op. cit, p-13.

The objects of the Kerala Education Bill as interpreted by the Communist Party are given below:-

- "(1) To give the departmental rules and practices legal sanction so that the Department is in a position to enforce its orders and see that reasonable protection is afforded to teachers.
- (2) To regulate the choice, appointment, conditions of service etc. of teachers in Private Schools without curtailing the supervisory powers of Managers.
- (3) To secure authority for Government to proceed effectively against grossly mismanaged schools.
- (4) To take over any category of schools of any area if government are convinced of the desirability of such action in the interests of education.
- (5) To set up a high-level Advisory Board to guide government in the matter of framing educational policies and constitute, at district level, Local Educational Authorities comprising

elected representatives of local educational interests to assist the Department for the better conduct of educational affairs".¹⁴¹

The Chief Minister E.M.S. Nambudiripad said that the primary aim of the Communist Ministry would be "to practise what the Congress had preached but failed to act upon".

Another Communist Minister of Kerala even claimed: "We are, if you want to put it that way, the true congressmen".¹⁴²

Ajoy Ghosh, the then General Secretary of the C.P.I. declared that the Communist Ministry in Kerala would "implement the Congress programme more efficiently and expeditiously"¹⁴³. A document in Bengali entitled, "the present situation and policy of the C.P.I" and circulated in West Bengal in August, 1963 contains the following statements: "Every state has the strength of arms behind it, without which it is not possible to preserve the state power. Bereft of that power, the Communist Government in Kerala was destined to die at the hands of the bourgeoisie"¹⁴⁴.

141. Ibid, p-13.

142. Quoted by Mankekar, D.R; The Red Riddle of Kerala Manaktalas, Bombay, p-107.

143. Quoted by Ibid, p-106.

144. The C.P.I. Publication, Resolution on splitters and other Documents of the National Council of the C.P.I., New Delhi, April, 10-15, 1964, quoted by Ibid, p-110.

"We have to work within the frame work of a system which includes several regulations and limitations which are not to our liking", asserted Mr. E.M.S, Nambudiripad immediately after swearing allegiance to the constitution, "but we would work within the framework of ~~the~~ Constitution and would try to utilise the provisions of the Constitution to amend the Constitution itself"¹⁴⁵ A close examination of the theory and practice will reveal that the Communist Party in power did not act as it had been preached by them. They asserted that they would work only within the letter and spirit of ~~the~~ Constitution. But, the provision of giving power to government to take over the private schools affects the minority rights mentioned in clause (i) of Article 30 of the Indian Constitution which guarantees protection to all religious and linguistic minorities, the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. Without taking over of a particular private school, the government could improve the conditions of a school if it wanted to do so. The Kerala Education Bill itself contains contradictory statements. Clause 3 of the Kerala

145. Indian Express, April 6, 1957.

Education Bill deals with the "Establishment and recognition of schools - (1) The Government may regulate the primary and other stages of education and courses of instructions in Government and private schools. (2) The Government shall take, from time to time, such steps, as they may consider necessary or expedient for the purpose of providing facilities for general education, special education and for the training of teachers. (3) The Government may, for the purpose of providing such facilities:-

(a) establish and maintain schools,

(b) permit any person or body of persons to establish and maintain aided schools, or

(c) recognise any school established and maintained by any person or body of persons".¹⁴⁶ At the

same time, clause 15 of the Kerala Education Bill gave ample power to government "to acquire any category of schools"¹⁴⁷.

This itself arouses doubts as to the real motivations of the Government behind these two provisions having contradictory nature.

146. The Kerala Education Bill, 1957, op. cit, p-2.

147. Ibid, p-8.

The Election Manifesto of the Communist Party appealed to the people that the "entire administrative structure of the state would be re-organized through decentralisation of power; to bring efficiency, eliminate red tape and bring down cost"¹⁴⁸. Still the Election Manifesto continues:- "Merciless fight would be carried out against corruption, nepotism and favouritism in order to provide the state with clean, cheap and efficient administration".¹⁴⁹

The Administrative Reforms Committee appointed by the Government submitted its report in July 1958. One of the recommendations was to give more power to village Panchayats in the state. In other words, "democratic decentralisation" was one of the important recommendations made by the Administrative Reforms Committee. With a view to implementing the recommendations of the Committee the Kerala Government framed the Panchayat Reform Bill immediately after this. The Government took several steps ~~xxx~~ in order to give a "new outlook" to the administrative structure of the

148. Fic, Victor, M; op. cit, p-69.

149. Ibid.

state. The Kerala State Committee of the Communist Party, in a resolution passed in May 1957, suggested that "administrative reforms should be aimed at establishing local self-government institutions at all levels in the state and bringing officers of the government under the control of such institution"¹⁵⁰. Some accounts reveal that these reforms were put forward with a view to tightening the party's grip over the administration in the name of the people"¹⁵¹. Accordingly 'People's Committee' were established by the Communist Government in each ward and similar committees were formed at the division and sub-division levels for the public works department and other branches of the administration. "Work Committees" were also established for each development project in the State. These Committees consisted mostly of local men having sympathy towards the Communist Government. These Committees were expected to be advisory committees to supervise the work of the Executive.¹⁵² "The Communist Government devised many other devious ways to bring the

*50. Quoted in Kerala under Communism - A report, op. cit, p-30.

151. Ibid, p-31.

152. Ibid, p-31.

administration under party control. For example, the Government appointed personnel Assistants to three Ministers (Ministers for Law, Education and Land Revenue) from outside the permanent services. The three persons appointed have been active party works"¹⁵³. By saying that the Communist Ministry would make serious attempts in eliminating favouritism, the Communist Ministry began making all sorts of efforts to fill government services with communists. E.M.S. Nambudiripad, knowingly or unknowingly happened to reveal this sort of favouritism which had been shown to his party men. "A hue and cry was then raised that an effort was being made to fill government services with Communists"¹⁵⁴.

A.K. Gopalan, a well known Marxist leader, said that the police existed "not for suppressing the people's struggle, but for safeguarding their rights." The Chief Minister E.M.S. Nambudiripad said the police were only the servants of the people and hence, "their attitude

153. Ibid.

154. Nambudiripad, E.M.S.; *...* op. cit, p-213.

and behaviour towards the people should have this basic outlook". He also added that, "in all cases of worker - capitalist or peasant - landlord disputes, police intervention should only be at such a stage of the dispute when there was an actual threat to peace"¹⁵⁵.

They claimed that they would work within the letter and spirit of the Constitution. But, some accounts reveal that as soon as the Communist Party came to power in 1957, they established, in many rural areas, local Communist Cells which assumed quasi-governmental powers¹⁵⁶. It is a matter to be investigated whether the establishment of Communist Cells also comes within the purview of the Indian Constitution.

In the Liberation Struggle, the Ministry used police for suppressing the mass upsurge and all sorts of attempts were made to crush the democratic movement of the people. For instance, in June 1959, a prohibition campaign, quite unrelated to the mass upheaval, had been

155. Ibid, p-212.

156. Woodcock, George; op. cit, p-267.

going on at Ankamali. The police opened fire against a procession taken out in connection with the agitation. More than thirty persons were seriously injured. Five people died on the spot and two died in the hospital¹⁵⁷.

Three days after the firing at Ankamali, Pulluvila, a place not very far from the city of Trivandrum, witnessed the police firing and Vettukad - another Christian Centre - also experienced the police firing. Two persons died at Vettukad and many others were injured.¹⁵⁸ The Communist Party claimed that their police policy was different and they would observe people's attitude. But, in practice, the police was used to suppress the democratic movement of the people.

Moreover, there were many occasions when the Communist Ministry denied the fact that Liberation Struggle was a massup~~surge~~ and they said that it was a struggle of the vested interests. Their attitude was unrealistic in the sense that they were not ready to understand the social reality. U.N. Dhebar, the ex-president of Congress, who was

157. Pillai, Kainikkara Padmanabha; op. cit, p-185.

158. Ibid, p-187.

deputed to study the political situation in Kerala reported back to the Congress High Command that the movement could not be regarded as a communal agitation or one artificially created by the political opposition. Mrs, Indira Gandhi, the President of the Congress, stated that the Liberation Struggle was really a mass upsurge.

The Ministry did not attach any human sympathy to the people whom they regarded as opposition. For instance, the police opened fire at Cheriyathura - a beach area near Trivandrum city inhabited by Catholic fisherfolk - on July 3, 1959. Without any provocation, at about mid-day, the time when most of the fishermen want to the sea, two vans of armed police reached Cheriyathura. Seeing the police jump out of the vans with loaded rifles, frightened women and children ran crying in all directions. Without giving any consideration to human sympathy the police opened fire on these women and children. A fisher woman Mrs. Flory, a woman belonging to working class family - was hit by a bullet and died instantly.¹⁵⁹ This was the

159. Ibid, p-188.

attitude of the Ministry towards the working class.

A close examination of the promises and performance of the Communist Party reveals that they did not act, on many occasions, according to their promises. A thorough study of their activities brings to light that they patronised one section of the people i.e. the people who believed in communist ideology. The available data reveals that the party which was supposed to give greater importance to the economic background of the people gave more attachment to certain communities who had been the backbone of the Communist Party. One of the most important failures of the Communist Ministry was that they did not act according to the Communist ideology which they were expected to believe and put into practice.

CHAPTER - VI

Conclusion

C.A. Innes holds the view that the word 'Kerala' is related to 'Keram' which means the 'land of coconut palms'. Authentic records witness that even in the dim distant past, the existence of the land Kerala was known to the Aryans and many other scholars and writers. Modern Kerala came into being as a result of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 and Kerala has got an ancient history with its cultural contact and trade relations with the Mediteranean and Persian gulf ports.

Two millennia of foreign contacts played a very vital role in giving shape to Kerala's way of life and its pluralistic society and as a result of which, the changes which have taken place in so many spheres like economic, religious, cultural and political are immense.

Different communities in Kerala have been following various customs and traditions and all of them, in turn, have exerted a great influence on the people in their attitude towards certain problems. Matrilineal system has left Malayali women with an influence and an

independence of outlook which one will find it very difficult to see any where else in India. It has prevented widowhood from becoming the sordid tragedy which it was - and to a great extent still is - in other Hindu Societies. These aspects of Malayali life make Kerala 'a back water of regional conservatism' and this conservatism is combined with new and foreign ideas.

Casteism was one of the aspects of the social behaviour in Kerala and it was this rigidity of the caste system that forced people like Vivekananda to remark that Kerala was a 'lunatic asylum'. But, several changes have taken place in caste system and in the social behaviour of the people very recently. This sort of social change is partly because of the mass literacy and partly because of the influence exerted on people by the writings of men like Kumaranasan etc.

Available sources witness that one of the causes of the spread of christianity and the growth of Islam was the casteism which has been prevailing in Hindu Society.

There are enough historical evidences to prove that the local Malayali lower caste Hindus voluntarily accepted Islam as well as christianity in order to escape from the social disabilities of belonging to low Hindu castes.

Though the standard of living of the people is well below the level for India, as a whole, Kerala, is still one of India's principal exporting and cash earning regions.

The growth of cash crops in Kerala has been highly responsible for the rapid commercialisation of the state's economy. Due to commercialisation and consequent monetization, there emerged in this region two local credit institutions known as 'kuries' and 'chitties' and one of the important aspects of the economy of Kerala has been that these credit institutions paved the way for the rapid development of commercial banking. They made a very profound effect on the further growth of the economy of Kerala.

The British were the initial investors in plantations and they spent their energy and capital in starting plantations and in establishing the coir manufacturing

industry more particularly in Travancore. The natural factors conducive to the location of the coir industry were more favourable to Travancore than to any other part of Kerala. The investment of capital into plantations opened up new opportunities for agricultural and non-agricultural economic expansion.

Religious harmony is one of the aspects of Keralan life. Moreover, the adherents of the non-Hindu religions now form important political interest groups and no Keralan government has yet been able to stay in power without the support of either Christians or Muslims.

Kerala the land of radical politics coupled with conservative social system and uniquely complex system of Hindu castes is one of the most politically conscious states. No other part of India presents problems so numerous and so acute. Mass unemployment and chronic food shortage make addition to the conflict between castes and communities which, in turn, produce 'turbulent politics' .

Its agricultural system had developed in the past in an era of mercantile economics and it had produced

mostly for export rather than internal consumption. Its population had increased in numbers and density during the present century. Moreover, Kerala is a land where there is too little land with too much population which the state can not accommodate in any way and it is a state where there is too little chance of employment with too much literacy and enthusiasm for education. Finally, it is a place which earns a lot of foreign exchange but with too little food to eat. Kerala has got an educational system which creates expectations that under present circumstances, people would be in great difficulty to realise them.

The political history of Kerala reveals the fact that the state in the past made it a practice of suppressing certain communities particularly non-Hindus, scheduled castes and other backward communities. This kind of tendency on the part of the rulers led to the gradual growth of popular movements championing the cause of the suppressed communities.

Untouchability and unapproachability were some of the characteristic features of Malayali society till recent times. The rigid caste rules and the social behaviour of the people very well reflected in politics also and caste oppression was another phase of social behaviour in Kerala.

Under such circumstances, only very few of the low caste people got respectable jobs. Moreover, the people of high castes had to compete with their low brethren in schools, offices, factories, markets and lastly, in politics. The low caste people did not get enough opportunities to rise upto the social ladder.

These social conditions led to the emergence of the modern democratic movement in Kerala for social equality. The Communist Party extended its support to the struggle launched by these communities. The writings of literary men like P. Kesadev, Bala Murali and Thoppil Basi etc, helped in spreading Marxist ideas among students and some sections of society as a whole. Poverty with mass literacy has been one of the causes giving inspiration to the youth, some backward communities

and other people to think in terms of a left alternative. To be more clear, the communist movement in Kerala had been nurtured within the Congress Party and its early history is the story of the Congress.

Sources available testify that Kerala did not remain backward in education even in the past inspite of the fact that literacy did not spread among the masses in large scale at that time. Kerala, at present, has got a good percentage of literacy among all states in India. Education in ancient Kerala was different from that of today. Generally, temples became the centres of all cultural activities after the 8th century, and educational institutions formed part of temple establishments. Religious education was a part of curricula of educational system in ancient Kerala and the education for women was encouraged even during this time. Historical sources witness that scheduled castes were not allowed to study in those educational institutions. Education in ancient Kerala was the privileged possession of the higher castes.

Educational development in Kerala varies from place to place. In Malabar, a part of Kerala state, the educational standards are far below those of southern Kerala. Literacy rate among women is less in Malabar compared to that of

Travancore and Cochin. Malabar always remained backward in education, partly because of the relative inactivity of the British in providing state education and partly because of the cultural backwardness of the local Moplah population, particularly the Muslim women.

The advent of the Europeans marked a turning point in the history of education in Kerala in the sense that modern liberal education was started in the state by the Christian Missionaries of Europe. In the early stage Government had little to do with the conduct of schools and one of the motives behind the establishment of educational institutions by the Christian Missionaries was the propagation of religion.

The next stage in the development of liberal education was marked by the eagerness of government in granting aid to schools run by Private Agencies including Missionaries. In the meantime, government also established and maintained schools as model educational institutions.

The next stage in the process of educational development in Kerala was the establishment of a regular

grant-in-aid system and with the emergence of this new scheme, a good number of Private Agencies came forward to set up schools. In the course of time, the number of schools by the Private Agencies increased and under such circumstances government sought immediate steps for standardising courses of studies and insisted on certain matters pertaining to the appointments and qualifications of teachers etc.

Later the social organisations like N.S.S., S.N.D.P. and the social organisation of Muslims began founding their own schools. In the course of time education became widespread and it reached even to the people belonging to rural areas. Even the poor people began sending their children to schools and colleges and this led to the increase in the number of graduates coming out of the Universities every year.

It is very difficult for a person to get job in Kerala under present circumstances and every body prefers to have white collar job. The system of education arouses expectations which, on most occasions, remain unfulfilled in the sense that the candidates find it very difficult to get proper jobs for which they are

trained in the institutions of higher learning. Under these circumstances, it can be said that, 'Kerala like many other parts of the world, is undergoing an education explosion'.

Kerala has a high percentage of literacy partly because of the humanitarian and social services done by the Private Management and partly because of the encouragement extended by the Government. But, in the course of time, corruption entered into the administration of the schools under the Private Management. They began running the schools with business motive.

Available sources witness that the Private Management did not pay to the teachers the actual pay which was due to them. Moreover, appointment and admission of the students to their institutions was done under various considerations. The teachers under Private Management had no security of service and no provident fund benefit etc. A teacher could be dismissed on the flimsiest of grounds even without giving any notice to him in advance.

It has been the habit of many of the Managers of the Private schools to receive illegal gratification

from those candidates appointed by them. They have been claiming that there is nothing wrong with such practice and this practice of the Private Management has been, very systematically, keeping out of employment of good number of educated youth having low income.

Under such circumstances, an educational legislation to minimise these corruptions and safeguard the interests of teachers working under Private Management without affecting the educational institutions run by the minorities became a necessity.

When the Communist Party came to power in 1957, they took up the problem of education from the primary level upto the University stage. The fact that the programme of the re-organisation of the entire educational system was pre-planned by the communist party even before coming to power can be understood from the Election Manifesto of the party itself. It can be understood that the political indoctrination of education was one of its motives. It is stated in the Bill itself that, 'Government may regulate the primary and other stages of education and courses of instructions in government and Private schools'.

If the government wanted only to improve the conditions of teachers in Private schools it could have been done without affecting the interests of minorities in Kerala. It is a question ^{to be investigated} on the motives behind the interests of the government in regulating the primary and other stages of education and courses of instructions. In the educational institutions run by the Hindus, Christians and Muslims, religious teaching was also imparted to their own students. The Communist Party which regards 'religion as the opium of the masses' had pre-planned of introducing communist literature into schools and colleges by replacing the traditional educational systems.

Moreover, the Government wanted to bring about a uniformity in the educational system in the state and such a uniformity was sought to be realized not only in the course of studies pursued but in the service conditions and salaries of teachers also.

Corruption in various forms crept into the administration of the schools under Private Management. The teachers did not get adequate salary and they had to sign for more and receive less. They did not enjoy

pensions but their friends in the Government schools had the privilege of pensions and security of service which a teacher in a private school could never expect.

The Managers of the Private schools went after riches, not in the absurd form of a heap of perishable goods but in the very convenient and mobile form of money. In the course of time, the possession of wealth became an end itself and this transformation of the attitude of the managers was a turning point in the educational field. Thus, these periods witnessed the subjection of educational talent of the teachers for money making purposes.

This Bill became "historically as a mode of transition". In other words, the introduction of the Bill became really revolutionary transformation of education in the sense that it put forward the rules and regulations which the history of Kerala did not experience by that time. Moreover, the Bill wanted to reduce the control of the Private Sector over education and to bring about uniformity in the educational system.

The Bill was referred to the select committee and the Select Committee concluded that the Kerala Education

Bill, 1957 should not, in any way, affect the rights of the minorities under the articles of the constitution and hence, this Education Act should not apply to schools other than Government schools and those aided by the government. The Church in Kerala accused the government of making this Bill which, according to them, was a planned attempt to drive away the Private Managements from the field of education and they argued that it was contrary to the rights of the minorities as guaranteed by article 30 of the Constitution.

The Bill has been reserved by the Governor of Kerala under Article 200 of the Constitution of India for the President's assent to the Bill. Since doubts had arisen with regards to the validity and constitutionality of the Bill, the President of India, on 15th March, 1958, in exercise of the power conferred on him by clause (1) of Article 143 of the Constitution, raised some questions and they had been referred to the Supreme Court for a thorough investigation of the provisions of the Bill.

The Supreme Court ruled that clause 33 is subject to Article 226 of the Constitution and it pointed out that the right to administer schools does not mean the right to administer them inefficiently. Since the state aid was given to them, the state should have statutory rights to control and supervise the schools under Private Management. The President of India gave his assent to the Bill and it became an Act in February 1959.

The Kerala Education Bill became a subject of much heated discussion all over the state and some people began criticising the Bill and some others were raising their voice in favour of it.

The Liberation struggle witnessed the biggest mass awakening in which even the common people actively participated. Education Bill was the important aspect around which many other issues and problems affecting the people from hut to the mansion helped for this mass awaking.

Moreover, the Liberation Struggle witnessed the biggest mass mobilisation Kerala ever experienced since independence. People were mobilised on different grounds.

The organisations and the people who had been in possession of the schools and colleges experienced that an ideologically orientated administration tried to turn education into political indoctrination.. They had also a 'genuine fear of authoritarian manipulation of the schools (a fear strengthened by the communist plan to introduce politically acceptable text books into the public schools)'. .

Nairs were mobilised mostly on the ground that the communist regime purposefully acted against the interests of the Nairs. Their leader Mannath Padmanabhan appealed to his community that the Communist Government not only neglected the Nair but tried to harm the Nair by introducing so many Bills.

State of insecurity under the Communist rule became the war cry. From the press, the pulpit and the platform, this was one of the common complaints. 'The communists are out for the kill', 'lawlessness and insecurity of life and property is the order in Kerala' - such was the cry rising gradually with a mass appeal not only in Kerala but in the whole of India.

This Mass Movement had an important characteristic feature which Kerala or any other state might not have experienced since independence. Nairs, Catholics and other communities who had been fighting for their separate causes so far united together for fighting the common enemy - the Communist Ministry. Moreover, children, women and even old people came out and participated in this movement and tried their best to make the movement successful even at the cost of their lives.

One of the reasons for this sort of lawlessness was the police policy adopted by the Ministry. The police policy they adopted was different from that of the former days and some accounts reveal that the attempts were made to make the police the party instrument.

People particularly Christians were mobilised mostly on religious grounds. The church in Kerala gave a call to defend religion against communism, 'dedicating their life to the cause of religion'.

The Bishops and the clergy were ready to court arrest and thereby arouse the feeling of the Christian community.

The Congress High Command in New Delhi, on July 7, 1959, scrutinised the chargesheet against the Ministry and later, it was presented to the President of India. Corruption, rigging of by-elections, repression of the mass movement by high handedness of the police, curtailing of educational freedom, increase of criminality and victimisation of non-communists at every level were some of the charges levelled against the communist party and the Ministry.

The Governor of the State reported to the Government of India that Constitutional Administration in the state had broken down. On July 31, 1959, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, dismissed the Communist Government and Kerala, once again, was placed under President's rule.

In a Democracy, the administration of education should be a non-partism public affair done with the cooperation of the community with

funds provided by the government. 'In other words, in educational policy the public should have a say because the education is not meant for the government but for the state, i.e. people. There should not be a situation in which the state versus the individual. On the other hand, the state should provide enough opportunities for the enrichment of the individual because the state exists for the individual.

APPENDIX - I

Copy of a circular letter sent by the Bishop of Quilon
on 11-6-1959

Dear Son-in-Jesus,

For God and church already we have started a real crusade under the care and lead of our Blessed Virgin Mary, the prop and support of Christians, in order to preserve and protect our faith and souls of our children, against the Education Act and other ill-conceived measures of the Communist Government.

We have set apart everything we have for the struggle - prayer, acts of attornment, men and property. For this Divine Cause, we have, with great sacrifice, spent and are spending at parish level and also at diocese level our God given money. As this endeavour of ours involves huge expenditure the Diocesan Education Council is collecting money.

We, therefore, in the name of our Blessed Virgin Mary request thee to contribute at least Rs.50/- towards the fund raised by the Diocesan Educational Council.

Committee members may be approaching you to receive the contribution. We hope that you will gladly handover to them your liberal donation.

With paternal blessings in the name of Jesus and Mary to yourself and your family.

Your beloved Father

Quilon,
11-6-1959.

Sd/-
Bishop of Quilon

(The original in Malayalam submitted to the Prime Minister Shri Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.)

APPENDIX - II

An important speech of Mannath Padmanabhan:-

Every Nair should courageously come forward to bring down this government of the Communist Ravana who is trying to stamp down to hell the resurgent Nair community Now there is commotion in the Nair community. The Nair who is lazy, the Nair unconcerned of his starving wife, the Nair who does not mind whatever happened, is now organising. We should congratulate the communist who helped this awakening. Oh dear Communist regime! you please stay on for some more months. Let the Nairs be roused even at this late hour This Communist has no caste distinction. He is out to ruin every one. He is hypnotising the Ezhavas Let Nair arise to awake this Nambudiri (Chief Minister) who ate fish and rice from the huts of Pokkan (the poor Ezhava).

(Sri Mannath Padmanabhan said this while inaugurating the Chirayinkil Nair conference on 13th April, 1959.)

APPENDIX - III

Another important speech of Mannath Padmanabhan:

All communists should be hated like lepers.

In my opinion, not a single communist can be admitted in any house. They will destroy temples, churches and mosques in this country. I regret very much that mothers of this place did not give birth to men who are capable of flogging communists in the street

There is no way other than dragging them by their legs and hurling them on the ground. Our puranas tell us how to deal with them.

(KERALA JANATHA, 30-5-1959.)

APPENDIX - IV

Panampally Govinda Menon's condolence speech at
Ankamali after the firing of 14th June, 1959.

This nightmare will end soon. The dawn is approaching. The government officials can listen to the orders of the government and Nambudiripad only if their conscience permit. But if the officials carry out the orders of this government of the communists - who were vagabonds till yesterday and again vagabonds from tomorrow - they will have to answer for that; they will be called to settle accounts with. This Liberation Struggle of ours is also to liberate you. If you open fire listening to the orders of the communists, tomorrow we will take revenge upon you; there comes the men who are powerful enough to make you account for this. This Liberation Struggle is the Liberation Struggle of the whole of India. Congress is ruling India. The Prime Minister and the Central Government live here.

The IAS and IPS personnels should know one thing; if you do rotten things on the orders of the communists you will have to answer for all that. I am giving you this warning in my own name and also in the name of the Joint Action Council. Today's Liberation Struggle will liberate India, and most probably the whole of Asia, from Communism.

(DEEPIKA, 15-6-1959.)

APPENDIX - V

A notice issued by the Communist Cell of Chathanthara:

"Chathanthara, June 24. Notice issued by comrade Kunju Cherukkan, Secretary of the Communist Cell of Chathanthara, on Ulahannan Mani and Ulahannan John, sons of Kunju Lonappan, who have arrived to cultivate the plot of land given to them in exchange in Ranni Pakuthi, Pathanamthitta Taluq!"

"As the complaint filed against you by Mr. Vechukunnel Marcose Varkey, before the Cell Committee of the Communist Party of Chathanthara, is posted for hearing and final disposal on Monday, the July 8, 1957 at 4 P.M., you are summoned hereby to appear in the Election Office of the Party at Chathanthara at the fixed time.

Yours

O.M. Kunju Cherukkan
Cell Secretary.

(Source:- Kainikkara - Padmanabha Pillai,

The Red Interlude in Kerala,
K.P.C.C., Trivandrum, 1959, p-166.

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