

**POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN KERALA :
A MICRO STUDY OF A CONSTITUENCY**

**Thesis Submitted for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that this thesis is a bonafide work done by
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Date : 11-7-94

Place : Hyderabad,



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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is carried out by me under the supervision of Professor G. Haragopal and this has not been submitted for a degree in any other university.

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Chapter-I

Introduction

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Kerala occupies a unique position in several spheres. It is one state which has the distinction of being one of the top halfadozen states in India on welfare index, in spite of its very low place on the growth or development index. Kerala is way ahead in indices like literacy, public health and sanitation. It has the lowest infant mortality rates, birth rates and highest life expectancy in India. It is the only state where females outnumber males. Educationally, Kerala is India's most advanced state with cent per cent literacy rate. No other state perhaps maintains such a high level of educational facilities and enrolment ratio or spends such a large share of its income on education. This accounts partly for the high level of unemployment among the educated.

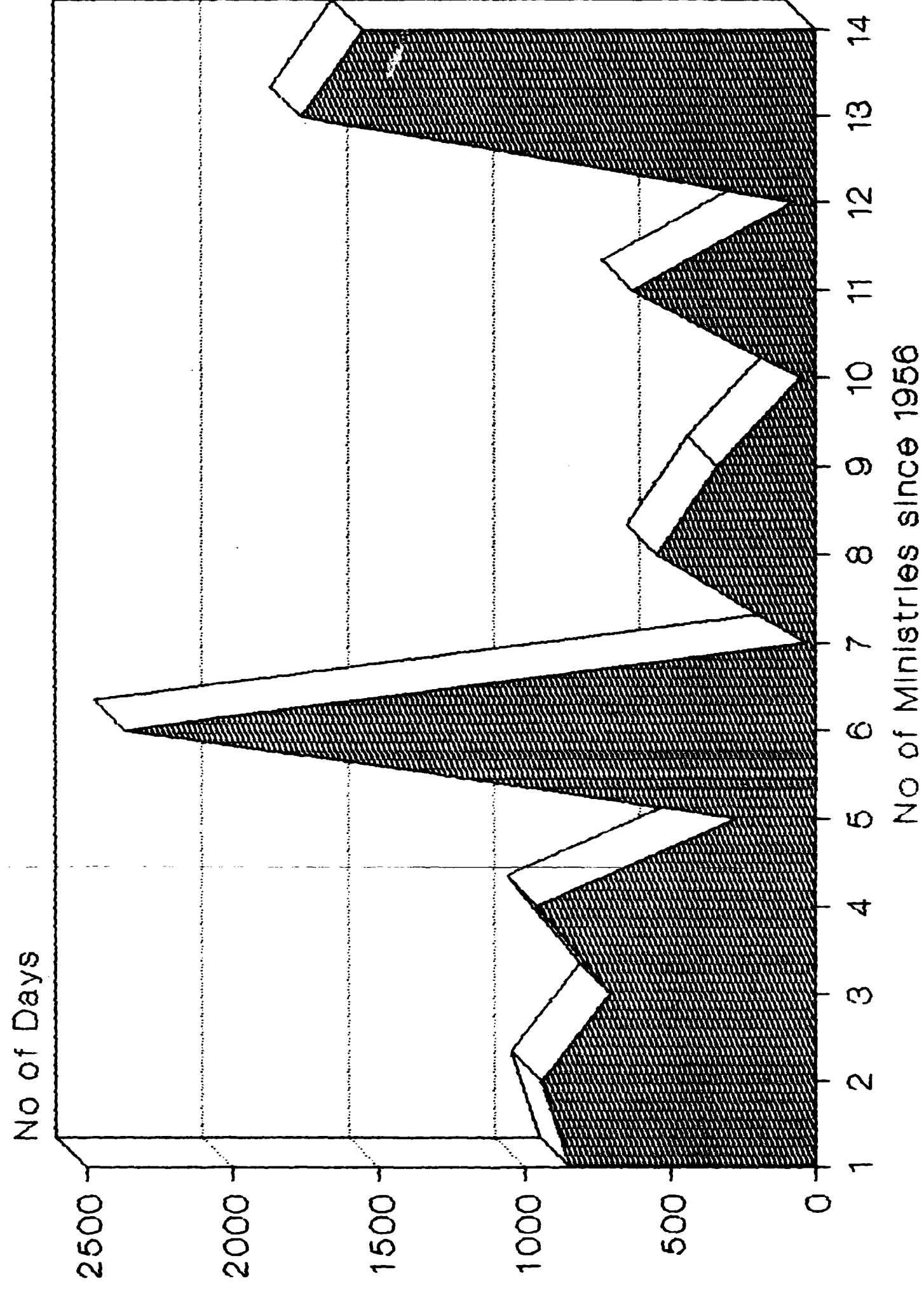
As against the social indicators, Kerala lags behind in terms of indices reflecting upon the level of development, particularly the per capita share. The per capita availability of land has fallen drastically and the number of agricultural labourers (with no land or minimal land) has risen to high proportions. The farm labourer enjoy the maximum wage rates in the agricultural sector of any Indian state. The result has been shift of operations to the neighbouring states of Karnataka and Tamilnadu.

Industrially, Kerala does not boast of heavy industries and the number of public sector companies is very negligible.

The state's cultural heritage contains elements of ancient Hindu culture that have been enriched by centuries of contact with both East and West. It is the most densely populated state in India. Though the majority of Malayalis belong to the Hindu community, there are also sizeable Christian and Muslim minorities. Through its cash crops such as rubber, coffee, black pepper, cardamom and cashewnut, Kerala earns valuable foreign exchange for the country.

In the political sphere, Kerala politics have been unpredictable, very often isolated from national and political currents. In the elections held in 1957, it voted the Communists to power. In 1970, Kerala voted a CPI-led and Congress backed coalition. This was repeated in 1977, though the North India voted for the Janata Party in the aftermath of the emergency. In 1980, when most other states voted for Congress, the state of Kerala did not follow that pattern. However, in the elections to Parliament in 1984, Kerala voted for the Congress-led coalition, but in the bye-elections that followed to Assembly seats, the coalition suffered reverses in all the three seats. All these developments resulted in a number of analysts bestowing their attention to find out the reasons for this phenomena. There has been no dearth of

Political Instability in Kerala



literature on political developments in Kerala. Studies so far done cover a wide range starting with political instability to social relations among various communities.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY

Political instability may be defined as the inability of governments to complete its normal tenure of five years. Kerala has been affected by political instability right from its formation in 1956. It has seen no less than ten elections and fifteen ministries between 1956 and 1994. Except twice, no ministry could complete its full tenure of five years in power. Observers have given various reasons for this political instability. To Nair, lack of Congress leadership; multiplicity of parties; failure of Communist and the Praja Socialist Party; the role of casteism and religious interest groups in politics account for Kerala's political instability.²

According to John, coalition governments in Kerala have been confronted by a multi-regional, religious and communal interests. To him, therefore, communalism, regionalism, the size factor and higher literacy contributed to political instability.³

Hardgrave writes, "Governments in Kerala have formed and fallen on the shifting alliances of short-term interest and common opposition and party fortunes fluctuated erratically

as a near majority of Assembly seats in one election was followed by only a handful in the next elections. This fluidity within the political system has been essentially a product of unstable coalitions in the state".⁴

Visalakshi attributes political instability in Kerala to three reasons : one, it is largely on account of the persistence of a series of economic problems like deficiency of foodgrains; two, the powerful influence of the communal organisations seem to have a disintegrating effect on Kerala politics and the leaders of political parties in general are not free from the influence of communalism and not capable of commanding the loyalty of all sections of the society; three, the presence of innumerable parties and groups is yet another cause of political instability.⁵

According to Mammen, political instability is due to the high rate of politicisation in Kerala. He observes, "In spite of high degree of politicisation of the society, and partially because of it, the state has not had a stable ministry so far; for politicisation has caused more inter-communal and/or interfactional competition than co-operation. As a result so far Kerala has had 13 ministries (and President's rule was imposed five times upon the state)".⁶

Pylee and John's study deals with the reasons for Kerala being ruled by a coalition government. They state, "the

Communists and Congress are more or less of equal strength in Kerala. Together they account for a total of some 65 per cent of the state's voters. Thus, it is clear that neither can, on its own strength, form a ministry and give the state a stable government". Hence, if either of them aim at capturing power, it becomes absolutely necessary to forge an alliance with one or more of the small parties. That seems to be a political imperative in the given Kerala situation. A political party which ignores this dimension would do so only at its own peril. Another interesting feature is that among those who consistently support the Communists are the Ezhavas - the largest single community in Kerala. In contrast, the bulk of the Congress strength is derived from the two economically most powerful communities viz.,
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 Christians and Nairs.

Chhabra and Jones attribute Kerala's economic maladies to its uncertain political situation. They write, "...in Kerala every prospect pleaseth, only politics is vile. This implies that the root of Kerala's economic maladies lies in its politics. It is significant to note that the Kerala electorate has never voted any single party to power ever since that state was formed in 1956. The uncertain political atmosphere accompanied by the administrative inability of the state machinery has thwarted all economic progress. Consequently, there is a kind of feeling among the people

that elections provide merely a brief pause before introduction of President's rule." This fact has been aptly summed up by them as follows : "the elections appear like a fixed rule, that is being run for the sake of form".⁸

As can be made out from the above trends that there is prevalence of uncertain political situation in Kerala. People resort to "checks and balances" on the basis of issues that crop up from time to time. This can be fruitfully exemplified by the fact that the same electorate behave differently on different occasions. To wit, the electorate gave the LDF a resounding victory in the Assembly elections but in the 1989 parliamentary elections, it sent 17 out of 20 United Democratic Front (UDF) representatives to the Lok Sabha. The remaining three seats were won by the Left Democratic Front (LDF) candidates. When the Left Democratic Front appeared to be crumbling, the electorate gave a new lease of life by exercising their franchise in favour of the party in 12 out of 14 districts in the elections held in January 1991 for the District Councils. The same electorate gave a resounding victory to the UDF during the June 1991 Assembly elections.

SOCIAL RELATIONS

Some writers trace the reasons for political instability in Kerala to the evolution of the state and its impact on

social relations among the people. The case in point is the breakdown of the matrilineal system among the Nairs. There has also been assertion by various other communities for a share in the political spoils. The emergence and growth of NSS and SNDP and other organisations among the Christians along with other trends changed the entire complexion of Kerala.

Jeffrey's study deals with the breakdown of the matrilineal social system which resulted not only in the overall decline in the position of the dominant caste but it has pushed into competition with the other communities. He observes, "From the 1850's onwards, the balance of the political and social system was increasingly disturbed as new resources became available for which all men, regardless of caste or religion, could compete on fairly equal terms. The commercial and menial occupations of many Christians and low caste-Hindus and their association with European missionaries, gave them advantages in this competition, which Nairs did not share. Indeed, the economic pressures, changing values and rigorous legal system, which were the concomitant of the new resources seriously weakened the Nair matrilineal joint-family and thereby hastened its disintegration. As the bonds of the matrilineal family loosened, so did the hold of Nairs on the land".

Kurian finds that the Christians, though a dominant force, demographically and socially are not a homogeneous entity. The Christians in Kerala are broadly divided into two sects - Syrian Christians and the Backward Christians. The Syrian Christians in general display certain uniform pattern in socio-economic and cultural behaviour; whereas the Backward Christians remained completely oblivious to the changes taking place on the socio-economic plane. In the modernization and development of the state's economy and society, the Syrian Christians have been on the vanguard. The Backward Christians who are converts from the lower castes of Hinduism neither enjoy the same privileges nor have shown that much of enterprise to offset the power and influence of the Syrian Christians.

Aiyappan looks at the reasons for breakdown of the traditional Hindu society and the consequent problems from a slightly different angle. He observes, "...feudalism and rigid caste unmitigated by the consolidation of Vaishnavism on the one hand, and the presence of two egalitarian faiths for a long period slowly but surely undermined the hold of Hinduism on the lower castes. These were two of the most important factors that led to the earlier disorganisation of traditional Hindu society and the consequent social ferment in Kerala".

ELECTION STUDIES

Hartmann traced the changing political behaviour of the electorate for the period 1948 to 1967. His analysis attempted to establish that while caste and communal considerations continued to be operative, the results of the 1967 elections, unlike the earlier ones, revealed greater¹² secular trends in the voting behaviour.

Krishnamurthy and Lakshmana Rao made a detailed electoral analysis of the Kerala general elections of 1957, 1960, 1965 and 1967. They examined the voting behaviour on the basis of some of the aggregate socio-economic and occupational characteristics. They noticed that massive voter turn-out in any election was a setback for the Communists excepting the Malabar region. Congress, on the other hand, gained from a higher voter turn-out. Among the rural areas the backbone of the Congress Party comprised the poor farmer or the owner-cultivators falling in the category of five acres and below. The appeal of the Communist parties seem to be more among the landless labourers than the poor¹³ peasantry in Kerala.

Bhagat's study deals with the elections of 1960 held immediately after the dismissal of the first Communist ministry headed by E.M.S. Namboodiripad. The author notes that the 'triple alliance' of the Congress Party, the Praja

Socialist Party and the Muslim League won the Kerala mid-term election of 1960 mainly due to its passionate anti-communist campaign and not necessarily due to its organisational efforts. Though defeated, the Communists did improve their vote bank because of the support from a large number of agricultural worker, poor tenants, peasants, fisherfolk, a bulk of factory, transport, plantation workers and toddy tappers. They voted for Communist party as they were attracted and impressed with the programmes, policies and principles which the CPI pursued while it was in office¹⁴ in spite of certain odds against it.

Gough in a study of 1965 elections, while not denying caste and communal influence in Kerala elections, finds evidence suggesting significant association between occupation and party affiliation. She finds that the propertyless and the poor generally support the Communists as against the propertied and the rich who promote non-Communists. She also finds that the supporters of the Communist party "have greater political allegiance to it than¹⁵ to their caste or any organised communal association".

Nair in a study of the 1967 election finds that the electorate had grown enlightened and politically articulate. Another trend noticed was declining hold of communal leaders and the Church over their traditional following. He

observes, "From a position of meek submission and abject obedience, some of the Catholics rose to challenging the propriety of their bishops ...the Nair Service Society leader enjoyed an unbroken reputation for carrying with him a sizeable section of the electorate whichever side he joined, since 1948. But this time, his support for the Congress did not prove effective".¹⁶

Sengupta and Chakraborty observe, "the history of electoral politics in Kerala shows that there has been periodical ups and downs in the fortunes of political parties. In the 1965 mid-term elections, there was the success of the Left Front followed by the formation of a United Front during the period 1965-67. But from 1967 onwards, the nature of Kerala's politics became highly complex. During this period, a number of important political events took place : formation of a United Front Ministry (1967-1969), formation of a mini-front ministry (1969-1970 and again in 1970-71), large front ministry (1971-1975) and the like".¹⁷

Pillai in his study of the Assembly elections of 1977 concludes that the verdict of the people in favour of UDF should not be construed as a verdict on emergency. Rather, it was an approval for political stability and economic justice which the previous administration was able to provide but only in some measure.¹⁸

Pillai traced the political events of Kerala from March 1977 to the election of 1980. This short period witnessed a series of changes in Chief Ministers and cabinet, splits within political parties, alignments and re-alignments of political parties. The re-alignments resulted in the new front - the LDF led by the CPI(M) - coming to power in the 1980 election. About the elections the author observed the dilemma when he stated that "they proved beyond doubt that the Marxist Party is the strongest political party in the state with a wider mass base. But, then it has also shown that it is difficult for any political party in Kerala to come to power without the support of one or other communal party".¹⁹

Chander examined how factions and factional infights have grown in the Congress(I) and the Kerala Congress, and affected the prospects of the UDF in the March elections of 1987. He observed, "there was a spurt of rebel candidates on account of dissatisfaction with the UDF leadership. Factional leaders went to the extent of canvassing against the UDF candidates and in the process digging their own grave. This development must have naturally persuaded many UDF voters to move into the LDF camp..."²⁰

Narain and Dutt in a study of the 1987 elections stated that the LDF won because of its appeal to the voters from a secular and non-communal platform. The Congress, on

the other hand, fell a prey to its own deeds - lack of co-operation and internal disorganisation. For it had to spend a lot of time trying to balance different communal and religious segments. The UDF was further handicapped by its educational policy and its stand on the reservation issue. Total rejection of the Nair based NDP and Ezhava based SRP and also the Kerala Congress indicates weakening of communal forces and politics associated with them.

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TRENDS AND FEATURES OF KERALA POLITICS

Kumar studied the trends and features of regional politics - their growth and the party system. He observes that regional parties have their roots in certain vote banks and adds that the regional parties in Kerala are the offshoot of caste, economic and environmental factors. He concludes that the splinter groups in Kerala have come to stay. It is in this context that single party rule is almost not possible.

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Varghese assessed the role of ideology in politics and showed how ideology got watered down by the constraints of coalition politics. More often coalitions have been formed to prevent a common enemy from capturing power. In this context the coalescing parties having ideological differences are compelled to come to a compromise as they have to choose the lesser of the two evils...A coalition devoid of

ideological moorings survives till the enemy is humbled. Once the euphoria of victory is over, the differences come to the surface and the structure collapses like a pack of cards.²³

Mathur and others analysed the historical legacies and various economic forces at work in Kerala and concludes that "Kerala is moving towards a polarisation of political forces". They add, "Kerala politics show a reversal of the trend of fragmentation of political choices... For instance, as seen earlier also, a large number of voters are shifting their preference either to the CPI(M) or to the Congress. The other political parties are definitely in for some heavy political weather. Secondly, both CPI(M) and the Congress, have lately been pre-occupied with consolidating their popular support base".²⁴

Francis in a study of Kerala politics says that the root cause of the political struggle in Kerala state has been its caste structure. Caste in a feudal society is almost equal to class. The lower classes tend to unite on caste basis to fight against caste prejudices and for their human rights.²⁵

In sum, the political scene in Kerala presents a 'mosaic' picture than a uniform pattern compared to many other states. Voter preferences have changed over time from one front to the other. Various communal/caste groupings further complicated the situation. Thus, nothing can be

predicted about the voting behaviour as 'issue' based alliances among different political parties seem to be gradually weakening. No political party for sure, can be complacent about its success at the hustings, be it for the national, state or local bodies.

COMMUNAL POLITICS

For some political analysts the burden of their song has been that Kerala politics is characterised by communal and caste factors. All political parties are to be blamed for the growth of communalism because they at one time or another made use of communal parties to improve their electoral chances. Fic notes that Kerala politics is merely a projection of the aspirations and strength of the communal organisations into the political arena. Therefore it failed to reflect the class affiliation of voters. In fact, they (communal organisations) have been critical factors of politics in Kerala and a slightest shift in their voting pattern can upset the fortunes of political parties.

Fadia observes that caste and communalism have been the catalysts of political consciousness in Kerala. As the Muslims are concentrated in certain areas of Malabar, so is the position of other communities in different regions in Kerala. Each political party in Kerala must, therefore, seriously count the dominant community, or what Communists

prefer to call it as 'social base' in the selection of the candidates. Although elements of each community are present in all parties (except for the Muslim League), the parties in Kerala have come to be identified with specific communities. And in each party, there is factionalism expressed through the division of religion and caste. In fact the politics of caste constitutes fundamental reality of political culture in Kerala.²⁷

Chacko blames the major parties for the mushrooming of communal and factional parties in Kerala. He observes, "In their eager pursuit of power both have discharged ideological principles. Opportunist alliances were forged to get to the reins of power and to keep the other out of power as long as possible. The practice followed by both CPI(M) and Congress, of offering ministerial berths to one leader centered parties and communal groups have only whetted further the insatiable²⁸ power appetite of splinter groups".

Thomas maintains that the interest groups in Kerala are invariably either communal or occupational. These groups enjoy greater importance because the society is divided into four major communities - Nairs, Ezhavas, Christians and Muslims. About Christians, he says that their main interest is in the field of education. Their interference in politics is itself due to its anxiety to preserve their 'right' and

privileges in the field of education. The Church takes to politics only when driven to it. At other times, it prefers to keep aloof from politics, though it is always on the alert²⁹ against encroachments on minority rights.

Nayar has dealt with the communal interest group in Kerala. He finds that the religious and caste-centered interest groups exercise greater influence on state politics than pressure groups based on class or occupation. The three powerful interest groups are the Nair Service Society representing the Nairs, Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam representing the Ezhavas and the Syrian Christians organised into Catholic and non-Catholic churches. This study also reveals that the leadership of these communal interests has been very often able to dictate its terms to the formal leadership of political parties. From this it is clear that one of the major factors contributing to governmental instability in the state of Kerala has been the ability of communal groups to overthrow cabinets found to be³⁰ unresponsive to their needs and demands.

Gladstone believes that communal consciousness got intensified with the growth of nationalism in Kerala. He observes that "the growth of nationalism furthered the sense of freedom which had been inspiring various communities for many decades. At one level people belonging to different

communities shared the national feeling though their political aims were different from those of the people of British India. At another level, there was an attempt by almost every community to strengthen and improve its own members, resulting in the growth of communalism. One of the manifestations of this tendency was the formation of communal organisations such as SNDP, NSS, etc and the changing of caste names. For the old caste names, for these groups, symbolised inferiority and humiliation in varying degrees".³¹

Tharakan finds that Kerala's history of communal influence in politics is closely linked with the pattern of social and economic development. He observes, "the distortions that occurred in the development process, particularly in the absence of strong urbanisation and industrialisation, created the premises for the growth of communalist politics. Such political organisations survived on the basis of the revival of earlier communal identities for contemporary political bargaining. In a society which does not have a sufficiently developed industrial base to absorb the increasing pressure from the unemployed, the government with its manifold avenues of patronage becomes all the more important. In this context, we would further hypothesise that the government in Kerala itself has become a participant and not any more an arbitrator in the communal wheeling and dealing".³²

Varghese while analysing the phenomenon of communalism notes that religion is not the root of communalism but rather a powerful instrument in the hands of those who seek to play their political game through it. Communalism is born of secular issues and what communal parties and groups want to safeguard is not the spiritual but the material interests of their followers. More employment, more business facilities, more forest land for cultivation, more schools, more seats in professional colleges, more berths in the ministry - are the issues around which communal parties and groups revolve and thrive. It may be wrong to conclude that communalism thrives only under the patronage of parties having communal labels; in fact 'secular parties' also function as its breeding ground. It is during the time of election that communal groups get maximum access to secular parties. It is not therefore surprising that communal groups and parties play a decisive role in the politics of Kerala.

Tharakan makes another analysis of the behaviour of communal votes in Kerala Assembly elections of 1987. He identifies six political formations, viz., Hindu Munnani, BJP, IUML, Kerala Congress, NDP and SRP that were found to be motivated by communal persuasions. As to the outcome of the 1987 elections, he observes a mixed scenario. On the one hand, both communal and anti-communal forces have grouped under one or the other political umbrella. There was an

anti-communal feeling among the young voters who moved towards the LDF because of their more positive political inclinations. A tendency to regroup under more integral religious banners such as Hindu, Muslim and Christians is also noticed.³⁴

Bhaskar tries to highlight the sociological aspects of communal problems in Kerala. She maintains that caste and community have a close association with the political alignments in a pre-capitalist society. The emergence of caste organisations is conditioned by specific socio-historical and cultural configurations wherein the ideational or material or both, are being challenged. Regarding politics, she says that its parliamentary politics is heavily dependent on caste or religious organisations. The balance between the two forces changes from time to time depending on the changes in the economic and political organisations. In Kerala, as in other parts of India, the political counterpoise between various communities to maintain its paramountcy is carried out through the devices of communal representation, communal electorate and the like to suit the ruling class interest and help to accentuate communalism.³⁵

According to Pillai, Kerala's social and political structure is characterised by established communal system. He writes that bulk of the electorate were swayed more by

caste and communal considerations than by ideological postures or political attitudes. The struggle for power and position of top leadership had been consistently waged by different communal leaders.³⁶

To Gangadharan the influence of communal organisations pervades not only the political life but also all socio-economic activities including the day-to-day working of the bureaucracy in the state. In the political field, their influence is all pervasive and is enhanced by separate political parties sponsored by the most powerful of such organisations.³⁷

Mammen traces the historical origins and evolution of the main socio-religious communities in the state as well as their shifting political loyalties which have characterised its politics. The high rate of politicisation has prevented Kerala from having a stable ministry so far since politicisation has caused more inter-communal and/or interfactional competition than co-operation. Each one of the ministries Kerala has had so far was created and subsequently toppled by the political configuration of any two or more of the five communities or factions within them. Even parties like CPI for its survival gave up its secular outlook at the altar of the powerful communal solidarity groups. Thus the party became what he calls

'traditionalised' in the antecedent communal culture of the
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traditional society.

Pillai unlike others who dealt with communalism, do not take a pessimistic view of communalisation of Kerala politics. He tries to examine role of caste and communal forces in Kerala politics from a historical perspective to bring out the positive outcomes of such interaction. He says that the transgression of castes into political forces was an institutional necessity and that it took place with predictable spontaneity. The caste associations had to incarnate themselves into political interest groups to protect the socio-economic interests of its members; and the political parties had no choice but to exploit the prevailing institutional milieu to attain and retain power. In fact, interaction of caste and politics was the most efficient way to democratise Kerala's traditional society. Once the caste interest groups succeeded in political manipulation, their own internal contradictions began to surface and their
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influence, political or otherwise began to evaporate.

Mathew also maintains that Kerala with all its communal manifestations is making a definite move towards a secular society. In his work, he tries to encapsulate the struggle for power and status by the three principal communities of Kerala. He examines how basic group identities and

primordial loyalties in which the religious factor is common, play a sustaining role in social movements, with the eventual result of initiating a secularising process. He studies how traditional (ascriptive) loyalties like religion (caste included) were made instruments to demand modern, secular (achievement oriented) ends. Though Kerala has a strong religious identity, the people of Kerala sought power and not the blood of one another. The quest for power is the underlying denominator of secularisation process in Kerala. There had been bloody clashes in Kerala between political groups but not on inter-communal identities. Therefore to capture power, the communal groups try various permutations and combinations among themselves and with the established secular political parties as well. In the process, Kerala has shown a way, a religious-communal way, towards achieving
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a secular society.

Lieten demolishes the notion that Kerala politics is purely a caste-communal affair. He brings out how a purely class based organisation, the Communist Party of India, projected an alternative programme and made tremendous advances by rallying the people in the national, democratic and economic struggles. As regards the liberation struggle launched by the communal interest groups, he says that it was not a mass upsurge as made out by the other parties. He notes, "in the first place, the media, which was almost

totally in the hands of opposition parties and had been spitting venom upon Communism during the whole period, spread a highly one-sided picture of the events. Petty police actions were frightfully exaggerated as terrible repression; rallies by the Communists were blanked out; violence against the government was played up and even small jathas and public meetings were given the aura of heroic, glittering mass
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demonstrations".

Ahmed observes that primordial and parochial ties and loyalties tend to erode and weaken when drawn into the political process. With regard to Kerala, he writes, "the temporary and shifting alliances that the compulsions of electoral politics forced upon caste and communal groups in Kerala have tended to reduce the coherence and weaken the power of their parochial appeal among the public. At the same time, the use of governmental patronage by those in power had helped to encourage important individuals in different communities to break their ties with strictly
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communal organisations".

As can be made out from the above analysis, the emerging trend appears to be the increasing nature of communalisation of Kerala politics. Although there have been different interpretations, the demographic composition of the various communities and their geographical location have helped them

to play an important role in the politics of the state. The major political parties in their eager pursuit of power diluted their own ideology by entering into alliances with parties that represented different communities. In the process, they had lent legitimacy to these communal parties.

GROWTH OF COMMUNISM

Jeffrey traced origins of Communism in Kerala in 1930's and described the way it spread and became popular with the Malayalis. By 1930's, the matrilineal social order that governed a section of the caste Hindus was collapsing and the orthodox notions of caste were giving into Western style education and new economic opportunities. The structural and ideological props of society were destroyed, and men and women were unsettled and displaced against their will. It was under these circumstances that Marxism made its appearance. In the words of Jeffrey, "Marxism in Kerala came to fill an ideological void keenly felt by thousands of literate, alienated people. Given glaring class divisions, high rates of literacy and population density, what was crucial in directing Malayalis towards Communism was the breakdown of the social system".⁴³

Hardgrave analysed the two Communist parties - CPI and CPI(M) - their electoral base and factional conflicts, tactics used in elections and their problems and prospects.

He points out that Communists maintained a steady one-third of the vote in almost all the elections. In addition to this, the support for each party has got highly regionalised and neither party, i.e., CPI and CPI(M) do stick to their traditional strongholds. Hardgrave notes that after the 1964 split, the CPI was left with its base of support in the areas of the Communist's weakest strength, the cultivator-dominant areas, while the Marxist base was concentrated in the traditional Communist stronghold, the areas of high agricultural labour.

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Nossiter evaluates essentially an indigenous Communist movement's efforts to reconcile the demands of the mass base for immediate relief from poverty on the one hand, and political lines derived from the radical interpretations of the nature of the Indian state held by the CPI and CPI(M), on the other. He also tried to bring out how, when in power, they tried to bring about a social change through a combination of constitutional machinery reinforced with mass mobilisation, despite their lack of autonomous state power. He observes that the most lasting contribution made by the Communist movement in Kerala has been its politicisation and mobilisation of propertyless and the under-privileged.

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Lieten analysed how the Communist government's attempt to disturb the superstructure in Kerala and how that had led to

the growth of a movement against it and ultimately to its dismissal. The first Communist government attempted to bring about changes in the educational system. With this aim they brought forward the Kerala Education Bill in July 1957. The main objective of the Bill was "to provide for a better organisation of general education", and more specifically to ensure the payments of salaries and security of service to teachers and provide for a check on the administration of the institutions. But this Bill set off a storm of protests from vested communal interest groups which was later supported by opposition parties. To put in Lieten's words, "The government's attempt at educational reform had attracted the immediate attention of various groups and interests who had a stake in the existing system. The opposition parties in Kerala alleged that in the field of education, government was trying to bring about a hidden 'quantitative change' through an open 'qualitative change'".⁴⁶

The review of literature reveals that there are studies on different aspects of political developments of Kerala. The general trend that emerges from all these studies is the problem of chronic political instability in the history of Kerala. Writers attribute this to a number of factors like shifting of party loyalties from one front to another; the powerful influence of communal organisations and sharp divisions of the two fronts in the state. Others trace

political instability to the breakdown of the social system and claims and counter claims of various communities for a share in the spoils of power. Studies on electoral politics indicate that the parties are bereft of any ideology. They, therefore, followed haphazard strategies at the time of elections. There was, by and large, no continuity or stability in the fortunes of political parties : defeat in one election was followed by a victory in the subsequent elections.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

As already discussed above, a number of studies have been done on Kerala in general and on political instability in particular. While the value of these studies, no doubt, is high, no effort has been made to study the interactional pattern between macro and micro level political worlds in a systematic manner. One does not have enough of studies to make generalisations about the causes and motivations that govern the phenomenon. The present study tries to fill in this gap but yet a vast ground remains to be explored before any valid generalisations can be attempted.

The present study seeks to examine political instability by taking up a micro level analysis of a constituency and studying the political process in its detail. The investigator concentrated on three specific aspects of

political process : one, the influence of community over the voters; two, perceptions of people of their leaders, and its effect on instability: three, the nature of political participation in general and modes of electoral behaviour of the respondents in particular. These factors are examined in the context of the macro level trends and their interconnections.

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Chapter-II

**The Study :
Scope and Methodology**

CHAPTER II

THE STUDY : SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The scope of the study is confined to the examination of the phenomenon of political instability at two levels :

one), the voting pattern of 140 constituencies, which provides an overview of the phenomenon at a macro level;

two), based on the macro level data, the study seeks to examine political instability at the micro level by a detailed and indepth analysis of micro level case study of a select constituency.

As a part of this analysis the study focuses on three factors viz., communalism, leadership and participation. These three factors are considered crucial to Kerala politics. Assessing the place of these variables in the phenomenon of stability or instability are expected to throw up light on the areas of political enquiry which have hitherto been not covered. Studies of instability have not gone into the causation of this kind. Hence the focus on these three variables.

(i) COMMUNALISM

Communalism as it operates in Kerala is quite different from what is obtained in other parts of India. Kerala is noted for its uniqueness in religious diversity and communal harmony as compared to other states. But with all these

positive attributes, it is noticed that the electorate is being swayed by communal feelings and identities at the time of elections. That makes this factor important to the present study as it results in fragmentation, which, in turn contributes to the instability.

(ii) LEADERSHIP

Leadership may be defined as the interaction between leaders and the voters who elect them. The interaction includes people's perception about leaders and level of satisfaction with the leaders performance. In addition, the social linkages and personality traits of the leaders and their interaction with the people is examined. The increasing gap between the leaders and followers can provide a clue to instability syndrome.

(iii) POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation may be defined as the process through which the individuals and groups play a role in the political life of the society. It is the levels of participation and organised articulation that determines the levels of stability. While organised participation can lead to orderly change, the unorganised participation can result in instability without direction. The study is an attempt to examine this complex process.

SELECTION OF CONSTITUENCY

An analysis of political history of 140 constituencies of Kerala (for details, see Chapter IV) indicate that they can broadly be classified into three categories : the first category include constituencies that showed a greater amount of stability during the various elections (Table 1); the second category comprises constituencies that showed traces of both stability and instability during various elections (Table 2); the third category includes constituencies that have been unstable in terms of electoral shifts and the outcomes (Table 3).

TABLE 1 : STABLE CONSTITUENCIES

1. Trikkarpur	2. Payyannur
3. Taliparamba	4. Peravoor
5. Koduvally	6. Wandoor
7. Malappuram	8. Kondotty
9. Tirurangadi	10. Thirvambadi
11. Sultan's Battery	12. Tanur
13. Tirur	14. Kuttipuram
15. Malampuzha	16. Kollengode
17. Alathur	18. Cherpu
19. Mala	20. Kodungallur
21. Ernakulam	22. Alwaye
23. Palai	24. Chavara

TABLE 2 : RELATIVELY UNSTABLE CONSTITUENCIES

1. Kasaragod	2. Irrikur
3. Kuthuparamba	4. North Wynad
5. Quilandy	6. Balusseri
7. Calicut - 1	8. Beypore
9. Nilambur	10. Kalpetta
11. Thrithala	12. Perintalmanna
13. Ottapalam	14. Palghat
15. Coyalmanam	16. Wadakancherry
17. Kodakara	18. Ankamali
19. Parur	20. Mattancherry
21. Palluruthy	22. Thodupuzha
23. Peermade	24. Vazhoor
25. Puthupally	26. Aroor
27. Mararikulam	28. Aranmula
29. Mavelikara	30. Pandalam
31. Pathanapuram	32. Punaloor
33. Chadayamangalam	34. Kunnathur
35. Eravipuram	36. Chathanoor
37. Varkala	38. Killimanoor
39. Nedumangad	40. Ariyanad
41. Tellicherry	42. Badagara
43. Nadapuram	44. Perambra
45. Manjeri	46. Mankada
47. Manalur	48. Guruvayoor

contd.

49. Vadakkekara	50. Kothamangalam
51. Idukki	52. Changanacherry
53. Vaikom	54. Alleppey
55. Kuttanad	56. Pathanamthitta
57. Kottarakara	58. Neduvathod
59. Vamanapuram	

TABLE 3 : UNSTABLE CONSTITUENCIES

1. Manjeswar	2. Hosdrug
3. Udma	4. Azhikode
5. Cannanore	6. Edakkad
7. Peringalam	8. Meppayur
9. Calicut - II	10. Kunnamangalam
11. Ponnani	12. Pattambi
13. Sreekrishnapuram	14. Mannarghad
15. Chittur	16. Chelakara
17. Kunnamkulam	18. Trichur
19. Ollur	20. Chalakudy
21. Irinjalakuda	22. Nattika
23. Narakal	24. Tripunithura
25. Perumbavoor	26. Kunnathunad
27. Piravom	28. Muvattupuzha
29. Devicolam	30. Udumbanchola

Contd.

31. Kanjirapally	32. Kottayam
33. Etumanoor	34. Ponjar
35. Kaduthuruthy	36. Sherthala
37. Ambalapuzha	38. Haripad
39. Kayamkulam	40. Thiruvalla
41. Kallooppara	42. Chegannur
43. Ranni	44. Konni
45. Adoor	46. Karunagapally
47. Kundara	48. Quilon
49. Attingal	50. Kazhakuttam
51. Trivandrum North	52. Trivandrum West
53. Trivandrum East	54. Nemon
55. Kovalam	56. Neyyattinkara
57. Parassala	

The first and third category constituencies fall in the extreme end of stability and instability respectively. While it is desirable that each category is studied to capture the pattern, this being a study undertaken single handedly without any support, it had to be restricted. In order to avoid extremities and biases, a constituency which falls in the middle category has been selected. For this purpose, Mavelikara constituency, situated in Alleppey district was selected for a detailed study. The selection is through

purposive random sampling. It should be admitted that there is as yet no method of sampling which can be totally representative of the universe.

Alleppey district is bounded on the north by Ernakulam district, on the east by the Kottayam and Quilon districts, on the south by the Quilon district, on the west by the Arabian Sea and its longest point it extends 31 miles from west to east and 55 miles from south to north. The total area of the district is 708.07 sq. miles i.e., 4.72 per cent of the total geographical area of the state. According to the 1981 census, the total population of the district is 2,350,145. There are 13 constituencies in the district and Mavelikara is one of them.

Two major criteria for selection of this constituency were :

First, an important feature of the Assembly constituency is its caste and community composition. The electoral politics of the constituency are subjected to divergent pulls of different communities. While there is a sizeable number of Ezhavas, the other communities like Nairs and Christians are also a force to reckon with in this area. The Muslims do not constitute a significant number in this constituency.

The second significant and influential factor in selecting the constituency is its political background. This constituency did show certain degree of political instability

TABLE 4 : ELECTORAL TRENDS IN MAVELIKARA CONSTITUENCY

Election	Year	Party that won
First	1957	CPI [*]
Second	1960	CPI
Third	1965	INC
Fourth	1967	SSP
Fifth	1970	ISP
Sixth	1977	Independent
Seventh	1980	CPI (M)
Eighth	1982	CPI (M)
Ninth	1987	CPI (M)
Tenth	1991	Cong (I)

* Mavelikara was a multi-member constituency in 1957.

Source : V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, State Elections in India : The South, Vol. 5 (New SDelhi : Sage Publications, 1988).

in its electoral processes. In the first few elections after the formation of Kerala, the seat was won by the undivided Communist Party of India and in the subsequent elections, the seat was won by different political parties (See table 4). In 1977, CPI (M) won the seat and it continued to win it till the 1987 elections. In 1991 elections, congress won the seat by unseating the sitting Communist Party of India (Marxist) candidate. This stability-instability syndrome can provide

insights into the overall micro-level political processes in Kerala, in particular and to the overall situation in Kerala in general.

Selection of Panchayat

As the entire Mavelikara constituency would have been a difficult task to study, a panchayat comprising a cluster of wards was identified and selected for the micro level study. In the selection of Panchayat (a) a Panchayat with some sort of political history (b) a panchayat with multi-caste composition was selected. Additional reason for identifying the Panchayat was that the area under study should not be too large for the researcher to cover in view of the constraints of time and resources nor should it be too small to prevent a meaningful coverage. The purpose of selecting the Panchayat with multi-caste composition is to have representation in the sample from various castes/communities coming from various social ranking. This is done to capture the complexity of socio-political dynamics.

Adapting this criteria, Thekekkara Panchayat consisting of several wards was selected in the first instance. The next stage was to short list a few wards from this Panchayat. Some wards were rejected on the ground that they were mainly inhabited by either a single caste or a very few castes. Finally, the following wards in Thekkekkara Panchayat was selected for the study :

- (a) Vathukolam
- (b) Olayattambalam
- (c) Mullikulangara
- (d) Kurthiad
- (e) Ponezha

As the Thekkekara Panchayat did not have a sizeable Muslim population, a ward of the adjoining Panchayat was selected so as to have coverage of all the communities which matter in the elections. This ward, Kattachera is located in Bharanicavu Panchayat.

SAMPLE SIZE

It may not be out of place to state that in the present study, what matters is not the ratio between the size of the universe and size of the sample to make the study totally representative. As stated earlier, it is fairly a difficult task. What weighed in the sample selection was the depth and comprehensiveness that a microscopic analysis can offer. For this purpose, what is needed is a manageable sample rather than a large one. Apart from this, the sample should also be stratified so as to represent a cross section of the population. However, in the theory of sampling there are very serious differences about the representative sample of the universe. In the absence of a scientific criterion, we depended on the sample which is dependable and also manageable.

For the purpose of this study, a sample of 180 respondents was drawn on the basis of purposive random sampling to establish their proximity to the actual social strata of the population in the constituency. Each of the selected respondent was contacted personally to elicit his/her response to the questions in the schedule. Enough of effort was made to strike rapport with the respondents. They were given sufficient time to answer the questions in the schedule without the slightest lead from the investigator. The respondents, by and large, were responsive and cooperative. Though a bit reserved in the beginning, women were also responsive. The conclusions drawn on such a study are more valid to similar situations than to universal situation.

FEATURES OF THE SCHEDULE

The data for the present study have been gathered from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include data generated from the structured interview schedule canvassed to a selected respondents and observations and discussion with people including the leaders. The secondary sources include gathering of relevant materials from books, articles, newspaper clippings, party manifesto and so on. The investigator made two trips to Kerala : once in March 1987 when a good deal of information and material relating to

the nomination and campaign phases of election was collected. The second trip was made during June-July, 1988 for canvassing the structured interview schedule.

As the interview schedule was framed in Malayalam, care was taken to see that the translation was not only closest to the English original but was clear enough to be intelligible to an average respondent. The schedule consisted of a number of open and close ended questions (Questionnaire enclosed in Appendix 1). The open ended questions were framed so as to give the respondents greater degree of freedom in expressing their view points better. The questions that were included covered a whole spectrum relating to political participation, leadership and communalism. The questionnaire consisted of four parts :

(a) **DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES**

The details of the personal data about the respondents were collected. The details relate to sex, age, education, caste/religion, occupation, income and the extent of land holdings.

(b) **LEADERSHIP**

The second part of the schedule contained questions to assess perception of the respondents in relation to their leaders. This was primarily aimed at comprehending the type

of expectations from the leadership. This section contained questions relating to qualities expected in a leader - satisfaction with their performance, the need for a change in leadership and the type of interaction that people expect between leaders and followers.

(c) POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The third part of the schedule contained questions relating to various dimensions of political participation. This includes : frequency of voting, voting behaviour during elections, grounds of appeal by the candidates, factors that motivate candidates to contest elections, party affiliation of the respondents (if any), leaning to political parties and active participation in election campaigns.

(d) COMMUNALISM SCALE

In the study of influence of communalism, a scale used by Verma with certain modification has been used. Verma had suggested a barometer of ten points reflecting the intensity of communalism.¹ This has been taken into consideration while formulating the statements of the communalism scale. As the scale was found to be not totally appropriate an attempt has been made to construct the scale and examine the reliability and validity with the help of a pilot survey prior to the final data collection.

In order to measure the level of communalism, preliminary scale items were constructed based on survey of existing literature and after eliciting the opinion of experts and social scientists in political behaviour. The scale was intended to get an agree-disagree-undecided response. Suitability of the statements were thoroughly discussed and a final list of 17 statements was made. Prior to pilot testing, the prepared attitudinal statements were referred to six social scientists with high social standing for establishing the content validity and appropriateness of the wordings in the statements. Based on the reaction of the judges several statements in the scale were edited and focus was sharpened eliminating the observed ambiguity of the item structure. The statements were then translated to Malayalam so as to help the respondents get a clearer idea of the things proposed to be asked. While translating care was taken to see that the Malayalam version more or less corresponded to the English one. The preliminary scale used for the pilot survey consisted of nine negatively keyed and eight positively keyed items (Appendix 2).

PILOT SURVEY

The schedule was pre-tested : this was done mainly to examine suitability of 17 statements. The pilot survey data was coded by giving appropriate score for positive and

negative items. The total score of the statements ranged from 2 to 20. Two statistical tests were used for the item² selection as indicated by McTver and Carmines.

The individual score of 17 items were summed up and as a first measure the item scores were correlated using product moment correlation, to find out to what extent the individual item score correlate with the total score. This gave an indication as to whether each item is more or less uniformly contributing to the total score. Further, as a second measure the total respondents were divided into high and low groups based on the quartile one and three values based on their total attitude score (the middle group was not considered for this analysis). The 22 respondents fell within Q1 range (<9) and 15 respondents above Q3 (>14). Critical ratios ('t' ratio) were also computed to examine the statistical significance of the mean difference between the two groups. The final selection of the statements was based on the combination of these two techniques of item selection. Those items which showed a significant 't ratio' and significant correlation coefficient at 0.05 were retained in the scale for final survey. In all 11 statements were retained for the final scale. Theoretical score ranged between 0-22. The final scale consisted of six negatively keyed and five positively keyed items. Scale responses were weighted so that higher score on the scale meant greater

communal tendency while a lower score indicated lesser communal intensity.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The statistical technique 'Chi Square' was used to explore the relationship between the selected variables. It helps in comparing the obtained set of observed frequencies in given categories with a set of theoretical or expected frequencies occurring within them. Essentially it is based on a comparison of the sum of the squared deviations from the mean in a given sample with the variance of the theoretical or assumed proportions.³ The formula for calculating Chi Square is :

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum (f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

in which f_o = observed frequency in a single category

f_e = expected, theoretical or hypothetical frequency

\sum = Sum of

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Socio-economic profile of the respondents is elicited mainly to show that a representative sample has been drawn up in the study of political instability. The data on socio-economic variables like sex, age, castes/religion, education, occupation, income and land holding have been analysed and presented in the following section.

SEX RATIO

The ratio of males to females in the sample size is given below in the Table 5. Though the sex ratio in Mavelikara constituency is slightly in favour of the females, in the sample that was selected, the ratio is largely in favour of the males.

TABLE 5 : SEX RATIO

Village	Females	Males	Total
1. Vathukolam	10	20	30
2. Olayattiambalam	11	20	31
3. Mullikolangra	12	17	29
4. Kurthiad	10	18	28
5. Ponezha	11	19	30
6. Kattachera	11	21	32
	65	115	180

LITERACY

Literacy is an important determinant of political behaviour, especially in Kerala which is having the highest literacy rate in India. This high level of literacy has helped the people participate more forcefully in the affairs of the state. All the 180 respondents in the study area are literate. But if we go deeper by breaking up the education level of the respondents, we find that 15.6 per cent of them have education below primary level, about 39.7 per cent between primary and SSLC level, 36.6 per cent between SSLC and under graduate level, 5.6 per cent completed graduation while only 1.7 per cent of them were in the professional line.

TABLE 6 : LEVEL OF EDUCATION

1. Below Primary level	28 (15.6)
2. Primary and below SSLC	71 (39.4)
3. SSLC and Under graduate	66 (36.7)
4. Graduates	10 (5.6)
5. Professionals	2 (1.7)
	180 (100.0)

CASTE/RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION

The major communities that are present in the state are the Nairs, Ezhavas, Christians, Muslims and the Scheduled Castes. The Namboodiris who once dominated, now do not play a significant role in the politics of the state. In keeping with the state situation, all the above communities were represented in the sample. The break up of the respondents on the basis of communities is given in Table 7. The ratio of different communities, more or less, correspond to the general situation in the state. In the selected area, it is the Nairs who dominate the political scene and the leadership is also provided by this community.

TABLE 7 : CASTE/RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION

1. Nairs	35 (19.4)	
2. Ezhavas	36 (20.0)	
3. Scheduled castes	34 (18.4)	Hindus : 110
4. Namboodiris and others	5 (2.8)	
5 Christians	39 (21.7)	
6. Muslims	31 (17.2)	Non-Hindus : 70

AGE

For the parliamentary elections held in 1989, the minimum voting age was reduced to 18 years. But since the assembly election was held in 1987, only those who were listed in the electoral rolls are selected. The age of the respondents ranged from 23 to 83. Since this is too wide a range to put down in a tabular form, the actual age as told by the respondents was collapsed into three age-groups : young, middle and old (Table 8).

TABLE 8 : AGE

1. Young	Below 35 years	55 (30.6)
2. Middle	36-55 years	55 (30.6)
3. Old	56 and above	70 (38.9)

As seen in Table 8, the respondents are more or less divided among the three categories, though there are some differences in their respective strengths. For example, the number of respondents belonging to the old age group are the highest in number - 70 (38.9) followed by the other two groups - 55 (30.6) each.

OCCUPATION

Occupation which is an index of the class structure of society helps one assess the responses of the cross section of the society. In the study, the respondents have been grouped into five categories of occupation : cultivators, labourers, businessmen and traders and the unemployed category.

Data on occupation given in table 9 shows that 23.9 per cent of the respondents belong to the unemployed category. Around 27.2 per cent of the respondents are labourers followed by 13.9 per cent respondents from business and

TABLE 9 : OCCUPATION

1. Cultivators	19 (10.6)
2. Labourers	49 (27.2)
3. Business and trade	43 (13.9)
4. Organised sector	26 (14.4)
5. Unemployed	43 (23.9)

trade. Respondents who are in the organised sector accounted for 14.4 per cent and the cultivators 10.6 per cent.

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Income, which is another socio-economic variable, is considered as an index of one's social status and influence that one wields in the society. In the present study, the respondents were asked to give their monthly income and not the income of the household to which they belonged. What we found from experience is that the respondents showed a tendency to understate their income. The figures relating to the monthly income of the respondents, however, is given in Table 10.

The table shows that those in the income of Rs. 1000 and above (per month) constitute about 17.4 per cent of the

TABLE 10 : ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

S. No	Village	Upto Rs.500	Rs 501- 700	Rs. 701- 999	Rs1000- and above
1.	Vathukolam	9	4	11	6
2.	Olayattiambalam	9	11	8	3
3.	Mullikulangara	13	12	2	2
4.	Kurthiad	10	9	6	3
5.	Ponezha	5	8	10	7
6.	Kattachera	5	12	8	7
		51 (28.3)	56 (31.4)	45 (25.0)	25 (17.4)

total. The highest percentage - 31.4 per cent - is of those respondents who are earning between Rs. 501-700 per month. Those respondents having an income upto Rs. 500 constitute about 28.3 per cent. A fairly good number of the respondents (25 per cent) have an income between Rs 701-999. Thus there is a mixed group of respondents ranging from the relatively poor to the rich.

LAND HOLDING

A glance at the data on the extent of ownership of landed property reveals that only a few respondents come in the category of landless - just 1.1 per cent. Equally significant is that those who said that they own more than

TABLE 11 : LAND HOLDING

(100 cents = 1 acre)

S.No.	Village	Landless	Upto 25 cents	26-99 cents	1 Acre and cents
1.	Vathukolam	-	13	8	9
2.	Olayattiambalam	-	20	8	3
3.	Mullikulangara	2	18	5	4
4.	Kurthiad	-	13	10	5
5.	Ponezha	-	14	7	9
6.	Kattachera	-	13	12	7
		2 (1.1)	91 (55.6)	50 (27.8)	37 (20.6)

one acre of land is 20.6 per cent. This small percentage would show the kind of changes that have taken place in the land relations. The respondents who own upto 25 cents constitute about 55.6 per cent. The respondents who own land between 26-99 cents constitute about 27.8 per cent.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It must be mentioned here that the present study in no way can be considered exhaustive. For that matter no single study can capture the complete picture of political instability and its impact on the polity. For the size and complexity of the phenomenon is problematic. It is generally agreed that a more representative sample covering larger universe can throw up data on the basis of which certain generalisations can be attempted. This study is confined to a micro-level area and focuses attention on one select constituency. ~~Such a sample does suffer from certain~~ severe limitations. However, as M.N. Srinivas observes, "while macro level studies provide the perspective, the micro level studies provide insights".⁴ Needless to mention, the constraints of time, finance and single handed handling account for such an approach.

CHAPTERISATION OF THE STUDY

Based on the objectives as given earlier, the study is arranged into the following chapters :

The first chapter deals with theoretical review of Western and Indian scholars on various aspects of Kerala. It also identifies gaps existing in the present literature.

The second chapter deals with the scope and the methodology of the study.

The third chapter outlines the profile of Kerala - its history, geographical location, economy and a brief sketch of its people.

The fourth chapter outlines the political history of Kerala and the voting pattern in 140 constituencies during the post independence period.

The fifth chapter traces the origin of communalism and its impact on the stability instability syndrome of the governments in Kerala. It analyses the intensity of communalism with the help of a scale. -----

The sixth chapter provides an account of the relationship between the leaders and followers. The perception of people about their leaders and their assessment of the leaders is analysed to get a view of stability of the relationship and the factors that influence the stability or the otherwise in the relationship.

The seventh chapter focuses on levels of participation of the electorate in the political process. This analysis,

it is hoped, would help both in assessing the consciousness and its impact on stability-instability syndrome.

The final chapter presents the findings flowing from the macro and micro level data.

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Chapter-III

Kerala : A Profile

CHAPTER III

KERALA : A PROFILE

I

Kerala is known for its continuous political instability. Any discussion on instability in Kerala politics is not meaningful without looking at its geographical location and historical evolution of the state. For history has an important bearing on the social and political behaviour of the people. Here an attempt is made to trace the historical roots of instability and the influences of the other geographical factors on this political phenomenon.

HISTORY

Kerala as Kerala was first mentioned on a rock inscription of the third century B.C. left by Emperor Ashoka. It then became an independent Kingdom of Keralaputra and was ruled by the Chera dynasty until the fifth century. The Chera kingdom disintegrated into innumerable petty principalities during the eleventh century after the Hundred Years war with the Chola empire. Ravi Varma during the 14th century established a kingdom spanning almost the whole of southern India. But after his death in 1314, the kingdom once again broke up into a number of warring chieftaincies, the most important being Calicut in the north and Travancore in the south.

The entry of foreigners to Kerala began with Vasco da Gama who landed in Calicut in 1498. The Portuguese and Dutch tried to establish their supremacy over the territories but were thwarted in their attempts by Zamorin of Calicut and Marthanda Varma of Travancore. It was the British who succeeded in establishing their presence in Kerala. They were helped by the frequent invasions by Hyder Ali and later by Tippu Sultan between 1741 and 1766. In order to ward off the attacks from Tippu Sultan, Cochin and Travancore kingdoms had to take help of the British. In return, the British imposed their suzerainty over these kingdoms in 1791 and 1795 respectively. After the defeat of Tippu Sultan, the Zamorin's territories were annexed by British and was made a part of the Madras Presidency.

In 1949, the two princely states were integrated together resulting in Travancore-Cochin state. In 1956 when the states were reorganised on a linguistic basis, the state of Kerala was formed by integrating Travancore-Cochin and Malabar. But within the broad unity of Kerala there are significant social, cultural and economic differences between the three regions which have had an impact on the political process. The peculiarity of evolution of the three regions resulted in each region showing a different and distinct trends as far as the political process is concerned.

MALABAR

After the defeat of Tippu Sultan, Malabar was annexed by the East India Company in 1792 and was made a part of the Bombay Presidency and later of the Madras Presidency. Under British rule, Malabar was a neglected region. The British hardly spent any amount except meeting the requirements of law and order.² They did little to develop the area though the returns they got from land in terms of revenue were very high. They changed the land settlement completely and established one which was beneficial to the Hindu Jenmis. The Jenmi became the absolute proprietor with a contractual title and could evict the tenant at will.

Another notable feature was the presence of intermediaries (Kanomdars) between landlords and peasants and were given the responsibility of collection of revenue. The net result of all these changes was that the cultivator/peasant began to live at the mercy of landlord/intermediary because he was allowed to retain only a third or less of the net produce. As Manu Bhaskar observes "the exorbitant rent rates, frequent evictions and accumulation of debt were the key factors responsible for the worsening of general economic condition of the peasantry. Relations between the Jenmis and tenants went on deteriorating and the unrest ultimately broke out into a full

fledged battle between the two called the 'Moplah
Outbreaks'³".

Among the three regions, Malabar is the poorest with incidence of highest unemployment and the lowest level of literacy. It is the only area where one finds the nucleated type of settlement pattern. Together with the distinctive role of the mosque as a communal gathering place, this has served to reinforce the hold of the Muslim League on the Moplah population.⁴

COCHIN

Cochin, the smallest of the units had also to face a long series of invaders starting with the Portugese and later by the Dutch. But unlike the Portugese, the Dutch took no interest in the development of the area as their sole interest was trade. Consequently their policies were less forceful and less impetuous than those of the Portugese...⁵
The rivalry between Travancore and Cochin finally erupted in the form of a clash in 1754. Travancore's Marthanda Varma defeated the chieftains of Cochin though they had forged a united front to face Travancore. The victory was followed by a treaty of friendship in 1757 between the two princely states and which marked the beginning of an unbroken peace between Travancore and Cochin.

TRAVANCORE

The history of Travancore unlike the other two regions was quite different. The kingdom of Venad established in the twelfth century lasted till the end of the eighteenth century. During this phase, the kingdom got extended from Cochin to Cape Comorin. Unlike what was prevalent in Malabar, the land was appropriated by the state by subjugating the traditional landed gentry. During the end of the eighteenth century, Travancore entered into a treaty with the East India Company and in 1805 became a protectorate state with the imposition of British suzerainty.

Under British suzerainty, the Princely state of Travancore began to imbibe many of the features of the British system : codified law, British-style courts and (missionary-led) education. The Maharaja of Travancore was helped by Chief Ministers called Dewans, who were mostly non-Malayali Brahmins. The most progressive of the Chief Ministers was T. Madhava Rao who introduced far reaching reforms : the fundamental reorganisation of education; creation of a Public Works Department; the encouragement of the cash economy and the enfranchisement of tenant
6
cultivators.

All these developments made the people more conscious of their political rights as never before. They began to resent

the dominance of the alien Brahmins in administration. Their protest against this outside domination resulted in the Malayali Memorial, a petition signed by thousands of people asking for more opportunities for the natives. This was submitted to the Dewan. This move, though symbolic, was initiated by the Nairs backed by the Christians and Ezhavas.

II

GEOGRAPHY

Kerala, the southern state of the Indian Union lies sandwiched between the Arabian Sea in the west and the Western Ghats in the east. It has an area of 15,005 square miles (38,863 sq. km.), about one per cent of the total area of India. The state can broadly be divided into three natural sub-divisions : the coastal lowlands, midlands and highlands. Among the three, the coastal lowlands is the most densely populated region.

The state of Kerala is a land of contradictions in a nation of contrasts.⁷ Though Kerala is one of the smallest states in terms of area, it is very densely populated with a density of 654 persons per sq.km. This is in contrast to the all India average of 221 persons per sq.km. Kerala like rest of the country is overwhelmingly rural in character. But unlike the rest of the country, Kerala lacks the nucleated

village which is a characteristic feature of the settlement pattern. As a result of this, it is difficult to find villages in the strict sense of the term. Some writers describe Kerala as one continuous village. Nossiter maintained that the peculiar settlement pattern contributed to the strain of individualism found in modern Malayali culture. He also adds that absence of nucleated villages is a significant factor in the development of the communist movement. During the underground era, party workers were in a better position to escape detection since police resources could not be concentrated. Conversely, the cadre has itself been stretched when operating as a legal party by reason of the dispersal of the population. This indicates how the settlement pattern is important to the study of political culture.⁸

Kerala has the highest literacy rate and the only state where females outnumber males (Table 1). It abounds in natural and agricultural wealth but still has to depend on centre and other states for a regular supply of foodgrains. It was once a bastion of orthodox Hinduism with an elaborate system of caste ranking but at the same time a region which has been deeply affected by the process of social mobilisation and change. As Menon observes, "the caste rules operated at one time in the most irrational

Entire state has since been declared as cent per cent
literate

manner. The triple social evil of untouchability, unapprochability and unseeability were observed by people at all the levels of Hindu society. The concept of purity and pollution assumed serious dimensions and came to be applied not only in relation between different castes in Hindu society but also in the relation between Hindus and non-Hindus⁹".

TABLE 1 : POPULATION OF KERALA

Year	Persons	Males	Females	Density of people per sq.km	Decadal growth rate
1971	21347375	1058785	10759524	549	
1981	25453680	12527767	12925913	655	19.24

Source : Census of India, 1981.

THE ECONOMY

AGRICULTURE

Though agriculture still remains the mainstay of Kerala's economy the per capita distribution of land shows a declining trend over the years. The high pressure of population on land is compounded by extreme fragmentation of landholdings and their uneven distribution among the different classes of society. The average size of marginal holding is as low as 0.18 hectares as against the all-India

average of 0.38 hectares. This abysmally small average size is an obvious reflection of the preponderance of sub-marginal holdings in Kerala. In the 1981 census, 13.07 per cent of the total population were classified as cultivators and 28.13 per cent as agricultural labourers as against the all India figures of 41.56 and 21.91 per cent respectively.

Another characteristic feature of the agriculture scene in Kerala is the diversity of the crops grown. While about 70 per cent of the cropped area in the country as a whole is under food crops, the corresponding figure in Kerala is only about 30 per cent.¹⁰ Though the major food crop grown in the state has been paddy, the area under paddy has shown a downward trend over the years. As against this, the area under cash crops such as coconut, rubber, coffee, tea etc.¹¹ has registered a substantial increase. As a result of this lopsided development the state became more and more dependent on the centre for a regular supply of foodgrains. Any cut in the supplies led to acute shortage of foodgrains in the state. Sometimes shortage of foodgrains became a focal issue during the Assembly elections.

Among the cash crops, coconut is important to the Kerala economy in a number of ways : one, the outer husk is used as a raw material for the most important cottage industry in the state i.e., coir industry; two, the kernel is used for edible purpose and it is the mainstay of a number of oil

mills in the state; three, the oil extracted from it is used as a raw material for making soaps; four, the leaves are used for providing shelter and the tree itself is used for fuel purposes. This, in a way, is a crop which generates employment at multiple levels.

INDUSTRY

Although Kerala is endowed with certain basic requirements of industrial growth, the picture on the industrial front is not very encouraging. Kerala does not possess any industrial fuel like coal, gas etc. and it imports all these basic raw materials from other states. Apart from this, the militancy of labour has slowed down the industrial growth in the state. The various governments that ruled the state made no determined effort to bring about industrialisation of the state. This is reflected in the outlays fixed for the industries during the five year plans. The major chunk of the allocation went to agriculture and social service sectors like education, health etc., and thereby relegating industries to a secondary position in the development process.

III

THE PEOPLE

The people of the state broadly belong to one of the three religions : Christianity, Islam and Hinduism (Table 2).

TABLE 2 : DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

	Population	Hindus	Muslims	Christians
Total	25,453,680	14,801,347	5,409,687	5,233,835
Rural	20,682,405	12,022,163	4,361,469	4,284,063
Urban	4,771,275	2,779,183	1,048,218	939,802

Source : Census of India, 1981

It is one of those states of India where Hindus are not as predominant in number as elsewhere. Here the Hindus constitute 58.1 per cent of the total population while rest of the population is either Muslims (21.3%) or Christians (20.5%).

CHRISTIANS

The origin of Christians can be traced to St. Thomas who is said to have landed at the Kerala port of Merzeris(Craganore) in 52 A.D. and converted the Namboodiris into Christianity. The church slowly grew through conversion of local Hindus and through immigration of Persians and Mesopotomians. These links with Persia and Mesopotomia shaped the liturgy and also the doctrines of the church in India. The Christians assimilated a part of the dominant system and even underwent the process of Hinduisation. They adopted many of the customs of the Hindus like tying of sacred thread at the time of marriage and lighting of lamps in churches.

The Christians constitute 20.5 per cent (1981) of the total population in Kerala. They are concentrated in central and northern part of Travancore and southern Cochin. They are strongly represented in business, banking, government service and plantations like coffee, rubber and spices. The single largest group among the Christians is the Syrian Christians who trace their ancestry to Syria. They are broadly divided into Roman Catholics, Jacobites and Mar Thomites. The second largest group are the Latin Catholics who practice Latin rites in their worship service. They form the backward group within the Christian fold and are concentrated mostly in the coastal areas. Socially and economically they are a 'backward group' officially listed¹² thus for purposes of education and job reservation.

Politically, the Christians have been strong supporters of the undivided Congress party. After the birth of Kerala Congress in 1967, Christians especially the Catholics shifted their allegiance to it. The church on its part quite often dabbled in politics. The bishops played an important role during the 'Liberation Struggle' against the CPI government in 1959 when they felt that the educational reforms proposed by the government were against the church interests. Through pastoral letters, the Bishops were able to whip up communal feelings against the proposed bill of the government.

MUSLIMS

The Muslims who constitute 21.3 per cent (1981) of the total population are concentrated in the northern part of Kerala. Their origin can be traced to the Arab traders who carried on trade with the Malabar coast. In course of time, the Muslim community grew through proselytisation and by natural increase.

The annexation of Malabar by the British after the defeat of Tippu Sultan had an adverse impact on the general condition of the Muslims in the area. The British rule placed them in a state of economic and cultural subjugation. A majority of them lived in a state of poverty because most of them belonged to the category of landless labourers, poor fishermen and petty traders. The land relations were such that they hardly got anything from their land if at all they possessed any and they had to depend on landlords who mostly were Hindus. Literacy did make some progress in the group, but was much more slower than in the case of other groups. For the cultural resistance to change was much stronger among them. The mass of people continued to stagnate both socially and economically while minority quickly integrated into the rising middle often Anglicanised class. The under-currents of continued repression against the British rule and exploitation at the hands of rich Hindu landlords and

moneylenders resulted in the Moplah Rebellion between 1921 and 1922.

Politically, the Muslims took a line different from the other communities. They generally tended to vote for the Muslim League from the beginning. This may be because their religious loyalty arising out of a sense of insecurity far outweighed other factors like personality of the contesting candidate, economic factors etc. This is true as far as Malabar region is concerned. In other places the Muslims tended to support other parties. Since the Muslims are concentrated in some specific regions, like Malappuram, Calicut etc. the yields for the Muslim League from this region has been quite significant. It was the undivided Communist party that actually brought the Muslim League into the forefront of politics in Kerala. It entered into an alliance with it during the 1967 elections and Malappuram district was formed as a concession to the Muslims for their support to EMS ministry. This is in contrast to the position taken by Congress party which refused to align with the communal Muslim League. This stand was diluted later and Muslim League became a partner of the congress led alliance.

The Muslim League also suffered a split in its ranks and two parties were carved out of it - The Indian Union Muslim League and the All India Muslim League. The former supported the Congress led front while the latter joined the Communist

led front. Both of them merged with each other during the 1987 elections after the Communist Party of India (Marxist) refused to include AIML in the Left Democratic Front.

HINDUS

Christians and Muslims have greater religious identity than the Hindus. This may be because of their feeling of insecurity arising out of their minority character. The Hindus on the other hand are not religiously disposed to each other, because people are divided horizontally and vertically on the basis of caste. In the case of Hinduism, the concept of untouchability was broadened to include unseeability and unapprochability. Within the Hindu fold the important castes are the Namboodiris, Nairs, Ezhavas and Scheduled castes.

At the top of the caste system are the Namboodiris who form about 2-3 per cent of the total population. They trace their descent from the Brahmins who had settled on the land gifted to them by the mythological Parasurama. This attitude and their simple life style enabled them to super impose¹⁴ their power on the people. They formed the priestly class and had set up temples in different parts of the state. They monopolised the educational field and prevented any one from entering the field. Their patrilineal and primogenital customs are such that under those customs the eldest son of

the Namboodiri was allowed to marry within his own community.¹⁵ This prevented fragmentation of the property. After independence, the Namboodiris lost much of their powers and prestige. Legislation was passed to permit the break up of joint family and to reform marriage customs. Politically they began to play less important role and they generally tended to keep aloof from the thick of politics.

Below the Brahmins in caste hierarchy are the Nairs who along with the Namboodiris formed the land-owning class. They form 16 per cent of the total population of the state. Historically they were the militia of the land and were recruited by various chieftains of the land. They were the typical knights - errant of the middle ages who scorned 'the toils of culture and of art' as well as riches and lived by rendering military service to their overlord...¹⁶

Unlike Namboodiris, the Nairs followed the matrilineal system of family structure called Maremakathayen. It was a loosely arranged system where the focus was centered on the Tarwad, the Nair family unit which consisted of all the descendants of a common ancestress in the family line. The family property was administered by the eldest male member of the tarwad, who was called the Karanavar; he had absolute powers of decision so far as management of the estate was concerned.¹⁷

Politically, the Nairs have not wielded the same influence they once had over the economic affairs of the land. But surprisingly in the political field, they provided the leadership to almost all the major political parties. They were not consistent in their support to any political party and their voting behaviour varied from election to election, though Congress and Kerala Congress parties secured a majority of their votes. According to Fic, it was the voting pattern of the Nair community that¹⁸ accounted for the victory of Communist party in 1957.

The Nair Service Society (NSS), founded by Mannath Padmanabha Pillai and others in 1914, runs a number of educational institutions and hospitals. They also function as an interest group for safeguarding the interests of Nairs. Its political arm is the National Democratic Party. But NSS has been plagued by fissures and division and it could not play that effective role in Kerala politics. As Nossiter observes "this powerful interest group, though still important, no longer commands the unswerving political allegiance of the majority of Nairs nor commands the¹⁹ influence in government which once it had".

The lowest of the castes, the Ezhavas form 26 per cent of the total population. They are spread throughout the state and are known by different names in different parts of the state. In Malabar, they are known as Theeyas while in

Central Travancore, they are known as Ezhavas or Iravas. In the Varna system, they were the Sudras and were denied temple entry by the Namboodiris. Most of the Ezhavas are small agricultural labourers. There are also a few small cultivators.

With economic and social changes taking place, Ezhavas had no choice but to join the mainstream of these changes. They began to avail the facilities of education provided by the British. Before long, these educated Ezhavas began to demand an end to their caste discrimination and admission to educational institutions and entry into government service. It was the Ezhavas who first established a caste association in 1903 called the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP). The leading light of this movement was Sree Narayana Guru whose slogan of unifying people was, 'one caste, one religion, one God'.

Sree Narayana Guru's social and religious reforms have had an impact on the conditions and life of the Ezhavas who till then had led a life of 'untouchables'. According to Thomas Issac et. al., "the Ezhava caste movements that emerged had two dimensions. One was reform outmoded social customs and rituals within their caste and two, challenging social and political determinants of their low caste status".

The SNDP quickly had spread throughout the state uniting Ezhavas of all hues and colour. Though social in origin, it

quickly began to seek political ends. The SNDP itself came under the influence of political personalities. It formed its own party called the Socialist Revolutionary Party (SRP) in 1972 and aligned itself with the United Democratic Front. Though SNDP leadership favoured the Congress and its allies, the Ezhavas at large voted for the communists. R. Shankar, an Ezhava rose to become Chief Minister of Kerala though he could not last long in office because of the combined onslaught of Christians and Nairs against his rule. Though SNDP digressed into the political field, its emphasis continued to be on education. For they consider education as a means of emancipating the Ezhavas from social evils in which they were entangled for too long a period.

Scheduled Castes and Tribes form 11 per cent of the total population. The scheduled castes are concentrated in Peermede, Palghat, Trichur and Trivandrum-Quilon while the Tribes are found in the taluks of North and South Wynad in the Malabar region. The Harijans who form the lowest rung of the caste ladder had to face continued exploitation at the hands of the higher castes. But with growing literacy levels and government support, the Harijans have been able to slowly make an upward swing. They still remain predominantly agricultural landless labourers who are employed on the most arduous agricultural tasks and against whom social discrimination is still practiced.

IV

SUMMING UP

Though Kerala occupies only one per cent of the total area of India, it is very thickly populated with a density of 650 persons per sq. km. as against the all India figure of 221 persons per sq. km (1981 census). It abounds in natural resources but does not have enough of industries to exploit it. On the agricultural front, the position is no better. It is characterised by high pressure of population and chronic food deficit owing to the emphasis on cash crops. As a result, there has been the phenomenon of migration.

The history of Kerala has been characterised by the incessant squabbles and differences among the various chieftains. This feature continued to influence the state and its political processes even after independence but under a different label. This time the fight was between the four major communities - Nairs, Ezhavas, Christians and Muslims over the spoils of power. In terms of religion, Muslims and Christians play the religious card to mobilise their people while in the case of Hindus, they could not use the religious weapon because of the endemic caste distinctions. The socio-religious groups though highly developed operate on a relatively under developed material base. The agricultural and the industrial fronts are not very encouraging. This

unstable economic base coupled with the community identity have led to a situation of instability. No government seem to be in a position to complete its normal tenure of office. The state has a record number of ministries after its formation in 1956. The average life span of the ministry was about two and half years. This phenomenon of political instability is sought to be examined in the subsequent chapter.

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Chapter-IV

**Political Instability :
Macro Level Trends**

CHAPTER IV

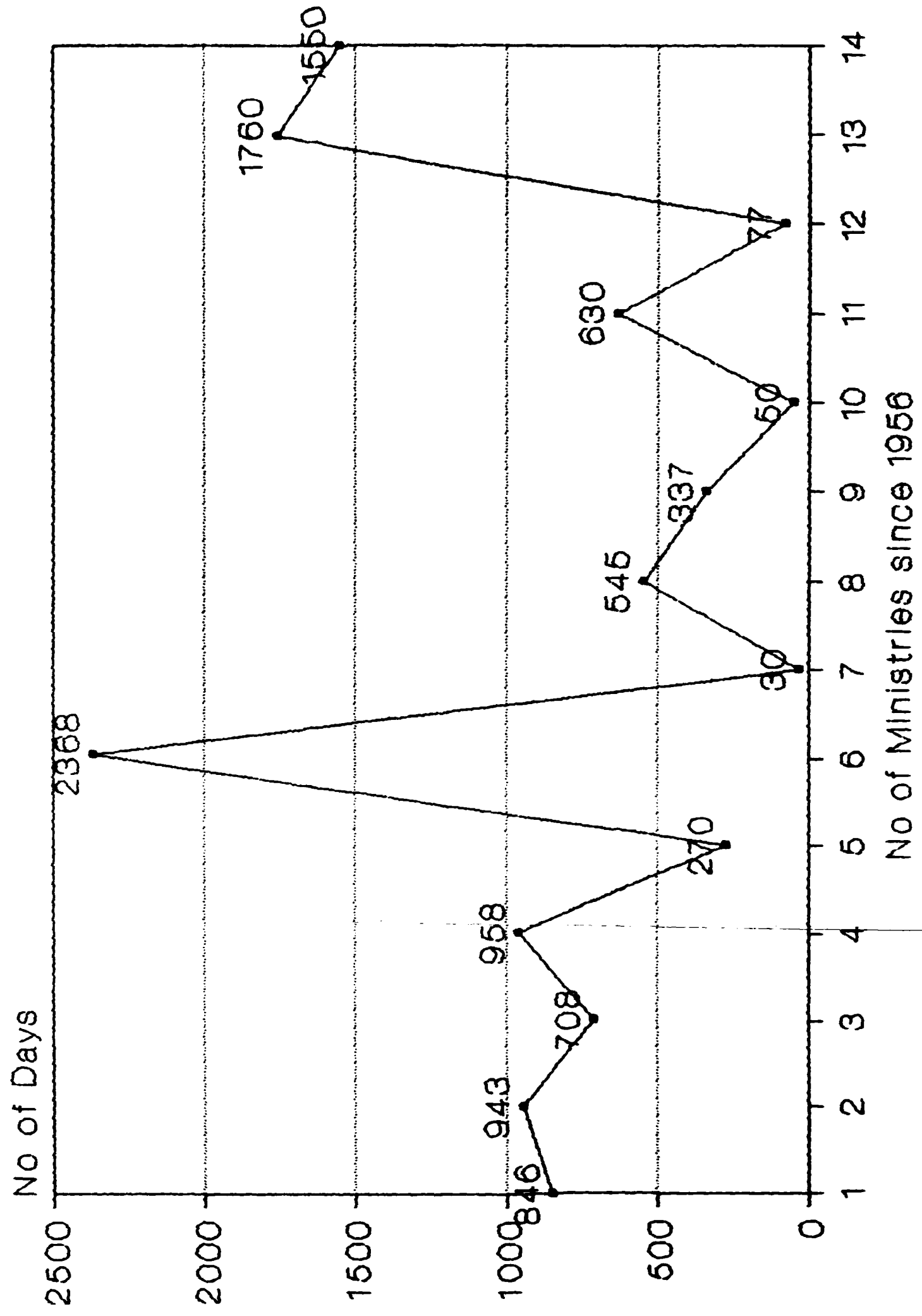
POLITICAL INSTABILITY : MACRO LEVEL TRENDS

Before probing into the causes for political instability, an attempt is made to look at the post-colonial political history of Kerala. This would help us in gaining an insight into the phenomenon of political instability.

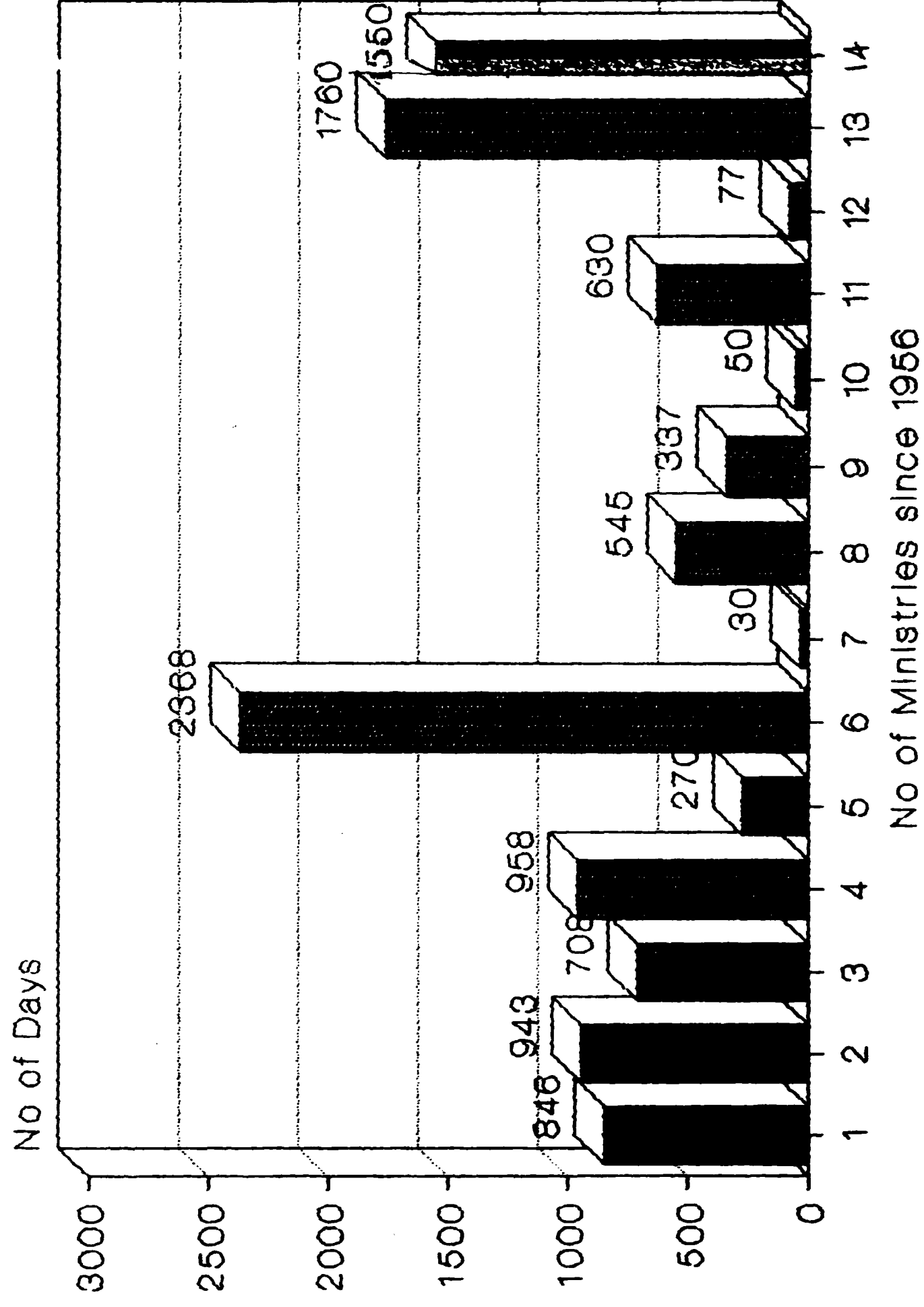
HISTORY OF GOVERNMENTS : 1957-1987

An analysis of the history of electoral politics of Kerala shows that all parties, irrespective of the front they supported, experienced periodical swing in its fortunes. The first election held after the formation of the state was in 1957. This can be viewed as a historic election as the Communists were voted to power for the first time through ballot. The ministry lasted for nearly two years and nine months before it was dismissed by the President on 31 July, 1959 due to the crisis precipitated by the Liberation Struggle. The so called 'Liberation Struggle' was launched against the EMS Namboodiripad ministry. The ministry attacked vested interests of the communal organisations like the Church and Nair Service Society. The main issues of conflict were the 'Educational Bill' and the 'Agrarian Relations Bill'. The first one sought to regulate the appointment and conditions of teachers and empowered the government to take over private educational institutions

Political Instability in Kerala



Political Instability In Kerala



which it considered were mismanaged. The Agrarian Relations Bill aimed at providing security of tenure, better working conditions and enhanced wages to the tenants.

The second election held in 1960 saw the ascendance of anti-Communist front to power. Though the anti-Communist front won, there was a perceptible increase in the percentage of total votes polled by the Communist Party (35.28 % in 1957 to 39.1 % in 1960). The new government formed was a coalition of all communities, all religions and all the major anti-Communist parties. Pattom Thanu Pillai - leader of the Praja Socialist Party - became the Chief Minister. The alliance which assumed office was beset with all sorts of problems. The Muslim League left the front when the Congress Party refused to treat the former as a political party. More serious was the antagonism between Pillai and the Congress leaders, R. Shankar and P.T. Chacko. Congressmen resented serving under the leader of a minority party and that too a deserter from its own ranks. In 1962, under a formula worked out by Lal Bhadur Shastri, Pattam Thanu Pillai assumed charge as Governor of Punjab leaving the door open for Shankar to take over. But immediately differences cropped up between Shankar and Chacko. The matters reached a point where fifteen Congress MLA's switched over and supported the no-confidence motion moved by the Communists and Praja Socialist Party. The ministry fell on 10 September, 1964.

The third election was held in 1965. This was declared infractuous as no single party or alliance could win a majority of seats in the Assembly. The end result of this indecisiveness was that the Governor recommended for the continuation of the President's rule. The fourth election in 1967 saw the emergence of an anti-Congress alliance consisting of seven parties led by the CPI(M) to power. The United Front Ministry headed by EMS Namboodripad started off well and did not have any of the kind of problems faced by the earlier coalition ministries. But soon inter-party rivalries exacerbated by the food crisis and intra-party conflict led to the collapse of the United Front ministry in 1969. The 1967 coalition in Kerala reveal that while desperate political forces could join together with a common aim of defeating a powerful and entrenched party, but there was no consensus on sharing of the power and dominance among themselves and work for a common advantage of their different constituents.

The fall of the EMS Namboodiripad's ministry led to fresh realignment of forces within the state. A new ministry headed by Achuta Menon and supported by the Congress from outside assumed charge in 1969. As Nossiter summed up, "This realignment of parties in 1969 was a dramatic turn around in the state politics -- ministerial stability; for the CPI, an entirely unexpected come-back; for the CPI(M), an

unanticipated decade in the wilderness; and for the Congress its first collaboration in government with Communists¹". The ministry resigned on 1 August 1970 paving the way for yet another round of election to the Assembly.

The fifth election to the Assembly held in September 1970 led to the formation of the mini-front headed by Achuta Menon. The latter was returned to power. The base of the alliance was enlarged by including the Congress and Kerala Congress. The government had a number of achievements to its credit : 'Land reforms had been implemented; houses had been provided to most of the homeless; a beginning was made to ensure a fair deal for the agricultural labourers; prices were brought under control; and the availability of food for² once was not an electoral issue. But more than these achievements, the front provided stability - one thing that Kerala lacked throughout its political evolution. It was the first ministry to complete its full term. In fact, there was an extension over a couple of months of its term. This arose out of imposition of the emergency.

The sixth election to the Assembly was held in March 1977. The ruling coalition was returned to power with a huge majority. But the front faced crisis after crisis. After nearly a decade of ministerial stability, Kerala reverted back to its earlier style : Cabinets fell one after another in rapid succession. The first to go was Karunakaran who had

to resign over the Rajan affair. This was followed by A K Antony who resigned in protest against the stand taken by the Congress in the Chikmagalur parliamentary election. R K Vasudevan Nair of the CPI took over as the Chief Minister. He also resigned to pave the way for the realignment of left democratic forces. He was followed by C H Mohammad Koya but had to resign due to withdrawal of support of Congress(U) and Kerala Congress. Kerala once again came under President's rule - the fifth since 1956.

Elections in the state - the seventh - were held in January 1980. The Left Democratic Front led by the CPI(M) was swept to power. But as was anticipated in a front composed of divergent ideologies, the LDF began to be rocked by intra-party contradictions. It was again the law and order problem that became a bone of contention between the constituents of the front. This was similar to that of 1959. First, the Congress (S) left the Front and later on the Kerala Congress (M) followed. The CPI(M) in their struggle for power was willing to form ministries with people of different ideologies and community interests. They deviated from their independent path. The Nayanar ministry resigned on 20 October 1981 inviting another bout of President's rule.

*

K. Karunakaran, the erstwhile Home Minister was accused of complicity in the torture and death of P. Rajan, an engineering student of the Calicut University.

The Assembly was not dissolved but kept in suspended animation. After two months of President's rule, K. Karunakaran - leader of the front - assumed office with the support of Congress (S) and Kerala Congress (M). The ministry sustained itself in office only with the casting vote of the speaker as the fronts were equally tied with each other. The ministry collapsed due to the defection of Lonappan Nambadan, resulting in fresh polls.

The eighth general election held in 1982 resulted in coming back to power of the United Democratic Front headed by K Karunakaran. The UDF ministry was the second ministry in the history of Kerala to complete its tenure of five years. These five years was not one of smooth sailing for the front. It was riven with dissension, infected with communalism, and widely accused of vanality. From its inception, it skidded, ~~not merely slipped,~~ on as many banana skins as there are varieties of this prolific fruit in Kerala. That it survived to full term says as much about the CPI(M)'s determination to see it hung with adequate electoral rope as about the³ indubitable political agility of the Chief Minister.

The 1987 elections - the ninth - were fought with a multiplicity of parties organised into two fronts - the CPI(M) led Left Democratic Front (LDF) and Congress led United Democratic Front (UDF). The LDF pruned the number of

constituents by not aligning with its former partner, the All India Muslim League. That part of the dissident Congress of 1978 which was progressive allied with the LDF so that the final line up was no longer 'United Front' but a higher stage of socialist coalition-building, a fairly genuine LDF, if not yet the straight forward Left Front of West Bengal.⁴ The LDF won the election but with a difference of just one per cent (44.91 to 43.70) between the LDF and UDF. E.K. Nayanar formed his second ministry with the expectation and hope that the front would remain intact during its tenure of five years.*

From the above description, it is clear that instability characterises the Kerala political process. A careful scrutiny of the various elections would reveal that the percentage of votes dividing the victor from the loser was always very thin. Moreover, the ruling party/parties never enjoyed absolute majority of its own. This means that it is only a few constituencies that make the difference in the election. Our attempt in this chapter is to look at the political instability with the help of the electoral data. This is done by examining the electoral outcome of 140 constituencies.

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The Front did remain intact but lost the Assembly elections held in June, 1991.

II

An analysis of the 140 constituencies gives a clear picture of the strength of political parties. In one election, a particular constituency might have elected a UDF candidate but in the very next election, the voters had preferred a different party. It has been this trend that contributes to political instability. Those constituencies which have been changing their preference from one election to another are the ones which create political instability. Here an attempt is made to look at stability-instability syndrome of 140 constituencies.

ANALYSIS OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR

A review of the electoral outcome of the 140
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constituencies during the nine elections reveal that there are certain characteristics peculiar to Kerala. Based on these characteristics, the constituencies are categorised as follows :

- a) Constituencies that have returned the same candidates or the same party in all the elections.

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The constituencies were reconstituted twice after the formation of Kerala. In 1957 and 1960 elections, the state had 126 constituencies. This number was increased to 123 in 1965 and 140 in 1977. All in all, there are 85 constituencies that were common in all the nine elections held in the state.

- b) Constituencies that show a stability and instability over a certain period of time.
- c) Constituencies that were continuously unstable.

Under the first category we include those constituencies that consistently returned the same candidates or the same party in almost all the elections. Here we may include constituencies like Konadatty, Malappuram, Tirur, Kollangode that returned the same party in all the elections (Table 2). The number of constituencies in this category is 24. The break up of the 24 constituencies on the basis of party affiliation is as follows:

TABLE 1 : PARTY BREAK UP OF STABLE CONSTITUENCIES

PARTY	NO. OF CONSTITUENCIES
CPI (M)	6
Congress	6
Muslim League	8
CPI	2
Kerala congress	1
RSP	1

	24

Among the parties, it is the Muslim League which has got the maximum number of 'safe' and stable constituencies. Out

of such eight constituencies, seven are located in one district alone, ie., Malappuram. If one looks at the reasons for this dominance, it is interesting to note that this district was created keeping in mind the size of the Muslim population as a prize to the Muslim League for the support it extended to the United Front Ministry in 1967. Because of this dominance, the Muslim League has always been able to win much more than 50 per cent of the total seats they contested

TABLE 2 : STABLE CONSTITUENCIES

1. Trikkarpur	2. Payyannur
3. Taliparamba	4. Peravoor
5. Koduvally	6. Wandoor
7. Malappuram	8. Kondotty
9. Tirurangadi	10. Thirvambadi
11. Sultan's Battery	12. Tanur
13. Tirur	14. Kuttipuram
15. Malampuzha	16. Kollengode
17. Alathur	18. Cherpu
19. Mala	20. Kodungallur
21. Ernakulam	22. Alwaye
23. Palai	24. Chavara

Source : V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, State Elections in India : The South (New Delhi : Sage Publications, 1988).

in every election. This was not the case with the other minority groups like Christians.

The Kerala Congress with its history of splits and counter splits in the party has never been able to play an important role. The Muslim League, in contrast, has been a significant political factor. The Kerala Congress had no district where they were in a majority. The Christians never voted enmass for a party as the Muslims did for the Muslim League. In the case of CPI(M), their safe constituencies are located in the erstwhile Malabar area. The Congress also enjoyed widespread support in Malabar and Cochin areas. However, it had no safe constituencies in the erstwhile Travancore area. The Kerala Congress and RSP have had one safe constituency each in the Travancore region.

In the second category, there are constituencies which returned candidates of the same party over a period of time. There has been, however, fluctuations in the political behaviour. In this category of constituencies there has been no support to the same party. For instance, the Quilandy constituency elected PSP candidates in 1957 and 60 elections, SSP candidates in 1965 and 67 elections and Congress candidates in rest of the elections, ie., 1970, 77, 80, 82 and 1987 elections. In Aranmula constituency the electorate elected Congress candidates in 1957 and 1960 elections, and

TABLE 3 : RELATIVELY UNSTABLE CONSTITUENCIES

1. Kasaragod	2. Irrikur
3. Kuthuparamba	4. North Wynad
5. Quilandy	6. Balusseri
7. Calicut - 1	8. Beypore
9. Nilambur	10. Kalpetta
11. Thrithala	12. Perintalmanna
13. Ottapalam	14. Palghat
15. Coyalmanam	16. Wadakancherry
17. Kodakara	18. Ankamali
19. Parur	20. Mattancherry
21. Palluruthy	22. Thodupuzha
23. Peermade	24. Vazhoor
25. Puthupally	26. Aroor
27. Mararikulam	28. Aranmula
29. Mavelikara	30. Pandalam
31. Pathanapuram	32. Punaloor
33. Chadayamangalam	34. Kunnathur
35. Eravipuram	36. Chathanoor
37. Varkala	38. Killimanoor
39. Nedumangad	40. Ariyanad
41. Tellicherry	42. Badagara
43. Nadapuram	44. Perambra
45. Manjeri	46. Mankada
47. Manalur	48. Guruvayoor

49. Vadakkekara	50. Kothamangalam
51. Idukki	52. Changanacherry
53. Vaikom	54. Alleppey
55. Kuttanad	56. Pathanamthitta
57. Kottarakara	58. Neduvathod
59. Vamanapuram	

Source : V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, State Elections in India : The South (New Delhi : Sage Publications, 1988).

after a break of three elections - 1965, 1967 and 1970, they re-elected the congress candidate in rest of the elections. During the above three elections, they sent Kerala Congress candidate in 1965 election, SSP candidate in 1967 elections and an independent in the 1970 election. In the Pandalam constituency, the electorate elected CPI(M) candidate in 1965 and 1967 elections and elected them again after a gap of three elections in 1982. During 1970, 1977 and 1980 elections, the Congress candidates were elected. (For list of constituencies see Table 3).

The third category of the constituencies are those which indicate a high degree of instability. Here the constituency changes its party preference almost with every election. There is no regularity in their electoral support. The number of constituencies which fall in this category is 57 (Table 4).

TABLE 4 : UNSTABLE CONSTITUENCIES

1. Manjeswar	2. Hosdrug
3. Udma	4. Azhikode
5. Cannanore	6. Edakkad
7. Peringalam	8. Meppayur
9. Calicut - II	10. Kunnamangalam
11. Ponnani	12. Pattambi
13. Sreekrishnapuram	14. Mannarghad
15. Chittur	16. Chelakara
17. Kunnamkulam	18. Trichur
19. Ollur	20. Chalakudy
21. Irinjalakuda	22. Nattika
23. Narakal	24. Tripunithura
25. Perumbavoor	26. Kunnathunad
27. Piravom	28. Muvattupuzha
29. Devicolam	30. Udumbanchola
31. Kanjirapally	32. Kottayam
33. Etumanoor	34. Ponjar
35. Kaduthuruthy	36. Sherthala
37. Ambalapuzha	38. Haripad
39. Kayamkulam	40. Thiruvalla
41. Kalliooppara	42. Chegannur
43. Ranni	44. Konni
45. Adoor	46. Karunagapally
47. Kundara	48. Quilon

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 49. Attingal | 50. Kazhakuttam |
| 51. Trivandrum North | 52. Trivandrum West |
| 53. Trivandrum East | 54. Nemon |
| 55. Kovalam | 56. Neyyattinkara |
| 57. Parassala | |

Source : V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, State Elections in India : The South (New Delhi : Sage Publications, 1988).

III

With this backdrop, let us look at the possible reasons for this type of electoral patterns. Though a definite answer cannot be given, an attempt can be made to analyse the reasons that contribute to this phenomenon.

The reasons for political instability can be traced to the peculiar demographic composition of Kerala : the major communities in Kerala are the Ezhavas, Nairs, Muslims and Christians (See the third chapter for details). These four communities comprise roughly 80 per cent of the state's population; and various governments have survived or fallen due to the shifting alliances of these communities. These communities by nature are divisive and each of them looked at the other with apprehension and suspicion. In the beginning, the ire of these communities was directed at the domination of the state administration by Namboodiris. They joined together and submitted petitions like the 'Malayali Memorial'

to the Dewan. When the administration was finally opened to them, the Nairs who were more educated and modernised appropriated the spoils of the system. This was resented by the Ezhavas and the Christians who submitted petitions seeking for reservation of positions. This marks the beginning of the role of the communities in the politics of the state.

Each of the above communities has its own organisation which in course of time played a major role in the cultural, social economic and political life of respective communities. These organisations run hospitals, educational institutions, orphanages, hostels, reading rooms and so on. Some of them publish their own newspapers and magazines. Politically, they act as pressure groups and involve themselves in the struggle for political power. As Fic observes, "In fact, they were the very pillars of politics in Kerala, and the slight shift in the voting pattern greatly influenced the fortunes of political parties".⁵

The second reason for political instability is the proliferation of political parties. Each community began to prop up its own party to project its demands more effectively. Sometimes the parties underwent fissions which resulted in spawning of more parties. It is noticed that internal dissensions, squabbles develop in almost all the political parties over a period of time. Once their

objectives have been achieved, the schisms are bound to come to the surface. When different factions fail to gain control over the main organisation, the rival groups split and form themselves into political parties. The number of parties that participated in the 1957 elections was five. The number touched 21 by 1982 elections, of which 17 were represented in the Assembly. This number got reduced to 11 by 1987 elections (Table 5). One consequence of such a proliferation of parties has been the birth and also necessity of coalition governments. The coalitional politics were so widespread that in Kerala Legislative Assembly, there is no political party which has not shared power in the state at one time or another.

The third reason could be absence of a clear cut ideology among the political parties. At the time of elections, all parties become interested in improving its chances of coming to power. If a political party ~~is not~~ confident of coming to power on its own, it enters into alliances, quite often opportunistic, with the other political groups. When a party enters into an alliance with other party/parties of different ideological backgrounds, ideology is relegated to a secondary position. The primary aim being acquisition of power. This was the case in Kerala throughout its turbulent history. As E.J. Thomas writes, "When a fresh election is announced the political parties search for a formula that will bring victory to their party

TABLE 5 : NUMBER OF PARTIES IN KERALA

Year	Total parties which contested elections	Total parties represented in Assembly
1957	5	4
1960	7	4
1965	13	7
1967	13	9
1970	17	11
1977	17	11
1980	17	13
1982	21	19
1987	15	11

Source : Gopa Kumar, Regional Political Parties in Kerala
(New Delhi : Deep & Deep Publications, 1986), p. 119

and the community they support. Usually these election formulae are sought not on the basis of common political ideology and action programmes for future, but on the basis of minimum programme and maximum acceptability among different community forces in the state in order to attain power ".⁶

If one looks at the previous elections, we find that the major parties like the CPI(M) and the Congress have diluted their ideology by aligning with communal parties for electoral considerations. As Fadia observes, " In their eager

pursuit of power both have abandoned ideological principles. Opportunistic alliances were forged to get control over the reins of power and keep the other out of power as long as possible. The practice followed by both CPI (M) and Congress, of offering ministerial berths to one man parties and communal groups have only whetted further the insatiable power appetite of splinter groups". In 1967, it was the CPI (M) which aligned with the Muslim League to defeat the Congress. Later on the Congress entered into alliance with almost all the parties with a sole view of defeating the CPI (M). For the communal parties, it was an opportunity to get a foothold in the political system and legitimise their politics. In the process, there has been a decline of ideological politics in Kerala.

Another reason for the political instability could be traced to the individualistic nature of the Malayali cultural syndrome. Kerala lacks the nucleated village which is a characteristic feature of the settlement pattern. Nossiter says that the peculiar settlement pattern contributed to the strain of individualism found in modern Kerala culture. Even the economic activity does not help in bringing people together. The major crop grown - coconut - is such that it does not involve much of collective effort. Each household owns on an average four to five coconut trees. The coconut has multiple uses as each of its parts carries some value.

As each is independent, each tries to assert his individuality even in matters that are political. This aspect tends to shape the individualistic modes of behaviour. As Woodcock observes, "... the Malayali is more than a member of a community. He is also inclined to be an intellectual individualist, impatient of discipline, and this tendency has been fostered not only by the spread of education but also by the break up of the joint family and by the consequent tendency for each man to seek economic independence and struggle even within politics for a better position for himself".⁹

The Mavelikara constituency that is selected for the purpose of this study is located in Alleppey district - a region in the southern part of Kerala. This constituency has exhibited the propensity towards relative instability and falls in the second category of classification. It elected Communist candidates in the first two elections and again in the last three elections. During the intervening period, it elected candidates of different parties. This case study can provide some insight into the Kerala's political culture.

IV

SUMMING UP

An analysis of the voting behaviour of all the 140 constituencies reveals that very few constituencies fit into the stable category in terms of their voting behaviour. More

than three fourths of the constituencies showed the tendencies of political instability at one time or other - though of varying degrees. Among the political parties, it is the Muslim League which has got more number of stable constituencies thereby indicating one form of 'minority cohesion' in Kerala's electoral politics. With this macro-background, micro level data is collected from two panchayats of Mavelikara constituency to analyse political instability. It is hoped that it would help in constructing the linkages between the micro and macro level data so as to arrive at some understanding of the phenomenon of instability.

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Chapter-V

Communalism

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COMMUNALISM

The communalism as it operates in Kerala is quite different from what is obtained in other parts of India. Kerala is known for its uniqueness in religious diversity and communal harmony. The state but for one or two incidents has been free from communal riots. Notwithstanding all these positive attributes, we find that the electorate is found to be swayed by communal feelings and identities. Taking advantage or undue advantage of communal identities for political purposes is defined as "communal" for the purpose of this analysis.

There is the rising phenomenon of various communities launching their own political parties with a view to striking bargain during the elections and share the spoils in the event of their alliances securing the electoral victories. The number of political parties that one finds in Kerala is nothing but a conglomeration of pressure groups. They promote interests of the communities which include : more employment, more business facilities, more forest land for cultivation, more schools, more seats in professional colleges, more berths in the ministry. These are some of the issues around which communal parties and groups revolve. The communal interest groups bring with them the whole weight of

the communities and are, therefore, powerful enough to dictate their terms to the government.

However, discussing communalism in Kerala context is difficult as it manifests itself in different forms. But as Mathew says, "two subtle distinctions of communalism can be identified : (a) Communalism as a political doctrine; and (b) Communalism as a behaviour based on community sentiments"². The first implies the tendency to use the religio-cultural differences to mobilise people for narrow political ends. Chandra defines "Communalism as the belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion, they have as a result, common social, political and economic interests."³ To Khan, "Communalism is perversion of religion from a moral order to temporal arrangement of contemporary convenience, from a faith into a constituency, from a strategy of living into tactics of politics, from an end into a means"⁴. Bhaskar defines communalism as "Competitive group solidarities within the same political system based on ethnic, linguistic or religious identities"⁵.

The other aspect of communalism is that a certain identity is transformed into a sense of community feeling. Here community means any group capable of developing a 'we' feeling e.g., racial caste, linguistic and religious. As Dumont puts it, "Communalism supposes the existence of a community, a group of adherents to the same religion, and it

gets an edge of the meaning through the parallelism with the other term : it is something like nationalism in which the nation, so to speak, is replaced by the community".⁶

The communalism in Kerala is a result of a sharp division of the society. The demographic composition is such that each community is in a position to dictate its terms to political parties or form themselves into political groups. As Gough observes, in Kerala "religious or caste communities or coalitions of them have tended to shape party strategy and political behaviour..."⁷ One significant factor about these communities is their geographical concentration. Although they are scattered throughout the state, they have certain areas of concentration or what one may call 'pocket boroughs'.⁸ This helps the communal parties like Kerala Congress or Muslim League to win more seats from the Christian and Muslim dominated areas respectively.

Apart from these specific social conditions prevailing in Kerala, there is intensification of communalism due to the dilution of ideology among political parties on the one hand and dominance of opportunistic politics on the other. Alliances are formed not on the basis of ideology but other considerations like getting maximum seats to contest in the elections. The major parties showed no qualms in entering into seat adjustments with communal parties for narrow electoral considerations. The result of this opportunism

displayed by major political parties has been such that small parties began to call the shots in politics. Any reluctance on the part of the government to accede to their demands started resulting in shifting of their loyalty to the opposite front. For instance, Kerala Congress (Mani) quit the LDF on the pretext of law and order in 1982. Kerala Congress (Joseph) threatened to quit the front when government refused to give title deeds to those who had encroached into government land. The United Democratic Front government had to give in to its demand so as to continue in office. The net result of such trends and developments has been political instability at the macro level.

II

HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN OF COMMUNALISM - MALABAR

The origin and growth of communalism can be traced to the sixteenth century when the Portugese made their appearance on the West coast of Malabar. With the advent of Portugese, who replaced the Arab traders, a certain amount of social tension arising out of their political and religious postures was incorporated into the Kerala society during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These tensions got escalated into full scale religious conflict. But many of the religious conflicts had a tinge of economic reasoning behind it. This could be one of the reasons why the differences did

not get degenerate the way they did in certain other parts of India.

The Muslims who constitute a majority in this region were mostly involved in agricultural occupations. Their conditions of life worsened after Malabar became a part of the Madras Presidency. As part of the Presidency, the developments in Malabar differed from that of the princely states of Travancore and Cochin. In the first place, its development was conditioned by its position as an extension of a large Tamil province. Secondly, its people were involved in a direct relationship with the British and their political institutions. This did make a difference to this region.

The agrarian structure in the Malabar region was dominated by the Jenmis with absolute ownership rights. They owned more than half of the cultivated area. The Jenmis were earlier the Rajas, Namboodiris, important Nayar and Nambiar families and in some places the Moplahs, though the proportion was comparatively smaller.¹¹ These Jenmis never cultivated land on their own but leased them to tenant farmers. As Bhaskar pithily puts, "The Jenmis were the parasitic rent-receiving landlords under whom there were three or four intermediaries between them and the actual¹² tiller of the soil, all having different interests". The

peasants and agricultural labourers - mostly Muslims - who suffered under the exploitative system. They began to revolt against the system. The peasant uprising, popularly known as the 'Moplah Outbreak' occurred in 1836. The most serious of this outbreak took place in 1921 which continued for six long months covering several villages. Though the immediate provocation for the violence was the case of frequent evictions, there were communal overtures to the movement which was essentially conceived of within the framework of Islamic religious traditions and legacy of struggles by the Moplah peasants of Malabar.¹³

The Moplah uprising changed the political complexion of the region. The Indian National Congress which had a presence in the area till then withdrew due to the increasing militancy of the Muslims. This left the field open to the Muslim League to take over. The alienation of the Muslims from the Britishers as well as the Hindus helped the Muslim League to make inroads into the Muslim community. It has struck its roots in the region.

The formation of the state of Kerala in 1956 gave Muslim League a fresh political space to operate. Unlike in the Madras Presidency, the Muslims became one of the four powerful communal groups in Kerala. Moreover, they were more cohesive than the other groups. Thus, the Muslim League has been able to mobilise the votes of Muslims wherever they had

numerical strength and treat it as a solid vote-block. The adage that politics is the art of the possible found an eloquent expression in such behavioural modes in Kerala. In other words, the so-called secular parties see in Muslim League, a powerful ally inevitable for an electoral victory. This is the reason why the League, despite being a communal party, continues to play a critical role in the politics of the state.

COMMUNAL POLARISATION IN TRAVANCORE /COCHIN

Travancore and Cochin unlike Malabar, were retained as princely states under the British paramountcy. The origins of communalism, interestingly enough can be traced to the awakening of nationalism among the people. As Gladstone opines, "The growth of nationalism furthered the sense of freedom which had been stimulating various communities for several decades resulting in intensification of their identities. People belonging to different communities shared the national feeling though their political aims were different from those of the people of British India on the one hand and there was an attempt by almost every community to strengthen and improve its own membership resulting in the growth of communalism on the other". This growth of nationalism was not properly channelised by political parties. Their role was taken over by the leaders of various communities who submitted petitions to the government for

redressal of grievances of their respective communities. This indicates the political space that was available which the national political parties failed to tap.

Till the beginning of the 20th century, the top positions in the government were always manned by outsiders and more particularly by the Tamil Brahmins. As a protest against this domination by outsiders, various communities within the state joined together and submitted a petition called the 'Malayali Memorial' to the Maharaja in 1831. Their plea was that the Malayalis who possessed proven academic and other qualifications be preferred in recruitment to all the levels of civil service.¹⁵

The opening up of administration created resentment among various communities. The Nairs could take advantage as they alone had the necessary educational qualifications coupled with the required ritual for purity in a polity which was still governed by such traditional norms. Varghese says that the Malayali Memorial and the subsequent problems arising from it was a significant development in the growth of communal consciousness among various communities. He adds, "The exclusion of three major communities from government patronage was unfair, unwise and unfortunate. It not only sowed the seeds of discontent among them but also induced them to organise themselves on communal lines and fight jointly against the domination of those communities

seeking royal patronage. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with communal hatred which set into motion the communalisation of politics".¹⁶

One of the manifestations of rising communalism was formation of communal organisations like the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) and the Nair Service Society (NSS). The rising community consciousness kindled hopes and aspirations among the communities and began to put forth economic and political demands like reservations in recruitment. In 1932-33, a number of communal organisations joined together under the Joint Political Congress banner. In January 1933, it initiated a movement called the 'Absentation Movement'. Under this movement the Congress decided to abstain from taking part either in voting or in accepting nomination to the legislative bodies. They put a condition that government should make a provision for the election to the legislature of representatives of all communities in proportion to their strength of the population. The movement succeeded in forcing the government to concede the principle of communal representation and in getting a proclamation relating to opening up of temples for all avarnas.¹⁷

This trend of rising communalism among the various communities has had a significant impact on the politics of the state. This was partly owing to the overlapping of the

leadership of political parties and the communal organisations as the same leaders manned both these bodies. As Varghese observes, "The first generation of political leaders were none other than the leaders of their respective communities. They began their public life with the backing of their communities and their interests and service within the community was often a passport enabling them to plunge into politics. Their first loyalty obviously was always to their respective communities and commitment to the ideology of the party was of secondary importance. So the party had to lean heavily upon the heads of various religious and communal organisations to continue in office...The continued sway that the communal parties had over major parties was the reason why ideology oriented politics did not get a foothold in Kerala politics".¹⁸

POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

The merger of different units in 1956 to form the present Kerala in no way lessened the intensity of communalism that prevailed in different areas at the time of its formation. On the contrary, communalism got intensified and different communities began to assert themselves with redoubled vigour in the politics of the state. For the

Muslims, as pointed earlier, the merger helped them to become one of the important minority groups in the state. The other communities also used this weapon to wrest as many concessions as possible from the government. A recent tendency of the major as well as minor communal interest groups has been the conversion of the 'social arms' into 'political arms'. Accordingly, the Muslims have the All India Muslim League (AIML) and Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), the Ezhavas have the Socialist Republican Party (SRP), the Nairs, the National Democratic Party (NDP), the Christians the Kerala Congress (Mani) and Kerala Congress (Joseph) and others have similar but splinter political
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organisations.

The role of Communist and the Congress parties in the growth of communal politics in Kerala is equally significant. The Communist Party could attain power in 1957 only because of the cooperation and support extended to it by some communal groups and the tactics of identifying their
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candidates according to the communal ratio. The so called 'Liberation Movement' in 1959 against the Communist government strengthened the communal pressure groups and fall of the ministry can be attributed to the agitation led by these groups. The Communist Party's alliance with the Muslim League in 1967 and the formation of Malappuram district was another instance of a party succumbing to such pressure politics.

The Congress Party with all its secular claims tied itself with Muslim League and Kerala Congress to fight the Communists. The opportunity it got to rule the state was considered more critical than the ideology it professed. At one time, almost all communal parties were a part of its front. The giving of pensions to Ulemmas and title deeds to those encroaching on government land were instances of Congress Party trying to appease the communal parties.

The so called secular parties identifying themselves with communal parties paved the way for different communal parties to thrive. The communal parties on their part saw the advantage of retaining their identity for bargaining with other communities for further gains. The government instead of being objective in its dealings became a participant and not any more an arbitrator in the communal wheeling and dealing.²¹

IV

It is against this background an attempt is made to examine how communalism operates in Mavelikara - the area selected for this study. Mavelikara is no exception to the general rule of what prevails in rest of Kerala. It is necessary to study micro-level trends to assess the present state of the society. The focus of this analysis is to understand the extent of communalisation of the voters. In

the absence of such analysis the macro level phenomenon cannot properly be grasped.

COMMUNALISM SCALE

In order to measure the level of communalism, a scale containing 17 statements were prepared in the first instance (See Chapter II). After pilot testing the scale, 11 statements out of the total of 17 found statistically significant at 0.01 level and 0.05 level were included in the constructing the scale of communalism (Table 1). The 11 items were added up to give score. The values in the scale ranged from 2 to 21. The frequencies and percentages of the respondents falling in the different value range of the communalism score is given in Table 2.

TABLE 1 : ITEMS IN COMMUNALISM SCALE

S.No.	Statement	Mean value
1.	I feel that the caste consciousness is very intense these days	1.31
2.	I see no harm in people belonging to different communities dining together	0.24
3.	I feel it is good if people marry within their own community	1.44
4.	I wouldn't oppose an intercaste marriage	1.02
5.	Inter-caste marriages are acceptable only when members of my caste marries another belonging to a higher caste	0.88
6.	Division of people into different caste groups has served our society very well	0.75
7.	I feel that our society cannot survive without distinct caste boundaries	0.79
8.	I don't feel that conversions from one religion to another does any harm to our society	0.91
9.	I feel it is impossible to have harmonious relationship among different religious groups because of their divergent backgrounds	0.87
10.	Groups with strong religious identity should keep away from formal educational activities	1.02
11.	Effective government control on schools/colleges run by community groups would be a welcome change.	0.30

TABLE 2 : VALUES OF COMMUNALISM SCORE

Value	Frequency	Percentage
2	5	2.8
3	2	1.1
4	16	8.9
5	8	4.4
6	15	8.3
7	7	3.9
8	20	11.1
9	16	8.9
10	21	11.7
11	14	7.8
12	21	11.7
13	3	1.7
14	13	7.2
15	9	5.0
16	2	1.1
17	2	1.1
18	3	1.7
19	1	0.6
20	1	0.6
21	1	0.6

To compare the degree of communalism in the sample, the communalism scores were cross-tabulated with the demographic variables and the variables associated with voting behaviour.

For this purpose the respondents have been divided into Low and High communalism based on the median value - 9 - of the communalism score. Respondents were classified as those with Low (L) communalism and others with High (H) communalism. This is given in the Table 3. Eighty-nine respondents fell in the Low level of communalism while 91 of them fell in the category of high communalism. There seem to be almost equal division between the two categories.

TABLE 3 : DEGREE OF COMMUNALISM

	No. of respondents	Percentage
1. Low communalism	89	49.4
2. High communalism	91	50.6
	180	100.0

GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that the degree of communalism is significantly associated with educational level, age, caste/community groups, income levels, landholding pattern, occupational pattern and voting behaviour of the respondents. In order to test these assumptions, Chi-Square analysis is carried out.

COMMUNALISM AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

One tends to associate communalism with the level of education of a person. If a person is more educated, he tends to be less conservative in outlook towards people of other communities. But does this assumption hold good in Mavelikara? In order to test this assumption, the communalism score was cross tabulated with the educational level of the respondents.

The Chi-square analysis of the data revealed a significant association ($X^2 = 12.53$ $P < .01$) between communalism and educational level of the respondents. Further probe revealed that it is those who are at below the primary level of education contribute more to the total Chi-Square value. Of the 31 respondents in this category, 24 come under the category of high level of communalism while only 7 tend to be less communal. The level of communalism tends to decline gradually with higher level of education. Respondents with above primary level education are more or less equally divided between the two levels of intensity of communalism. In the case of those with higher level of education - SSLC and above - a majority (47) come in the low level of communal intensity. About 31 respondents come in the category of high communal intensity (Table 4.0).

COMMUNALISM AND AGE

The Chi-Square analysis revealed that there is no significant relationship between communalism and age of the respondents ($X^2 = 0.824$ $P > 0.05$). The distribution of the respondents in the two categories of communalism tends to be more or less uniform among all the three different age groups. A further probe reveals that respondents above 35 years tend to be a bit more communal than the younger group of the respondents i.e., those below 35 years (Table 4.0).

COMMUNALISM AND COMMUNITIES

The four important communities that play an important role in Kerala politics and characterise communalism in their outlook are the Ezhavas, Nairs, Christians and Muslims. The Scheduled Castes form the fifth important community but are less communal than other communities. The sample size of 110 Hindu respondents fell in the three community groups while the remaining respondents are Christians and Muslims.

The Chi-Square analysis of the data reveals that there is a significant association between communalism and various communities in the state. A further probe into the distribution revealed that among the Hindus, Scheduled Castes are the least communal and therefore contribute least to the total Chi-Square value. The other four communities tend to be more communal and contribute significantly to the

TABLE 4.0 : COMMUNALISM AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		EDUCATION		COMMUNITY				RELIGION			AGE			
Intensity of communalism	Below Prim- ary	Prim- ary & above	SSLC & above	Nairs & Nam- boodi- ripad	Ezhav- as	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	SC & others	Hindus ms	Musli- Christ- ians	Upto 35 years	36- 50 years	51 years & above	
	7	35	47	16	16	12	16	29	61	12	16	30	26	33
High	24	36	31	21	20	19	23	8	28	19	23	25	29	37

$\chi^2 = 12.53$ d.f = 2 S $\chi^2 = 15.83$ d.f = 4 S $\chi^2 = 5.92$ d.f = 2 S $\chi^2 = 0.84$ d.f = 2 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

total Chi-Square value. Among the four communities, it is the Muslims who are more prone to communal identity followed by the Christians, Nairs and Ezhavas in that order. Among the Muslims, 19 (61.2%) of the total of 31 fall in the high communalism score while among the Christians, 23 (58.9%) out of the total of 39 fall in this category. In the case of Nairs and Namboodiris, 21 (56.7%) out of 37 and among the Ezhavas, 20 (55.5%) out of the total of 36 fell in the high level of communalism (Table 4.0).

COMMUNALISM AND RELIGION

It is obvious that religion is an important variable in the growth of communalism. Among the three religious communities found in Kerala, Muslims and Christians as minorities appear to be more communal than the Hindus. During the elections, the religious leaders always tried to influence the electorate through sermons and letters. In order to test whether this assumption holds good to the sample, the total sample has been divided on the basis of their religion. Then it was cross tabulated with the communalism score to see the statistical relationship between the two variables.

The Chi-Square analysis of the data reveals a significant association between the above two variables ($\chi^2 = 5.92$ $P < 0.05$). Muslims appear to be more communal as 19

(61.2) of them fall in the high communal intensity while 12 in the low communal intensity. Christian respondents are equally communal but not to the extent as the Muslims. The number of respondents falling in the high and low communal intensity being 23 (58.9) and 16 (40.1) respectively. The Hindus on the other hand appear to be less communal when compared to the Muslims and Christians. Here 61 (55.5%) of them fall in the low communal intensity while 49 (44.5%) fall in the high communal intensity. One reason for Muslims and Christians being more prone towards communal identity would be their minority status. Hindus are found to be relatively less communal because they are divided on the basis of caste. If the caste itself is treated as an identity and a communal identity perhaps, the trends would be different.

COMMUNALISM AND OCCUPATION

One can assume that there is a significant association between communalism and occupational status of the respondents. As the caste system is based on occupational pattern, members of certain castes expect the other caste members to continue their old occupational jobs. Put differently, any upward mobility of lower castes is resisted by the members of the forward communities. In order to test this assumption, the communalism score was cross tabulated with the occupational pattern of the respondents.

The Chi-Square analysis of the data reveals that there is no significant association between the two variables ($\chi^2 = 2.57$ $P > 0.05$). The distribution of respondents into the two levels of communalism is more or less uniform for the two occupational groups i.e., unemployed and employed. Among the self-employed, 26 (60.5%) of them belong to the category of high level communalism. In the third category of respondents i.e., those involved in agriculture, a majority of them, 37 (54.4%) fell in the low level communalism (Table 4.1).

COMMUNALISM AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The data are analysed to see whether there is a statistical relationship between communalism and income of the respondents. The Chi-Square analysis of the data reveals that there is no significant association between the two variables. The economic position of the respondents does not seem to show an association with their communal outlook. Among the four categories of income, it is only those in the economic range of Rs. 701 - 999/-, who are prone to more communal identity than the other three groups. Here a majority, 27 (60%) fell in the category of high communalism while in the other two groups a majority fell in the category of low communalism - 28 (54.0%) and 15 (53.5%) respectively. In the second group with an income of Rs. 501 - 700/-, they were divided equally between low and high level communalism (Table 4.1).

TABLE 4.1 : COMMUNALISM AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		OCCUPATION			ECONOMIC INCOME				LAND HOLDING		
Intensity of communalism	Retired & House- wife	Self employ- ed	Agricul- turists & labourers	Employ- ed	Upto Rs 500	Rs 501- 700	Rs 701- 999	Rs 1000 & above	Upto 25 cents	26- 99 cents	1 Acre & above
Low	21	17	37	14	28	28	18	15	44	29	16
High	22	26	31	12	23	28	27	13	49	21	21
		$\chi^2 = 2.57$		d.f = 3 NS		$\chi^2 = 2.41$		d.f = 3 NS		$\chi^2 = 2.20$ d.f = 2 NS	

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

COMMUNALISM AND LANDHOLDING PATTERN

The data is analysed to examine whether there is a statistical significance in the relationship between communalism and the landholding pattern of the respondents. The Chi-Square value is 2.20 implying that there is no significant association between the two variables. The 180 respondents falling in different landholding pattern are more or less divided equally between the two levels of communalism. Among the three categories, it is those with less than 25 cents and those with above one acre are more communal than those who come under the middle category i.e., owning between 26-99 cents (Table 4.1). This indicates that land is not a determining factor.

COMMUNALISM AND PARTY PREFERENCE

At the time of elections parties promise different things to wean away the voters from the other parties. Some parties use the class, caste/religious affiliation of the voters. The parties representing different communities try to elicit the votes by playing on the communal card. The major parties, CPI (M) and Congress (I) may not openly use the communal card but they buttress them by entering into alliances. In order to find out how these major parties fare in relation to communalism, the communalism score was cross-

tabulated with the party preferences of the respondents (Table 5). The analysis reveals that there is a significant association between communalism and the major political parties in Kerala. Of the two major parties, Congress(I) appears to be the party which is preferred by the high communal category. Fifty-one of the total of 82 respondents who preferred Congress(I) fall in the high communal

TABLE 5 : COMMUNALISM AND PARTY PREFERENCE

S.No	Party Preference	Communalism intensity		Total
		Low	High	
1.	Cong I/NDP	31	51	82
2.	CPI (M)	45	30	75
3.	BJP and others	9	10	19
		85	91	176

$$X^2 = 7.73 \quad \text{d.f.} = 2 \quad p < .05$$

* 4 respondents had not participated in the elections.

category. As shown in Table 4.0, it is Muslims and Christians who are more prone towards communalism than Hindus. These group might have voted for the Congress(I) as is reflected in the Table 5. On the other hand, 45 (60) respondents who voted for CPI (M) fell in the low communal category. In the case of BJP and others, the size of

respondents who voted for them was quite marginal to arrive at any valid inferences.

COMMUNALISM AND VOTING CONSIDERATIONS

A voter while casting his vote for a particular party is influenced by various factors : some vote for a party purely out of ideological considerations, while some vote because of promises made by the party, while some others are influenced

COMMUNALISM 6 : COMMUNALISM AND VOTING CONSIDERATIONS

S.No	Voting considerations	Communalism intensity		Total
		Low	High	
1.	Political ideology	56	54	110
2.	Loyalty to community/ religion	16	19	35
3.	Merit and personal reasons	17	18	35
		89	91	180
$\chi^2 = 0.299$ d.f. =2 $p > .05$				

by purely sectarian considerations. In order to find out how these voting considerations are associated with communalism, the two variables were cross-tabulated and the result pointed out that there was no significant relationship between the two (Table 6).

As can be gleaned from the Table 6, the distribution of respondents into the low and high communalism levels is more or less uniform for all the three categories of voting considerations. This does not mean that people are not swayed by communal considerations while casting their vote. Sometimes people who are found communal prefer secular parties purely on the ground that the communal party for which they have sympathy have no chance of winning the elections. Sometimes they vote for other parties to prevent a particular party from coming to power. In Mavelikara constituency, we came across RSS sympathisers who voted for Congress(I) because the BJP had no chance of winning the election. Thus, it was a negative vote for the Congress(I)/NDP alliance rather than one on the basis of its credentials.

COMMUNALISM AND PARTY MEMBERSHIP

The data is analysed to examine the statistical significance of the relationship between communalism and membership of the party (Table 7). The Chi-Square test reveals that there is no significant association between communalism and membership of political parties ($\chi^2 = 0.012$ d.f. = 2 $P > 0.05$). The distribution reveals that the respondents with party membership are equally divided between the two levels of communalism. For those who are not members of political parties, the division is unequal between

TABLE 7 : COMMUNALISM AND PARTY MEMBERSHIP

S.No	Member of political party	Communalism intensity		Total
		Low	High	
1.	Yes	31	31	62
2.	No	58	60	118
		89	91	180

$$\chi^2 = 0.012 \text{ d.f.} = 1 \text{ p} > 0.05$$

the two levels of communal intensity. Sixty respondents, who are not members of political parties, fall in the high communal category while 58 fall in the low communal category.

In the case of respondents who are members of political parties, it was further probed as to whether there was a polarisation of communal tendencies among different political parties. For this purpose, 62 respondents were asked to name the party which enlisted their membership. This data was then cross-tabulated with the communalism score and the result is given in Table 8.

TABLE 8 : COMMUNALISM AND PARTY

S. No	Party	Communalism Intensity		Total
		Low	High	
1.	B.J.P.	2	6	8
2.	Cong (I)	10	18	28
3.	CPI (M)	19	7	26
		31	31	62

$$X^2 = 9.8 \quad \text{d.f.} = 2 \quad p < 0.01$$

The Chi-Square value indicates that there is a significant association between communalism and political parties (Table 8). It is significant at one per cent level ($X^2 = 9.8$ d.f. = 2 $P < 0.01$). The data indicates that certain parties like Congress (I) and BJP are prone to more communal tendencies. This is reflected by the fact that a majority of the respondents with membership of these parties are falling in the high communal score. CPI(M) appears to be less communal than the other two parties because a majority of the respondents (19 [73%] out of 26) come in the low communal score.

IV

SUMMING UP

Communalism as it prevails in Kerala is a result of the basic and sharp division of society. The social structure is such that each of the community is in a position to set the guidelines for the parties. The political parties prop up the communal parties by entering into alliances of all sorts for narrow political considerations. In the process, communalism got intensified. This has been also due to the absence or decline of ideology among political parties. It is the dominance of opportunistic politics that has come to characterise the political culture. This opportunism has resulted in political instability. For the governments continue in power as long as different communities wanted it. Once the support is withdrawn, the governments fall like a pack of cards.

In this study, it is revealed that communalism is highest among the less educated and among minority communities like Muslims and Christians since they form a more cohesive group. Among Hindus the Scheduled castes are least communal. However, the process of communalisation got intensified more because of Ezhavas, Nairs, Christians and Muslims. Among the parties, Congress (I) seem to be getting

the support of the respondents with high communal score. When the membership of parties is taken into account, it is found that the respondents with communal orientation are members of the Congress. The data also suggests that CPI (M) appeared to be less communal as very few respondents with high communal score are members of it. The high level of communalism among the electorate coupled with opportunism displayed by the political parties explains the reason for the stability-instability syndrome in the state.

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Chapter-VI

Leadership

CHAPTER VI

LEADERSHIP

Bogardus defines leadership as "personality in action under group conditions. It includes dominant personality traits of one person and receptive personality traits of many persons. In other words, it is an interaction between specific traits of one person and other traits of the many. In a way the course of action of the many is changed by the one...Leadership is a process in which there is a give and take between leaders and followers"¹. According to Allport "Leadership means the direct face to face contact between leader and follower, it is personal social control"². Bonner conceived of leadership as the product of the interaction between the total personality of the leader and the dynamic social situation in which he has his being³. Bass also views leadership as a kind of interaction between members of a group⁴.

Leadership may be divided into two types : ascriptive and achieved. Ascriptive leadership is hereditary and it gets passed from one generation to another. Achieved leadership, on the other hand, is gained through competition⁶. In a democratic setting, achieved leaders irrespective of their party affiliation need entitlements to their leadership position; they need legitimacy. In a democracy elections are

the vehicles of both the legitimisation of leaders and persuasion of voters.⁷ When the leader and followers strike an equation, the political processes acquire a certain degree of equilibrium.

In the case of Kerala, the people have been highly ambivalent about their political leadership. They have not shown any continued loyalty to any leader. This could be one of the factors that accounts for the overall political instability of the state. A cursory glance at the pattern of leadership reveals that there has been a frequent change of leaders from election to election. Mammen in a study of 1965, 1967 and 1980 elections found that only 33 constituencies out of 133 elected the same representatives or representatives of the same party affiliation. In the rest of the constituencies different leaders get elected at different points of time.⁸

The reasons for the ambivalence on the part of Kerala electorate can be traced to the peculiar land settlement pattern. This settlement pattern had contributed to high degree of individualism among the Malayalis. This strong individualism, complex communal rivalries and a high level of politicisation of the society made the task of the leaders difficult. As Nossiter observes, "...there are few heroes in modern Kerala history not just because the state's problems are intractable but also because Keralites almost relish the

sight of a fallen idol".⁹ He sums up this behaviour by saying that leadership in Kerala is the business of many but art of
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a few.

An examination of leadership pattern at the micro level is found to be no different from the macro level though there was a semblance of stability at the micro level. The leadership at the micro level hailed, to a large extent, from the Nair community. One can notice fluctuations in the behaviour of the electorate. During the first election of 1957, the constituency returned CPI candidates - Kuniachen and K.C. George. It was a double member constituency then. In the 1960 election, the seats were retained by the CPI again. Its candidates G. Kurup and P.K. Kuniachen won defeating the Congress candidates. Congress won the seat for the first time in 1965 when its candidate K.K.C. Pillai defeated the SSP candidate, G.P. Pillai, but only to lose it again during the 1967 election. G.P. Pillai retained the seat during 1970 elections. In the 1977 election, B. Nair of Nair Democratic Party won the seat defeating S.G. Kurup of CPI(M). The CPI(M) party regained the seat in 1980 and the subsequent two elections - 1982 and 1987. The Congress regained the seat in 1991 when its candidate, M. Murali defeated the sitting CPI(M) candidate, S.G. Kurup. This shows the changing nature of the relationships between the electorate, political parties and the candidates. The instability in support structure is quite evident.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD LEADER

The working of any government depends, to a large extent, upon the leadership thrown up through the electoral process. Notwithstanding committed party vote and blind sectional loyalties apart, the perception of voter with regard to a good candidate does influence the voting behaviour considerably. In order to find out what the respondents felt about the qualities of a good leader, they were asked the following question, "What qualities do you expect in a good leader"?

The questions evoked varied responses about the qualities that followers expect in the leader. An overwhelming majority wanted their leaders to be dedicated, honest and educated. Some wanted them to be selfless and with a commitment to moral values and service to the society. A few others wanted them to be kind hearted, possess pleasing personality and not vulnerable to party pressures and corrupt practices. Yet a few others wanted them to be trustworthy, able and efficient in carrying out their duties. The emphasis of the respondents is more on personal qualities and not political or ideological orientations. It is evident from the responses that the level of expectations of the members about personal qualities of their leaders is quite high.

To a question whether people possessing such qualities were getting elected, the responses were quite striking. About 98 (54.4 per cent) respondents stated that the

TABLE 1 : QUALITIES PRESENT IN THE LEADERS

S.NO.	Village	Yes	No	Total
1.	Vathukolam	15	15	30
2.	Olayatiambalam	15	16	31
3.	Mullikulangara	11	18	29
4.	Kurthiad	8	20	28
5.	Ponezha	15	15	30
6.	Kattachera	18	12	32
		82 (45.6)	98 (54.4)	180 (100.0)

qualities mentioned are not present in the leaders of their area, 82 (45.6 per cent) stated that they did possess some of the qualities. Thus, there is a wide gap between the expectation and the reality. If we take into account the wards, we see that it is only in Kattachera that a majority of the respondents stated that the leaders possessed the above qualities. Here 18 out of 32 said that the leaders possessed some of the qualities that they generally expected in a leader. In three wards - Olayatiambalam, Mullikulangara

and Kurthiad - the responses indicate that their leaders did not possess the expected qualities. In the other two wards - Vathukolam and Ponezha - the respondents were equally divided. The conclusion from the data could be that though the respondents are quite clear in their perception of the qualities they expect of their leader, they found that these qualities are not present in most of their leaders.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

The perception of the people regarding the qualities of leaders is influenced by several factors. In order to find out how the demographic features affect their perception, Chi-Square analysis has been carried out. The analysis indicate that there is no significant statistical relationship with any of the variables like education, community, age, occupation, income and land holding pattern (Table 2).

CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP

In a representative democracy, people elect their representatives periodically through elections. They either re-elect their old representatives or replace them by electing new ones whom they consider as better candidates. But sometimes it so happens that the old representatives get elected and re-elected in election after election though they might not have done any good for the electorate. This could

TABLE 2.0 : QUALITIES OF LEADERS AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		EDUCATION		COMMUNITY				RELIGION		AGE					
Qualities of leaders		Below Prim- ary	Prim- ary & above	SSLC & above	Nairs & Nam- boodi- ripad	Ezhav- as	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	Hindus	SC & others	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	Upto 35 years	36- 50 years	51 years & above
Yes	13	33	36	18	13	12	18	21	52	12	18	29	25	28	
No	18	38	42	19	23	19	21	16	58	19	21	26	30	42	

$\chi^2 = 0.19$ d.f = 2 NS $\chi^2 = 3.90$ d.f = 4 NS $\chi^2 = 0.72$ d.f = 2 NS $\chi^2 = 2.8$ d.f = 2 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

TABLE 2.1 : QUALITIES OF LEADERS AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	OCCUPATION				ECONOMIC INCOME			LAND HOLDING			
	Retired & House- wife	Self employ- ed	Agricul- urists & labourers	Employ- ed	Upto Rs 500	Rs 501- 700	Rs 701- 999	Rs 1000 & above	Upto 25 cents	26- 99 cents	1 Acre & above
Yes	23	14	31	14	23	21	22	16	42	20	20
No	20	29	37	12	28	35	23	12	51	30	17

$\chi^2 = 4.74$ d.f = 3 NS $\chi^2 = 3.18$ d.f = 3 NS $\chi^2 = 0.28$ d.f = 2 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

be because of dominance of a particular caste. The other castes and communities are not allowed the space to articulate their own choice. Sometimes, the party loyalty helps the candidate in winning over the seat in election after election. In this case, it is the party loyalty that is taken into account and not the merit. In such situation whoever is contesting the election, he is assured of winning the election. In order to find out the position in Mavelikara, the respondents were asked "Has there been any change of leadership in your area?"

From the table 3, it is noticed that 77 (42.8) respondents answered in the affirmative regarding the change of leadership while 103 (57.2) stated that there was no change. Asked about the type of change, the responses were

TABLE 3 : CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP

S.No.	Village	Yes	No	Total
1.	Vathukolam	15	15	30
2.	Olayatiambalam	7	24	31
3.	Mullikulangara	9	20	29
4.	Kurthiad	16	12	30
5.	Ponezha	15	15	30
6.	Kattachera	15	17	32
		77 (42.8)	103 (57.2)	180 (100)

quite varied. Most of them stated that the new leadership which emerged was more responsive compared to the previous leadership : the leaders did evince interest in solving the problems of the electorate of their constituency. Some opined that the change was in terms of caste base of the leaders. The previous leadership which invariably belonged to the Nair caste had slowly given way to the under privileged castes like the Ezhavas. A few talked about the change having taken place without any advantage whatsoever accruing to them. The new leaders as far as their activities were concerned, were not qualitatively different. One respondent stated that the commitment to the people was getting diluted with every election though the leadership was passing into the hands of younger and educated persons.

From the 180 respondents, 103 (57.2) respondents stated that there was no change in the leadership and the old leaders continue to be the village leaders. With regard to the reasons for this phenomenon, some were of the opinion that people were not articulating their preferences on the basis of performance of the leaders. Others said that the general public voted on the basis of party affiliation and not on the qualities of the competing candidates. At other times, the voters voted on the basis of their caste/community affiliation. In fact variables like the personality of the candidates, ideology that he represents have not been important factors.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

For testing the significance of disagreement between the perception of the public regarding the change in leadership, Chi-Square method has been adopted. From the data given in tables 4.0 and 4.1, it is clear that there is a significant statistical relationship between change perception in leadership and occupational status of the respondents. There is no significant relationship with the rest of the features like age, education, religion, income and landholding pattern of the respondents.

CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP AND OCCUPATION

The Chi-Square value indicates that there is a statistical relationship between perception of change in leadership and occupational status of the respondents. Out of the four categories of occupation, a majority of the respondents from the retired, housewives and agricultural occupation perceived no change in the leadership. In the case of the other categories, a majority of the respondents perceived a change in the leadership pattern.

PERCEPTION ABOUT LEADERS SUPPORT BASE

According to Kothari the new political leaders are different from the earlier leadership. They adopt a style of leadership which can secure them control of modern political

TABLE 4.1 : CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	OCCUPATION				ECONOMIC INCOME			LAND HOLDING			
	Retired & House- wife	Self employ- ed	Agricul- urists & labourers	Employ- ed	Upto Rs 500	Rs 501- 700	Rs 701- 999	Rs 1000 & above	Upto 25 cents	26- 99 cents	1 Acre & above
Change in leadership											
Yes	11	27	25	14	17	26	18	16	35	26	16
No	32	16	43	12	34	30	27	12	58	24	21

$\chi^2 = 14.53$ $d.f = 3$ S $\chi^2 = 4.66$ $d.f = 3$ NS $\chi^2 = 2.74$ $d.f = 2$ NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

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institutions of traditional society. The political parties on their part select candidates on the basis of the caste/religious composition of constituency. This is done so as to maximise the winning chances of the contesting candidate. In order to find out the nature of support to the leaders, the respondents were asked whether the leader could secure majority of the votes from his own community?

A look at the table shows that more than half of the respondents felt that the leaders did get votes of his caste members. As many as 92 (51.1) respondents fell in this category. The fact that a majority of the respondents felt that the leaders got support from the members of their own caste is indicative of the stable base which makes the social base of the leaders far more complex. About 79 (43.9)

TABLE 5 : SUPPORT BASE OF LEADERS

S.No.	Village	Votes from own caste	No	Do not know	Total
1.	Vathukolam	14	13	3	30
2.	Olayattiambalam	20	8	3	30
3.	Mullikulangara	14	14	1	29
4.	Kurthiad	14	13	1	30
5.	Ponezha	13	17	-	30
6.	Kattachera	17	14	1	32
		92 (51.1)	79 (43.9)	9 (5.0)	180 (100)

respondents stated that the leaders did not get majority vote from their own caste and 8 (4.4) respondents stated that they were not sure about the break up of the leaders support base. The caste acts as a stabiliser of the polity at one level and gives rise to fragmentation of the base at another level.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

In order to probe deeper as to how the respondents perceive the leader's support base, the variable 'nature of support' was cross-tabulated with demographic variables. The hypothesis being that the demographic features have an impact on the perception of the voters about the support base. The Chi-Square analysis indicate that there is a significant association between respondents perception of support base of leaders and religion and income of the respondents. It has no significant statistical relationship with the remaining demographic variables (Table 6).

SUPPORT BASE OF LEADERS AND RELIGION

The Chi-Square value which is 5.88 (d.f. = 1) indicates that there is a significant association between perception of support base and religious background of the respondents. With regard to religion, a majority of the Christians - 26 (68.0) stated that the leader drew support from his own community. Only 12 (32.0) respondents stated that the leaders

TAB.F. 6.0 : NATURE OF SUPPORT AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		EDUCATION		COMMUNITY				RELIGION		AGE				
Support from own caste	Below Primary	Primary & above	SSIC & above	Nairs & Namboodiripad	Ezhavas	Muslims	Christians	Hindus	SC & others	Muslims	Christians	Upto 35 years	36-50 years	51 years & above
	11	44	37	17	16	18	26	15	48	18	26	28	27	37
Yes	18	26	35	19	15	12	12	21	55	12	12	22	25	32
No	11	44	37	17	16	18	26	15	48	18	26	28	27	37

$\chi^2 = 4.42$ d.f = 2 NS $\chi^2 = 2.21$ d.f = 4 NS $\chi^2 = 5.88$ d.f = 2 S $\chi^2 = 0.17$ d.f = 2 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

TABLE 6.1 : NATURE OF SUPPORT AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	OCCUPATION			ECONOMIC INCOME			LAND HOLDING				
	Retired & House- wife	Self employ- ed	Agricul- urists & labourers	Employ- ed	Upto Rs 500	Rs 501- 700	Rs 701- 999	Rs 1000 & above	Upto 25 cents	26- 99 cents	1 Acre & above
Support from own caste											
Yes	19	28	32	13	15	37	25	15	45	29	19
No	22	14	32	11	31	17	19	12	42	19	18

$\chi^2 = 0.87$ d.f = 2 NS

$\chi^2 = 13.21$ d.f = 3 S

$\chi^2 = 4.10$ d.f = 3 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

did not draw their support from the members of his own community. In the case of Muslims, 18 (60.0) respondents stated that the leaders won the elections due to support of his own people, while 12 (30.0) replied in the negative. In the case of Hindus there is almost an equal division between the 'yes' and 'no' categories. They seem to take quite a different and a cautious stand about the support base of the leaders than the other two communities.

SUPPORT BASE AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The Chi-square analysis indicates that there is a significant association between the perception of support base and economic background of the respondents. It is significant at one per cent level ($X^2 = 13.21$ d.f. = 3). The distribution of respondents into various categories reveals that it is those with income upto Rs. 500/- who take a more forthright stand regarding the support of the leaders. About 31 (67.4) respondents felt that the leaders did not depend on the support of their own community members while only 15 (31.6) felt that the leaders drew support from their own community. In the case of respondents with an income of above Rs. 500/- a majority of them said that the leaders got the support of their own community members. About 37 (64.9) out of 54 respondents in the economic range of Rs. 501-700, stated that the leaders relied on their own community members for support. In the other two categories

Rs. 701-999 and Rs. 1000 and above, the number of respondents who subscribed to this view being 25 (56.8) and 15 (55.5) respectively.

BREAK UP OF THE SUPPORT BASE

The perception of 79 respondents who said that the leaders did not get support from their own caste was probed into so as to find out what was the other kind of support that the leaders drew from the society.

About 27 (15.0) respondents stated that the leader could win only because of the support of the poor people. This cuts across party and caste affiliation. This means the support is derived more from the class than caste. This observation is further supported by the evidence that the candidates who got support from the poor belonged to the higher caste but represented the ideology of poor or the parties which are believed to be the parties of the poor.

Only 10 (5.6) respondents said that the leader was supported by the middle class. About 35 (19.4) respondents stated that the leaders drew support from all the classes irrespective of the caste/party affiliation. Around seven (3.9) respondents were of the opinion that it was difficult to gauge the support base of the candidate. They stated that in electoral politics it was not one factor that was crucial for victory but a combination of a variety factors. One time

it could be the caste, another time party or personality and so on. Further, they said that the secret ballot was another impediment that prevents one from knowing the candidates support base. One can only guess the support base by an overall perceptual pattern.

TABLE 7 : BREAK UP OF PERCEPTION OF SUPPORT BASE OF LEADERS

S.NO.	Village	Poor people	Middle income group	All classes	Diffi- cult to say	NA	Total
1.	Vathukolam	6	2	5	-	17	30
2.	Olayattiambalam	2	1	5	-	23	31
3.	Mullikulangara	6	2	5	1	23	31
4.	Kurthiad	3	2	7	-	5	28
5.	Ponezha	6	1	5	5	13	30
6.	Kattachera	3	2	8	1	18	32
		27 (15.0)	10 (5.56)	35 (19.4)	7 (3.9)	101 (56.1)	180 (100)

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

The efficiency of leadership lies in leaders correctly assessing the needs of the society and in articulating solutions to the problems faced by the people. The level of public satisfaction is directly related to what the leader represents and does for his constituents. In order to find

out the respondents perception about the leaders' response pattern, the respondents were asked to state whether they were satisfied with their overall performance.

From the table 8, we find that a majority of the respondents were satisfied with the political leadership.. In this regard while 111 (61.6) respondents answered in the positive, 67 (38.3) were dissatisfied. These respondents preferred alternative leaders who could satisfy their needs and demands.

If the wards are taken into account, it is found that in all wards except Ponezha, the respondents are quite happy with the prevailing leadership though the margin of

TABLE 8 : LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

S.NO	Village	Yes	No	Total
1.	Vathukolam	15	15	30
2.	Olayatiambalam	23	8	31
3.	Mullikulangara	24	6	30
4.	Kurthiad	16	12	28
5.	Ponezha	11	19	30
6.	Kattachera	23	9	32
		111 (61.6)	69 (38.4)	180 (100.0)

difference between 'yes' and 'no' category varied from ward to ward. In Vathukolam, the respondents were equally divided between the yes and no categories. In other villages the difference is quite high indicating their satisfaction with their leaders.

As to the reasons for their dissatisfaction, some of the respondents opined that the leaders were selfish and the interest of the society was of no importance to them. They take no interest in solving the basic problems of the village. A few stated that as the leaders were rich, they were not in a position to understand the problems of the poor and the underprivileged classes. Some maintained that the leaders were biased towards their own caste/religion. One respondent stated that the leader of his village lacked the ability to take decision. Another respondent felt that the leaders promised a lot at the time of elections but turn into anti-poor immediately after the election.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

In order to get a better understanding of the satisfaction of the people towards their leaders, 'level of satisfaction' was cross tabulated with the demographic variables. The hypothesis for this analysis being that different demographic features tend to colour the perception of the people regarding performance of the leaders.

As the Chi-square value indicates, there is a significant association between the level of satisfaction and (1) Education (2) Communities (3) Religion (4) Occupation and (5) Landholding pattern. It has no significant association with age and income. The chi-square values being 1.34 and 1.52 respectively (Table 9).

SATISFACTION AND EDUCATION

There is a significant statistical association between satisfaction and educational level of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 8.62$ d.f. = 2 $p < .02$). Around 52 (73.2) respondents out of the total of 71 who had above primary education but below SSLC were satisfied with the leaders. It was this category that contributed more to the chi-square value. Only 19 (26.8) respondents from this category were not satisfied with their leaders. In the case of those with below primary level education, 20 (64.5) were satisfied with leadership while 11 (35.5) were not satisfied. The satisfaction is less among those with education above SSLC level. About 39 (50.0) are not satisfied with their leaders. The inference that can be drawn from this data is that education seems to play an important role in evaluation of the leaders. There are more number of respondents in the category of satisfied among respondents with education below SSLC level while that number declined with higher educational qualifications.

TABLE 9.0 : SATISFACTION WITH LEADERSHIP AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		EDUCATION		COMMUNITY				RELIGION			AGE				
		Below Prim- ary	Prim- ary & above	SSIC & above	Nairs & Nam- boodi- ripad	Ezhav- as	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	SC & others	Hindus	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	Upto 35 years	36- 50 years	51 years & above
Yes		20	52	39	16	24	23	17	31	71	23	17	37	37	40
No		11	19	39	21	12	8	22	6	39	8	17	18	21	30

$\chi^2 = 8.62$ d.f = 2 S $\chi^2 = 20.79$ d.f = 4 S $\chi^2 = 7.83$ d.f = 2 S $\chi^2 = 1.34$ d.f = 2 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
 NS Not Significant
 S Significant

SATISFACTION AND COMMUNITIES

There is a significant association between the level of satisfaction and various communities ($\chi^2 = 20.7$ $p < .001$). There seems to be clear cut polarisation among the various communities regarding the satisfaction with the leaders. A majority of the Nairs and Christians are unhappy with the available leadership. This is rather surprising when one looks at the social composition of the leaders. Most often the leaders happen to be from the Nair community. The number of respondents who are not satisfied with the leaders from these two communities being 21 (56.4) and 22 (56.8) respectively. This is not the case with the other communities. The other three communities - Ezhavas - 24 (66.7), Muslims - 23 (74.7) and Scheduled Castes - 31 (83.8) - are satisfied with the leaders.

SATISFACTION AND RELIGION

The Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 7.83$ d.f. = 2 $p < .02$) indicates a significant association between satisfaction and religious background of the respondents. Around 71 (64.5) Hindus out of the total of 110 are satisfied with the leadership. Only 39 (35.5) respondents said that they are not satisfied with their leaders. A majority of the Muslims i.e., 23 (74.2) are also satisfied with the leaders. It is only Christians who took a different position. Here 22

TABLE 9.1 : SATISFACTION WITH LEADERSHIP AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		OCCUPATION			ECONOMIC INCOME			LAND HOLDING				
		Retired & House- wife	Self employ- ed	Agricul- urists & labourers	Employ- ed	Upto Rs 500	Rs 501- 700	Rs 701- 999	Rs 1000 & above	Upto 25 cents	26- 99 cents	1 Acre & above
Yes		23	23	47	18	32	31	30	18	61	32	18
No		20	20	21	8	19	25	15	10	32	18	19

$\chi^2 = 6.81$ d.f = 3 S $\chi^2 = 1.52$ d.f = 3 NS $\chi^2 = 44.83$ d.f = 2 S

χ^2 Chi-Square value
 NS Not Significant
 S Significant

(56.4) out of 39 said that they were not satisfied with the leaders while 17 (43.6) took an opposite view.

SATISFACTION AND OCCUPATION

There is a significant association between the level of satisfaction and the occupation of the respondents ($X^2 = 6.80$ d.f. = 3 $p < 01$). Out of the four categories of occupation, it is those involved in agriculture who contributed more to the chi-square value. Here 47 (69.1) out of 68 are satisfied with the leaders. In the case of other three categories of occupation i.e., retired & house-wife, self-employed and employed, a majority of the respondents are satisfied with the leadership though the difference between the 'yes' and 'no' categories is not as wide as in the case of respondents from agricultural occupations. The inference that can be drawn from this analysis is that the leaders enjoy greater rapport and effective linkages with those involved in agriculture than from the other occupations.

SATISFACTION AND LANDHOLDING

There is a significant association between satisfaction and landholding pattern of the respondents ($X^2 = 44.03$ d.f. = 2 $p < .001$). A majority of the respondents owning upto 99 cents are satisfied with the leadership. Around 61 (65.6) respondents out of 93 with 25 cents land holding and 32 (64.0) out of 50 with 26-99 cents holding are satisfied with

their leaders. More than half of those owning more than one acre of land are not satisfied with the leaders. The probable reason for this dissatisfaction may be that those who have relatively more land tend to be more critical and have higher expectations from the leaders.

NATURE OF INTERACTION

One way through which the leaders can serve and thereby acquire a following is through constant interaction with their constituents. The leaders would, through their interaction be able to articulate the problems of the people and assist them better in solving their problems. The people on their part should be constantly interacting with the

TABLE 10

DESIRED NATURE OF INTERACTION BETWEEN LEADERS AND THE PEOPLE

S.No	Village	Public go to meet leaders	Leaders go to meet people	Both	Total
1.	Vathukolam	2	18	10	30
2.	Olayatiambalam	1	18	12	31
3.	Mullikulangara	4	13	12	29
4.	Kurthiad	5	16	7	28
5.	Ponezha	7	7	23	37
6.	Kattachera	5	14	13	35
		24 (13.3)	86 (47.8)	70 (38.3)	180 (100)

leaders. However, it is noticed that the interaction between the two is less and sometimes totally absent. Apart from this, the leaders do not visit their constituency very frequently. The electorate out of partisan and other considerations does not involve the leaders in their problems. In order to find out how our respondents felt about this interaction, they were asked the following question, "What is the best way of interaction between people and the leaders?"

About 86 (47.8) respondents stated that the leaders should meet the people and solve their problems. About 24 (13.3) respondents felt that the people should go to their leaders and acquaint them with their problems. The remaining respondents 70 (38.9) took a mid position and felt that there should be a two way communication between the leaders and the people. People should go and meet their leaders if they have any problem and the leaders, in turn, should try to solve the problem and be willing to go to the people to get a first hand report of their problems and find solutions.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

The perception of people regarding how leaders should interact with people is influenced and shaped by many factors. The education, age, community, occupation, income

and landholding pattern have their influence on perception about the type of desirable interaction. To test this hypothesis, the variable 'nature of interaction' was cross-tabulated for Chi-Square analysis in order to see whether the observation differs from what is expected by chance at a particular level of significance.

The Chi-square analysis indicate a significant association between the 'nature of interaction' and (1) education (2) occupation and (3) income variables. There is no significant association with - communities, religion, age and landholding pattern (Table 11).

NATURE OF INTERACTION AND EDUCATION

There is a significant association between nature of interaction and educational level of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 11.34$ d.f. = 4 $p < .01$). The distribution shows that very few respondents want the people to go and meet the leaders. Many of them feel that leaders should go and find out problems of the people. About 70 (38.9) respondents opined that nature of interaction should be both ways - people should go and meet the leaders and the leaders should meet the people. Among the three levels of education, a majority of those with education above SSLC level subscribed to this view.

TABLE 11.0 : NATURE OF INTERACTION AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	EDUCATION	COMMUNITY				RELIGION				AGE			
Nature of inter- action	Below Prim- ary & above	SSLC & above	Nairs & Nam- broodi- ripad	Ezhav- as	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	SC & others	Hindus ms	Christ- ians	Upto 35 years	36- 50 years	51 years above	
People go to meet leaders	8	8	3	4	4	8	5	12	4	7	10	23	22
Leaders go to meet people	9	42	35	15	16	19	17	51	16	19	5	28	22
Both	14	21	35	19	13	12	15	37	11	12	9	35	26

$X^2 = 11.35$ d.f = 4 \$ $X^2 = 5.45$ d.f = 8 NS $X^2 = 7.83$ d.f = 4 NS $X^2 = 2.4$ d.f = 2 NS

X^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

TABLE 11.1 : NATURE OF INTERACTION AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	OCCUPATION				ECONOMIC INCOME			LAND HOLDING			
	Retired & House- wife	Self employ- ed	Agricul- urists & labourers	Employ- ed	Upto Rs 500	Rs 501- 700	Rs 701- 999	Rs 1000 & above	Upto 25 cents	26- 99 cents	1 Acre & above
Nature of interaction	8	6	7	3	12	3	7	2	15	6	3
People go to meet leaders											
Leaders go to meet people	11	28	35	12	17	28	22	19	44	20	22
Both	24	9	26	11	22	25	16	7	34	24	12

$\chi^2 = 12.60$ d.f = 6 NS $\chi^2 = 14.51$ d.f = 6 S $\chi^2 = 4.65$ d.f = 4 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

INTERACTION AND OCCUPATION

As the chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 15.60$ d.f. = 6 $p < .02$) indicates a significant association between the nature of interaction and the occupation of respondents. About 35 (51.5) respondents with agricultural occupation think that the leaders should go and meet the respondents, while 26 (38.2) want it to be both ways. Only 7 (10.3) respondents subscribe to the view that the people should go and meet the leaders. In the case of those in service, the number of respondents who fall in the above three categories is 12 (46.2), 11 (42.3) and 3 (11.5) respectively. Around 13.3 per cent of those engaged in business and trade are of the opinion that the interaction should be based on the leaders initiative. In the case of unemployed, 2.3 per cent felt that the interaction should be one where both the leaders and the people should be in a position to appreciate each others problems and difficulties.

INTERACTION AND INCOME

There is a significant statistical association between the nature of interaction and the income of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 14.51$ d.f. = 6 $p < 0.02$). The distribution of respondents into various levels of income reveals that from those with income upto Rs. 500, a majority wanted the nature of interaction to be both the ways. Around 22 (43.1)

respondents subscribed to the above view. In the case of the three remaining income levels, a majority of them felt that it was the leaders who should go and meet the people to find out their problems. The number of respondents who subscribe to this view being 28, 22 and 19 respectively. The inference is that the perception of people change with their income levels. People who are poor show a different perception than those who are well off.

SUMMING UP

In this chapter, the perceptions and orientations of people regarding their leaders is examined. As regards the qualities of the leaders, most of the respondents expect the leaders to uphold high ideals. The ideals they perceive are based more on the personality traits than caste or ideological orientation of the leaders. The perception of desirable traits has not been uniform because of different social background of the respondents. Though the respondents' expectations are high, the leaders whom they elect are found wanting as most of them possess none of the traits. In terms of support base, a majority of the respondents felt that the leaders draw support from their own caste/community. In relation to interaction, the respondents were divided. A majority of them, however, felt that the leaders should meet the people to find out their problems. With regard to th

satisfaction with the leaders performance; of the five communities, a majority of Ezhavas, Muslims and Scheduled Castes expressed some satisfaction with the leaders performance while a majority of Nairs and Christians are not satisfied. The absence of traits as perceived by the people in the leaders, but satisfaction with their performance explains the political complexity. This may explain the stability-instability syndrome.

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7. Henry C. Hart, "Political Leadership in India : Dimensions and Limits", Atul Kohli (ed.), India's Democracy; an analysis of Changing State-Society Relations (New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1986), p.45.
8. P.M. Mammen, "The Multi-Party System in Kerala", Verinder Grover (ed), Political System in India : Party System and Political Parties (New Delhi : Deep and Deep Publications, 1989).
9. T.J. Nossiter, "Communist Leadership in Kerala : The Business of the Many, the Art of the Few", B.N. Pandey (ed.), Leadership in South Asia (New Delhi : Vikas, 1977), p. 461.
10. Ibid.
11. See Rajni Kothari, Politics in India (New Delhi : Orient Longman, 1970).

Chapter-VII

Political Participation

CHAPTER VII

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

I

Participation of people in events like elections, membership of political parties, participating in election campaigning are a few indicators of their interest in the political process. A higher degree of interest on the large part of the people not only makes the democratic processes stronger, but the political parties more responsive and responsible. This can lead to more of programme based politics. That can also lead to a political direction, which in turn can lend stability to the government. McClosky defines political participation "as those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers, and directly or indirectly in the formulation of public policies"¹. It may also be defined as an "act of taking part in the formulation or passage or implementation of public policies"². Verba defines political participation as "those legal activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the action they take"³. Milibrath feels, "every person participates at least

passively in the political system in which he lives...there is no such thing as not behaving".⁴ Verba, Ahmed and Bhatt hold that participation is of different types. In their view, "Participation is...not a single undifferentiated entity. There are alternative modes of participation that differ significantly in the ways in which they relate the citizen to the government".⁵

Thus, political participation is a sine qua non of a democratic polity and can be considered as a sign of socialisation process.⁶ But it is also necessary to have a dynamic and organic relationship between political institutions and political participation. For as the participation expands, the capacity of the political institutions to absorb change must also increase if stability is to be maintained.⁷

In the case of Kerala, participation of people in the political process has been considerably high compared to the other states. In fact, the voter turnout at the time of elections has been one of the highest in the country. But in a fragmented society like Kerala, it has led to problems as is evident from its continued political instability. This may be explained by the conflict among the various communities over the scarce resources. The community oriented politics did result in each community mobilising and

activising its own voters to take more and more part in the affairs of the state. The lack of consensus among the various communities has led to a situation wherein the political system has been unable to accommodate the expanded participation. The net result seem to be political instability as has been evident in the fall of the governments in quick succession. As Hardgrave put it, "Conflict over scarce resources increases as new groups become participants, but if they lack the minimum consensus necessary for the orderly resolution of conflict, the political system may be unable to accommodate expanded participation by means of its institutions. In so far as the system can respond to newly mobilised groups and to accelerating demands, participation strengthens the system and reinforces its legitimacy"⁸. He further observes, "when the system is unable - or unwilling - to absorb new demands,⁹ participation may simply overwhelm performance capacity".

II

The present chapter seeks to examine various parameters of political participation and its likely impact on the overall political situation of Mavelikara constituency. By analysing this dimension, one would be able to examine the proposition that increased political participation would eventually lead to problems especially in a fragmented state

like Kerala. The broad areas covered relate to membership of political parties, election campaign, pattern and the frequency of voting. It also covers voters' perception of the contesting candidates.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE VOTING BEHAVIOUR

In a democracy people are the ultimate decision makers as far as choosing their representatives are concerned. But, as they are a part of the wider political system, they tend to get influenced by certain extraneous factors operating within the system. For instance, the voter may be influenced by the party ideology if he happens to be a committed party supporter or sympathiser. Sometimes, he may attach more importance to the merit of the candidate and at other times be influenced by caste/religious loyalty while casting his vote. His own family members may sometimes pressurise him to vote for a particular candidate/party.

What are the factors that influenced the respondents of the study area? The answers to the above question are attempted in Table 1. It is observed from the table that 110 (61.0) respondents are influenced by party ideology while the remaining respondents, 70 (38.9) by non-ideological factors like personality of the candidate, caste/religious loyalty, family loyalty. This data suggests that almost two thirds of the respondents feel that ideology plays a significant role.

TABLE 1 : FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE VOTING BEHAVIOUR

S.No	Village	Ideology	Non ideological factors
1.	Vathukolam	23	7
2.	Olayatiambalam	23	8
3.	Mullikulangara	20	9
4.	Kurthiad	12	16
5.	Ponezha	18	12
6.	Kattachera	14	18
		110 (61.1)	70 (38.9)

This seems to be in contrast with the least importance that political parties give to ideology. The parties have come to attach greater importance to prestige and power. For the sake of power, they do not hesitate entering into alliances with the parties of all hues at the time of elections.

In Kurthiad, eight respondents felt that it was religious loyalty that was of importance. This is partly because of the communal divide arising from the murder of Titus - a Kerala Congress functionary - allegedly by RSS workers. In Kattachera, Muslims attached more importance to ideology. On the whole the data suggests that party ideology

is not the sole factor that weighs in electoral behaviour. There are other factors that also operate.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

To get a better appreciation of the data, the variable 'factors that influence' was cross tabulated for Chi-square analysis in order to see whether our observation differs from what is expected by chance at a particular level of significance. The analysis indicate that there is no significant statistical relationship with any of the demographic variables.

MEMBERSHIP OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties play a pivotal role in educating the masses by inculcating in them the norms, values and attitudes that enable them to participate in the political process of the society and provide stability to the political system. It also reduces the distance between the citizens and the state and bring to bear the pressure of their opinion with state policies. In order to ascertain the extent to which political parties have been able to shape public opinion, the membership of political parties can be considered as good barometer. Membership, in fact, widens the area of 'commitment', makes the outcome of voting less difficult to

TABLE 2.0 : FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	EDUCATION		COMMUNITY				RELIGION		AGE																	
Factors that influence	Below Prim- ary	Prim- ary & above	SSIC & above	Nairs & Nam- boodi- ripad	Ezhav- as	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	Hindus ms	Christ- ians	Upto 35 years	36- 50 years above															
	17	49	44	20	25	14	22	29	74	14	22	31	28	51												
Ideology	17	49	44	20	25	14	22	29	74	14	22	31	28	51												
Non Ideo- logical reasons	11	22	34	17	11	17	17	8	36	17	17	24	27	19												
											$\chi^2 = 3.76$ d.f = 2 NS				$\chi^2 = 6.40$ d.f = 4 NS				$\chi^2 = 3.78$ d.f = 2 NS				$\chi^2 = 7.56$ d.f = 2 NS			

χ^2 Chi-Square value
 NS Not Significant
 S Significant

TABLE 2.1 : FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	OCCUPATION				ECONOMIC INCOME				LAND HOLDING			
Factors that influence	Retired & House- wife	Self employ- ed	Agricul- turists & labourers	Employ- ed	Upto Rs 500	Rs 501- 700	Rs 701- 999	Rs 1000 & above	Upto 25 cents	26- 99 cents	1 Acre & above	
Ideology	23	22	48	17	33	36	27	14	61	31	18	
Non ideol- ogical factors	19	21	20	9	18	20	18	14	32	19	19	

X² = 5.61 d.f = 3 NS X² = 4.11 d.f = 3 NS X² = 3.21 d.f = 2 NS

X² Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

TABLE 3 : MEMBERSHIP OF POLITICAL PARTIES

S.No	Village	Yes	No	Total
1.	Vathukolam	11	19	30
2.	Olayattiambalam	9	19	31
3.	Mullikulangara	13	16	29
4.	Kurthiad	10	18	28
5.	Ponezha	6	24	30
6.	Kattachera	13	19	32
		62 (34.4)	118 (65.6)	180 (100)

predict. As such, it throws a good deal of light on all aspects of recruitment process. But it is not necessary that success of the party can be assessed purely on the strength of membership. There are political parties which are very popular but whose membership is very limited. Moreover, membership of political parties is not the only criterion to judge the level of people's political participation. In order to elicit information about their own membership, a question regarding the details of membership of political party was, therefore, put to the respondents.

The table indicates that only a few respondents i.e., 62 (34.4) out of 180 are found to be members of political parties. This low percentage of membership in a volatile

state like Kerala may be explained by the fact that political parties in India give less importance to formal enrolment of the public in it. The parties are dormant during most of the time except during elections and many of its activities are carried out informally.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

In order to get a better appreciation of the type of people who join political parties, the membership data was cross tabulated with the demographic features of the respondents. The assumption being that the demographic features have an impact on the respondents taking up membership of political parties. The Chi-square analysis indicate that there is a significant statistical association between membership and respondents belonging to a particular community and religion. It has no significant association with education, age, occupation, income and land holding pattern (Table 4).

MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNITY

In a complex society, certain communities tend to be more active in political activities than others. This is in terms of taking up membership of the parties and also taking part in its activities. Out of the five major communities in Kerala it is generally believed that the Christians and Nairs

TABLE 4.0 : MEMBERSHIP OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		EDUCATION		COMMUNITY			RELIGION		AGE		
Membership of political parties	Below Prim-ary	Below Prim-ary	SSLC & above	Nairs & Namboodi-ripad	Ezhavas	Muslims	Christians	Hindus	Upto 35 years	36-50 years	51 years & above
	8	23	31	7	10	10	21	14	31	10	21
Yes											
No	23	48	47	30	26	21	18	23	79	10	21

$\chi^2 = 2.13$ d.f = 2 NS $\chi^2 = 11.41$ d.f = 4 S $\chi^2 = 8.48$ d.f = 2 S $\chi^2 = 0.64$ d.f = 2 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

TABLE 4.1 : MEMBERSHIP OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		OCCUPATION			ECONOMIC INCOME			LAND HOLDING			
Membership of politi- cal parties	Retired & House- wife	Self employ- ed	Agricul- urists & labourers	Employ- ed	Upto Rs 500	Rs 501- 700	Rs 701- 999	Rs 1000 & above	Upto 25 cents	26- 99 cents	1 Acre & above
Yes	15	12	24	11	22	16	16	8	32	17	13
No	28	31	44	15	29	40	29	20	61	33	24

$\chi^2 = 1.55$ d.f = 3 NS $\chi^2 = 0.02$ d.f = 3 NS $\chi^2 = 0.01$ d.f = 2 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

are far more active as far as taking up membership is concerned. In order to test whether this hypothesis hold good in our study area, the membership of political parties was cross tabulated with the community variable.

As shown in table, there is a significant association between membership and the various communities ($X^2 = 11.41$ d.f. = p < .05). A further probe into the distribution reveals that it is the Christians who are more active in taking up membership of political parties. This may be because of their interest in safeguarding their minority character. Out of the total of 39 Christians, 21 (53.9) are members of political parties. It is not the case with the other caste/communities and especially among the Nairs and the Ezhavas. Among Muslims and Scheduled castes, the percentage of respondents who are members of political parties is 32 (32.2) and 38 (37.8) respectively.

MEMBERSHIP AND RELIGION

The Chi-Square value ($X^2 = 8.48$ d.f. = 2 P < 0.02) indicates a significant statistical relationship between membership and religious background of the respondents. Of the three religions, Christians, relatively speaking are more active in taking up membership of political parties. It this group that contributes significantly to the total Chi-Square

value. Here 21 Christians are members of political parties. Muslims show disinclination to take up membership of political parties. This may be explained by the absence of Muslim League in the area. In the case of Hindus, 31 (28.2) are members of political parties while 79 (71.8) are not members.

SYMPATHY FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

As seen in table 3, the number of respondents who have membership of some party or the other is very low. There has been a general tendency among the public not to identify with any single party. This tendency partly explains the nature of politics in Kerala. The fluctuating party preference at the time of elections, perhaps, is one of the reasons for political instability in the state. Their lack of loyalty to any single party helps them in changing their party preference from one election to another. This does not mean that they are totally cut off from the political parties. They do have their own sympathies but not strong loyalties. Sympathy is something which is not visible to an outside observer like the membership. Those respondents who are not members of political parties have been probed into to assess the pattern of their sympathy, if any, for particular political parties.

TABLE 5 : SYMPATHY FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

S.NO	Villāge	Yes	No	NA	Total
1.	Vathukolam	15	3	11	30
2.	Olayattiambalam	18	4	9	31
3.	Mullikulangara	15	1	13	29
4.	Kurthiad	15	2	10	28
5.	Ponezha	18	6	6	30
6.	Kattachera	18	1	13	32
		101 (56.2)	17 (9.4)	62 (34.4)	180 (100)

Out of the total of 118 respondents who stated that they were not members of political party, 101 (56.2) stated that they have some sympathy for certain political parties; 17 (9.4) respondents said that do not have any sympathy for any of the parties. This does not mean that they are apolitical. It only means that they are not totally persuaded of the parties sincerity and ideology. They cast their vote not on basis of party affiliations but on factors like issues, candidates merit and so on.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Though election campaign is episodic, it is a significant mode of action through which the citizen can

influence the outcome of the election. The act of campaigning is directed towards persuading others to accept the party's programme and at the same time dissuading them from accepting the policies of other parties. Campaigning helps crystallise partisanship and reinforces the interaction of committed party adherents to vote and persuade others to vote. To Narain and Sharma, election campaign is a two way process of image building and image destruction, with each competing political party trying to establish a favourable image for itself and a negative one for the opposition.¹¹ Parties resort to various ways of campaigning during elections. It may take the form of door-to-door canvassing, distribution of pamphlets of party literature, putting up posters etc. The respondents in our study area were asked the question, "Have you participated in election campaign"?

TABLE 6 : ELECTION CAMPAIGN

S.NO	Village	Yes	No	Total
1.	Vathukolam	19	11	30
2.	Olayattiambalam	18	13	31
3.	Mullikulangara	15	14	29
4.	Kurthiad	11	17	28
5.	Ponezha	10	20	30
6.	Kattachera	14	18	32
		87 (48.3)	93 (51.7)	180 (100)

This question was asked to elicit information about the type of activity they carried out for various parties.

As seen in table 6, the respondents are almost equally divided between the two categories with a slight edge to the 'no' category. Taking part in election campaigning means an open commitment to a party. This may be the reason why very few people take part in election campaign of political parties. Among the wards, the respondents in Vathukolam, Olayatiambalam and Mullikulangara are more actively involved in election campaign than the respondents of the other wards. Another aspect of the election campaigning is in that constituency even those who do not have a formal membership of the party undertook the campaigning work. As described earlier, only 62 respondents have membership of one party or the other. The table 6 shows that 87 respondents partook in election campaign. Thus campaigning was not restricted to party members. Some do it for the sake of other considerations like monetary factor while others join it because their friends/relative are contesting the elections and other do it for political considerations.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

To find out the categories of people who take part in election campaigning, Chi-Square method was adopted. This was to test whether what is observed differs from what is

TABLE 7.0 : ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		EDUCATION		COMMUNITY		RELIGION		AGE						
Election campaign	Below Prim- ary	SSIC & above	Nairs & Nam- boodi- ripad	Ezhav- as	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	Hindus	SC & others	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	Upto 35 years	36- 50 years	51 years & above	
	Prim- ary above													
Yes	14	40	33	13	18	13	19	24	55	13	19	28	23	36
No	17	31	45	24	18	18	20	13	55	18	20	27	32	34

$\chi^2 = 3.08$ d.f = 2 NS $\chi^2 = 7.18$ d.f = 4 NS $\chi^2 = 0.62$ d.f = 2 NS $\chi^2 = 1.34$ d.f = 2 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

TABLE 7.1 : ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	OCCUPATION				ECONOMIC INCOME			LAND HOLDING			
	Retired & House- wife	Self employ- ed	Agricul- turists & labourers	Employ- ed	Upto Rs 500	Rs 501- 700	Rs 701- 999	Rs 1000 & above	Upto 25 cents	26- 99 cents	1 Acre & above
Election campaign											
Yes	13	19	41	14	23	31	21	12	64	22	21
No	30	24	27	12	28	25	24	16	49	28	16

$\chi^2 = 10.14$ d.f = 3 S $\chi^2 = 1.60$ d.f = 3 NS $\chi^2 = 1.46$ d.f = 2 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

expected at a particular level of significance. The analysis indicate that there a significant statistical relationship only with the occupational status of the respondents. It has no significant relationship with age, education, community, religion, income and landholding pattern.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND OCCUPATION

The chi-square value indicates a significant association between election campaign and the occupation of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 10.14$ $p < .02$). The voters from agricultural occupation are found to be more active in election campaign than the other three categories. The respondents who are employed are also active and contribute to the total Chi-square value though to a lesser degree. A majority of the respondents who come in the first category - unemployed - keep away from election campaigning. It is also the case with self-employed and businessmen implying that they have no interest/time to take part in these activities. They may also be playing safe. It is those in the agricultural field who tend to take more active part in the election campaign as they are relatively more independent.

VOTING

Voting lies at the root of the democratic process and it is through the act of voting that a government by consent is obtained. In the case of Kerala, elections to the

legislative assembly have been a frequent phenomena due to the political instability. There has been a record number of elections after the formation of the state in 1956. The electorate thus have had more number of chances of articulating their view which they did through their vote. Voting, though an individual act, is an important instrument of control over the government. As Verba observes, "Voting differs from other political acts in that it requires relatively little initiative. The occasion for voting is presented, to the citizen in the form of regular elections; he does not have to create the occasion"¹². As our concern here is the frequency of voting, the respondents was asked, "How many times have you voted during 1957 to 1987 period?"

As can be seen from the Table 8, 73 (40.6) respondents participated and voted in more than seven elections, 53 (29.4) participated in the range of 3 to 6 elections while 54 (30.0) participated between 1 to 3 elections. One thing which is striking about the data is the high level of participation of the people in the elections. The frequency of elections does not seem to have effected the voting frequency as is reflected in the number of respondents who have taken part in the various elections. About 126 of them have voted in more than three elections while only 54 respondents participated in the range of 1 to 3 elections. This shows that all the respondents participated in elections at one point or the other.

TABLE 8 : FREQUENCY OF VOTING

S.NO	Village	No. of Elections			Total
		1-3	4-5	7-9	
1.	Vathukolam	7	11	12	30
2.	Olayatiambalam	10	8	13	31
3.	Mullikulangara	8	10	11	29
4.	Kurthiad	10	7	11	28
5.	Ponezha	11	7	12	30
6.	Kattachera	8	10	14	32
		54 (30.0)	53 (29.4)	73 (40.6)	180 (100)

VOTING PATTERN

Normally each election has its own issues and problems, it, however, need not necessarily be a repeatition of the previous election. Sometimes new candidates make their debut and promise things which were not of much relevance in the previous elections. The voters on their part may continue to vote for the same party/candidate, thereby indicating a form of stable political behaviour or switch their preference with each election indicating changing political behaviour. As our task here is to find out the pattern of voting during the last nine elections, we asked the respondents the following question, "What has been your voting pattern from

election to election?" The answers we got are given with the percentages in Table 9.

TABLE 9 : PATTERN OF VOTING

S.No	Village	Voting for same party	Changed from election to election	NA
1.	Vathukolam	21	8	4
2.	Olayatiambalam	21	6	4
3.	Mullikulangara	18	7	4
4.	Kurthiad	14	11	3
5.	Ponezha	13	13	4
6.	Kattachera	19	11	2
		106 (58.3)	56 (31.1)	18 (10.6)

For 106 (58.3) respondents the data suggests that there has been no change in their pattern of voting from election to election. They voted for the same party whatever be the issues raised at the time of elections. For them, the party's ideology was more important and other related factors like candidates merit and his past performance were of secondary importance. For 56 (31.1) respondents, their party preference varied from election to election indicating non-conformism in their voting pattern. This number is quite

significant in a state like Kerala where the support base of two Fronts is more or less evenly matched and a slight shift in the voting pattern of even one per cent can result in a change of governments. For 18 (10.6) respondents, the vote they had cast in 1987 was a maiden voting requiring no analysis.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

To get a better appreciation of the data, this variable was cross-tabulated for Chi-Square analysis. This was done to see whether the observation differs from what is expected by chance at a particular level of significance. The respondents numbering 18 who had not voted in the previous elections were deleted from the figure of 180 while carrying out the Chi-square analysis. The analysis indicate that there is a significant statistical relationship between pattern of voting and education and occupational status of the respondents. It has no association with age, community, religion, income and landholding pattern.

VOTING PATTERN AND EDUCATION

This analysis indicates that there is a significant association between the voting pattern and the educational level of the respondents. The distribution of the respondents into various categories shows that a significant

TABLE 10.0 : VOTING PATTERN AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	EDUCATION		COMMUNITY				RELIGION		AGE					
Voting pattern	Below Prim- ary	Prim- ary & above	SSIC & above	Nairs & Nam- boodi- ripad	Fzhav- as	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	SC & others	Hindus	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	Upto 35 years	36- 50 years	51 years & above
No change	19	50	37	22	22	20	17	25	69	20	17	25	36	45
Changed	10	15	31	10	11	11	18	7	28	11	18	14	18	24

$\chi^2 = 11.4$ d.f = 2 S $\chi^2 = 2.07$ d.f = 4 NS $\chi^2 = 3.26$ d.f = 2 NS $\chi^2 = 3.64$ d.f = 2 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

TABLE 10.1 : VOTING PATTERN AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	OCCUPATION				ECONOMIC INCOME				LAND HOLDING		
	Retired & House- wife	Self employ- ed	Agricul- urists & labourers	Employ- ed	Upto Rs 500	Rs 501- 700	Rs 701- 999	Rs 1000 & above	Upto 25 cents	26- 99 cents	1 Acre & above
No change	25	20	48	13	37	32	26	11	61	27	18
Changed	14	20	14	8	9	19	13	15	24	17	15

$\chi^2 = 12.09$ $d.f = 3$ S $\chi^2 = 4.70$ $d.f = 3$ NS $\chi^2 = 3.01$ $d.f = 2$ NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

number of them are found to be committed to a single party/front. Quite a few of them changed their preference from election to election. This is more in the case of less educated people where 10 (33.3) respondents changed their party preference with each election. This may be because they are carried away by the promises made by different candidates at the time of elections.

VOTING PATTERN AND OCCUPATION

There is a significant association between voting pattern and occupation of the respondents ($X^2 = 12.09$ $p < .01$). More than 60 per cent of the respondents in the three categories except the self-employed and business people have shown consistency by voting for the same front/party in all the elections. In the case of the above category, 20 (48.0) have voted for the same front, 6 (14.6) for the best candidate and 15 (36.6) constantly changed their preference.

VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN THE NINTH ASSEMBLY ELECTION

The ninth Assembly elections held in March 1987 was a test case for both the fronts. For the ruling UDF, it was a chance to get a formal approval of the policies it had undertaken during the previous five years. For LDF, it was a chance to come back to power by playing upon the failures of the UDF government. From this standpoint, the respondents were asked about their party preference during the ninth

assembly elections held on 23 March, 1987. The responses relating to these are given below.

TABLE 11 : VOTING IN THE NINTH ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

S.No.	Village	Yes	No	Total
1.	Vathukolam	29	1	30
2.	Olayattiambalam	31	-	30
3.	Mullikulangara	29	-	29
4.	Kurthiad	28	-	28
5.	Ponezha	28	2	30
6.	Kattachera	31	1	32
		176 (97.8)	4 (2.2)	180 (100)

Table 11 shows that as many as 176 (97.8) respondents had exercised their franchise in the 1987 election. The high percentage of voting reflects the high degree of participation in the study area. Only 4 (2.2) respondents stated that they did not vote as they were away during the election.

The question that to which party did the respondents vote for is a sensitive one. This was tackled with rapport and a little persuasion. Most of them did talk about their preference, except for six respondents who declined to answer the question. Around 82 (45.6) respondents stated that they

voted for the United Democratic Front while 74 (41.1) stated that they voted for the Left Democratic Front. There was almost equal division of respondents between the two fronts. This division makes the polity relatively unstable as a slight shift of the uncommitted voters in their preference can tilt the balance either in favour of the LDF or UDF. It is actually the uncommitted voters who determine the fortunes of the two fronts. In Mullikulangara and Kurthiad, the LDF was preferred compared to other wards, viz., Vathukolam, Olayattiambalam, Ponezha and Kattachera where the UDF was preferred. Only four (2.2) respondents stated that they voted for other parties like CMP and Ex-servicemen society. The four respondents in the not applicable (NA) category are those who did not vote in the election.

TABLE 12 : FRONT/PARTY PREFERENCE

S.No.	Village	UDF	LDF	BJP	Others	NA	Total
1.	Vathukolam	14	13	-	2	1	30
2.	Olyattiambalam	15	13	1	2	-	31
3.	Mullikulangara	9	13	-	7	-	29
4.	Kurthiad	11	16	1	-	-	28
5.	Ponezha	15	10	-	3	2	29
6.	Kattachera	18	9	2	2	2	32
		82 (45.6)	74 (41.1)	4 (2.2)	16 (8.9)	4 (2.2)	180 (100)

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

The 20 respondents who stated that they voted for other parties were included in one category - others, so as to raise the expected frequencies above five. Moreover, the four respondents who did not vote in the election held in March 1987 were deleted while carrying out the Chi-square analysis. The hypothesis in this case being that the social composition of the electorate reflects their party preferences. The Chi-square analysis indicate a significant statistical association between education, age, community, religion, income and landholding pattern of the respondents. It has no association whatsoever with the occupational status of the respondents.

PARTY PREFERENCE AND EDUCATION

The analysis indicate that there is a significant association between the party preference and the level of education of the respondents. The distribution reveals that the less educated respondents tend to favour the Left Democratic Front while the more educated favour the United Democratic Front. Respondents numbering 51 (50.0) with education below SSLC level prefer LDF while 37 (36.3) respondents with the same level of education prefer UDF. In the case of respondents with education above SSLC level, 45 (57.7) prefer UDF while 23 (22.5) prefer LDF.

VOTING PREFERENCE AND AGE

The analysis indicate that there is a significant association, between party preference and age of the respondents. The Left Democratic Front by its ideology has been able to attract the younger generation compared to the older people : this is reflected in the distribution of respondents into various categories as shown in the table 13. Out of the total of 53 respondents in the age group of 21-35 years, 26 (45.5) preferred the LDF while 19 (34.5) preferred the UDF. The remaining respondents i.e., 8 (17.0) voted for other parties. The UDF was at an advantage in the case of other age groups. The UDF was preferred to the LDF. In the age group of 36-50 years, 25 (47.3) respondents preferred UDF while only 22 (41.5) preferred LDF. It is in the case of third group - 51 years and above - that there is some polarisation in the party preference. Here 38 (54.2) preferred the UDF while only 22 (37.1) preferred the LDF. The remaining respondents preferred other parties and hence do not have any significant impact on the total Chi-square value.

PARTY PREFERENCE AND CASTE/COMMUNITY

There is a significant association between voting preference and the various communities ($\chi^2 = 32$ d.f = 8 $p < .01$). There is a clear cut polarisation among various

TABLE 13.1 : PARTY PREFERENCE AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	OCCUPATION				ECONOMIC INCOME				LAND HOLDING			
	Retired & House- wife	Self employ- ed	Agricul- urists & labourers	Employ- ed	Upto Rs 500	Rs 501- 700	Rs 701- 999	Rs 1000 & above	Upto 25 cents	26- 99 cents	1 Acre & above	
UDF	20	26	21	15	15	22	30	15	32	27	23	
LDF	15	13	16	10	26	26	12	10	49	16	9	
Others	7	4	8	1	10	5	2	3	10	5	5	

$\chi^2 = 11.52$ d.f. = 6 NS $\chi^2 = 18.09$ d.f. = 6 S $\chi^2 = 13.78$ d.f. = 4 S
 χ^2 Chi-Square value
 NS Not Significant
 S Significant

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communities as far as their party preference is concerned. Ezhavas and Scheduled castes tend to favour the LDF while Nairs, Muslims and Christians tend to favour the UDF. In the case of Ezhavas, the polarisation is not as sharp as in the case of other communities. Though 20 (57.1) have preferred the LDF, a fairly good number - 10 (28.6) have preferred the UDF. This means that though certain communities have allegiance to a particular front, it is not necessary that all the community members would vote for the front. This is very well reflected in the above table.

PARTY PREFERENCE AND INCOME

As the Chi-square value indicates, there is a significant association between party preference and economic background of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 18.09$ $p < .01$). The distribution reveals that there is a class polarisation of respondents in terms of their party preference. Respondents with lower income tend to support the LDF while those with a higher source of income tend to support the UDF. If one looks at the distribution category wise, we find that 26 (52.0) respondents in the income category upto Rs 500/-, prefer the LDF to the UDF. In the case of those in the income range of Rs. 501-700, 26 (49.0) respondents preferred the LDF while 22 (41.5) preferred the UDF. The respondents who are better off tend to choose the UDF. The number of respondents in the remaining two categories - Rs. 701-999 and

Rs. 1000 and above - prefer the UDF. The preference being 30 (65.2) and 15 (53.5) respectively.

PARTY PREFERENCE AND LANDHOLDING

The chi-square value indicates that there is a significant association between landholding and party preference of the respondents. Respondents with lower land holding prefer the LDF while those with more land tend to choose the UDF. About 23 (62.1) respondents having more than one acre preferred UDF to LDF while 27 (56.2) respondents having between 26 to 99 cents, preferred the UDF. In the case of landless and those owning upto 25 cents, 49 (53.8) prefer the LDF, 32 (35.1) preferred the UDF while 10 (11.1) preferred other parties like BJP and CMP etc.

SHIFT IN VOTING

In a multi-party set up with so many candidates contesting the elections, the voter faces a dilemma during every election - which party or candidate to choose; or should he vote for the same party or candidate as in the previous one or should he elect some different party? These are some of the questions that the voter faces during the election time. Some researchers found that a great number of people make up their minds as to whom to vote just before the actual commencement of election campaign. This core voters

display a stable voting behaviour from election to election. The fluctuations in voting pattern take place because of the changing role of the peripheral voters who have no such commitment as the core voters. It is their attitude that swings the electoral results depending upon whether the¹⁴ election is a high stimulus or a low stimulus election.

TABLE 14 : VOTING FOR SAME PARTY

S.NO	Village	Yes	No	NA	Total
1.	Vathukolam	21	7	2	30
2.	Olayattiambalam	24	3	4	31
3.	Mullikulangara	22	3	4	29
4.	Kurthiad	16	8	4	28
5.	Ponezha	23	2	5	30
6.	Kattachera	25	4	3	32
		131 (72.8)	27 (15.0)	22 (12.2)	180 (100)

In order to know the extent of shift in voting among the respondents, we asked two questions viz., one, Did you vote for the same party in the 1984 elections? and two, If no, to which front/party did you cast your vote?

The data reveals that 130 (70.0) respondents did not shift their party preferences. About 27 (15.0) respondents

switched their preference to a different party during the 1987 elections.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

In order to find more meanings in the shift in voting of the respondents, this variable was cross-tabulated with the demographic variables. Before doing it, 22 respondents (18+4) were deleted from the figure of 180 for tabulating the chi-square value. From this 22, for 18 of them 1987 election was a maiden election, while four respondents are those who did not participate in the 1987 election. Hence the question of finding out their previous voting behaviour does not arise. The Chi square analysis indicate a significant statistical association only with the landholding pattern of the respondents. There is no significant relationship with education, age, community, religion, occupation and income.

SHIFT IN VOTING AND LANDHOLDING

The Chi-square analysis indicate that there is a significant association between landholding pattern and their voting behaviour. A majority of the respondents in various categories of landholding pattern voted for the same party/front in all the elections. They have not shifted their party preference at all and thus showing their continued faith in their party though the issues are quite different with each election. Out of the three categories,

TABLE 15.0 : SHIFT IN VOTING AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		EDUCATION		COMMUNITY			RELIGION		AGE			
Shift in voting	Below Prim- ary	Prim- ary & above	SSLC & above	Nairs & Nam- boodi- ripad	Ezhav- as	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	Hindus	SC & others	Upto 35 years	36- 50 years	51 years & above
Yes	24	51	56	29	27	25	22	85	28	31	44	56
No	6	13	8	4	6	3	10	14	4	9	7	11

$\chi^2 = 1.60$ d.f = 2 NS $\chi^2 = 6.41$ d.f = 4 NS $\chi^2 = 3.97$ d.f = 2 NS $\chi^2 = 1.25$ d.f = 2 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

TABLE 15.1 : SHIFT IN VOTING AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	OCCUPATION			ECONOMIC INCOME			LAND HOLDING				
	Retired & House- wife	Self employ- ed	Agricul- urists & labourers	Employ- ed	Upto Rs 500	Rs 501- 700	Rs 701- 999	Rs 1000 & above	Upto 25 cents	26- 99 cents	1 Acre & above
Shift in voting											
Yes	31	28	53	19	40	38	33	20	78	31	22
No	5	11	8	3	4	13	5	5	8	11	8

$\chi^2 = 0.622$ d.f = 3 NS $\chi^2 = 5.09$ d.f = 3 NS $\chi^2 = 8.28$ d.f = 2 S

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

those owning upto 25 cents have shown greater consistency in their voting behaviour. Here 78 (90.6) out of 86 have voted for the same party in all the elections. In the case of other two categories, the number of respondents who voted for the same party being 31 (73.8) and 22 (73.3) respectively.

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT CONTESTING CANDIDATES

GROUND OF APPEAL

Once the candidates enter the election fray, their only aim is to win the election without being bothered about the means to be adopted. They carry out the election campaign by promising many things to many people. They appeal to the electorate on various grounds - some invoke the caste/religious loyalty; some appeal to the electorate to vote for the best candidate; while others appeal on the basis of party loyalty. In certain cases, they go to the extent of using pressure and threats to get the votes from the vulnerable sections. In order to find out the perceptions of the respondents, they were asked "what are the grounds on which the candidates appeal for votes"?

The question elicited various type of answers from the respondents : about 14 (63.3) respondents stated that the candidates appealed on the basis of party loyalty; 36 (20.0) said on the basis of caste/group loyalty; 21 (11.7) stated

variable has a significant association with education, age, communities and occupational status of the respondents. It has no significant association with income and landholding pattern of the respondents.

GROUND'S OF APPEAL AND EDUCATION

The Chi-Square for this cross tabulation is 10.82 and this is significant at one per cent level. The distribution of respondents into various categories reveals that party loyalty is the main factor used by the candidates while appealing for votes. Around 20 (64.3) respondents with primary educational level stated that the candidate appealed for votes on the basis of party loyalty while 11 (35.5) stated that it was done on the basis of caste/religious loyalty and sometimes by using pressure and threats. About 54 (76.0) respondents in the category upto SSC stated that the major appeal was on party loyalty. The number of respondents in the third category who subscribed to the above view is 40 (51.3). Here a substantial number of respondents - 38 (48.7) - stated that candidates appealed for votes on the basis of caste/religious loyalty. Some went to the extent of using pressure and threats while appealing for votes. This indicates a gradual weakening of ideological moorings among the candidates in favour of community and religious dimension.

TABLE 17.0 : GROUNDS OF APPEAL, AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		EDUCATION		COMMUNITY				RELIGION			AGE			
Grounds of appeal	Below Prim- ary	Prim- ary & above	SSLC & above	Nairs & Nam- boodi- ripad	Ezhav- as	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	Hindus	SC & others	Musli- ms	Christ- ians	Upto 35 years	36- 50 years	51 years & above
Party loyalty	20	54	40	20	24	21	20	73	20	21	20	20	44	50
Caste/ religion/ threats	11	17	38	17	12	10	19	37	8	10	19	21	22	23

$\chi^2 = 10.82$ d.f = 2 S $\chi^2 = 7.84$ d.f = 4 S $\chi^2 = 3.13$ d.f = 2 NS $\chi^2 = 14.89$ d.f = 2 S

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

TABLE 17.1 : GROUNDS OF APPEAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	OCCUPATION				ECONOMIC INCOME			LAND HOLDING			
	Retired & House- wife	Self employ- ed	Agricul- urists & labourers	Employ- ed	Upto Rs 500	Rs 501- 700	Rs 701- 999	Rs 1000 & above	Upto 25 cents	26- 99 cents	1 Acre & above
Grounds of appeal											
Party loyalty	20	21	54	19	32	35	28	19	65	27	22
Caste/ religion/ threats	23	22	14	7	19	21	17	9	28	23	15

$\chi^2 = 17.76$ d.f = 3 S $\chi^2 = 0.29$ d.f = 3 NS $\chi^2 = 3.83$ d.f = 2 NS

χ^2 Chi-Square value
NS Not Significant
S Significant

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GROUND OF APPEAL AND AGE

The chi-square analysis indicate that there is a significant association between grounds of appeal and the age of the respondents ($X^2 = 14.89$ $p < .001$). In the case of younger generation (23-35 years), 21 (51.7) respondents stated the candidates appealed for votes on the basis of caste/religious loyalty and sometimes by using threats and pressures. Around 20 (48.3) felt that appeal was on the basis of party loyalty. In the other two categories, 36-50 years and 51 years and above, the number of respondents who agreed to the above pattern was 44 (66.7) and 50 (68.5) respectively.

GROUND OF APPEAL AND OCCUPATION

The Chi-square analysis indicate that there is a significant association between grounds of appeal and the occupation of the respondents. It is significant at 0.001 per cent level ($X^2 = 17.76$). The distribution reveals that those involved in agriculture contribute more to the total chi-square value. Here 54 (79.4) out of 68 stated that the candidates appealed on the basis of party loyalty. The number of respondents in the other two categories of occupation with the same perception are 20 (46.5) and 21 (48.8) respectively. The remaining respondents in these two categories, 23 (53.5) and 22 (51.2) stated that the

candidates appeal for votes on the basis of caste/religious loyalty and sometimes using pressure and threats.

SUMMING UP

Political participation by the people in various political activities can be considered as the main concern of all democratic political systems. In the case of Kerala, the participation of people in the political process has been of a high order. A majority of the respondents participated in most of the elections. In contrast to the high participation in elections, a majority of the respondents did not take up formal membership of political parties. The absence of such a formal commitment to a political party results in shifting their voting pattern from one election to another. Around 57 per cent of the respondents did not take part in election campaigning. They are reluctant to get identified with any party. However, around 58 per cent of the respondents did not change their voting pattern while 31 per cent changed their preference.

The analysis reveals relatively stable electoral behaviour as a majority of respondents did not shift their voting pattern from election to election. Yet a large majority are not ideologically committed, nor the political parties are depending on ideological factor. This introduces the element of fluctuations. Another weakness of the

electoral system has been that a shift of voting preference even by a small percentage of voters can upset and tilt the scales of victory either way. It is this phenomenon that contributes to the stability-instability syndrome.

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Chapter-VIII

Conclusion

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The unique characteristics of Kerala - physiological and demographic - characterise its political complexity and social diversity. In the political sphere it was the first state to elect a Communist Party to power through ballot and had pulled down the same government through a political turmoil. The political system has been subjected to continuous instability wherein the party control over the government was exercised by one or more than one party for a lesser period than what the constitution stipulates. This political instability can be traced back to pre-state formation in 1956. There were as many as six governments between the year 1948 - 1956. They collapsed one after another in quick succession. After the formation of the state in 1956, the average span of ministry works out to two and half years. In all it had a total of 15 ministries, seven spells of President's rule and ten elections after 1956. It is this instability that needs explanation.

There have been some attempts to identify the reasons for political instability in Kerala. The attempts remained unmatched to the complexity of the problem. With the result, the macro and micro level data to identify the reasons for political instability needs further refinement and

interpretation. This needs to cover structural and systemic aspect of the problem. In this study, an attempt is made to analyse the causes contributing to political instability by examining the macro and micro level trends.

The study is based on an ex-post-facto analysis of the 1987 Assembly elections. Emphasis is laid on behavioural aspects of the respondents participating in the political process. For the purpose of analytical convenience and space, the focus of the study is confined to three aspects - (a) Communalism (b) Leadership (c) Political participation. The investigation at micro level was confined to two Panchayats of Mavelikara constituency. The sample consisted of 180 respondents selected on the basis of purposive random sampling. The data was collected with the help of a structured interview schedule. In addition informal discussions with candidates/leaders of the area were also held.

For macro level trends, electoral behavioural modes of 140 constituencies has been analysed. This macro level analysis of 140 constituencies has thrown up three major trends (i) Constituencies that have been stable; (ii) Constituencies that have displayed traces of stability and instability and (iii) Constituencies that have been continuously unstable.

In the first category, there are 24 constituencies which returned the same party in almost all the elections. The second category consist of 59 constituencies which showed traces of both stability and instability during certain points of time. In the third category, there are 57 constituencies which had changed their voting pattern with every election.

The fact that there are a very few constituencies in the first category indicates the level of instability in Kerala. Even the few constituencies that fall in stable category are geographically located mostly in the northern part and a few in the central part of Kerala. Among the parties, it is the Muslim League which manages maximum number of 'stable' constituencies. Out of the eight stable seats for it, seven are located only in one district viz, Malappuram. Congress and CPI(M) have six stable constituencies while the other parties like CPI, Kerala Congress (M) and RSP have one each. More than three fourths - 116 - of the constituencies are subjected to political instability at one point or the other.

There are multiple reasons for this political instability. It is difficult to pinpoint the reason. The peculiar demographic composition of Kerala gives the major communities a decisive say in politics of the state. The major communities - Nairs, Christians, Muslims and Ezhavas -

constitute around 80 per cent of the total population. The ministries have been formed and toppled in the interplay of these socio-political forces. Each community joined an alliance to fight the elections through their front organisation in order to contain the dominance of the other communities. The alliances are not formed on the basis of a political ideology or a programme. The major political parties - Congress and Communist Party of India (Marxist) - are largely responsible for this political instability as they entered into opportunistic alliances with other parties or narrow political groups. For the minor parties, the alliance with major parties proved to be beneficial as it gave them a share in the overall political dominance.

The proliferation of parties has also been a result of various communities propping up their own parties to promote their self-interest. Given the individualistic nature of Malayalis, ~~the~~ parties underwent fissions resulting in spawning of new parties. The proliferation of parties led to a situation where coalition governments became indispensable to Kerala politics. Except once in 1957, Kerala was always ruled by coalition governments. Quest for power rather than the desire to implement minimum programme became the over riding concern of all parties which entered into alliances. Thus, coalition governments have been composed of disparate political parties or groups with contradictory aims

and goals. Even when there was a great deal of ideological homogeneity as was the case in 1967, parties found their interests at conflict with one another. In a situation where the coalition governments are made up of parties of divergent ideological polarity, interest aggregation becomes a difficult task.

An examination of the phenomenon of instability at micro level reveals certain underlying trends which contribute to political instability. The factors examined include communalism tendencies among people, leader-follower interaction and levels of political participation of the voters.

Communalism constitutes almost the essence of the politics of Kerala state. Apart from the unique social structure, communalism got intensified due to the opportunism displayed by the major political parties of the state. Both the fronts, i.e., Left Democratic Front and United Democratic Front entered into alliances with parties that represented varied interest of the communities. Added to it, the peculiar demographic composition gave these communities a decisive say in politics of the state. Coupled with this trend is their geographic concentration which is significant in two ways : first, it creates political boroughs ; second, in constituencies where they are in a significant number they could elect the leader in any way that they wanted.

The results from the micro level investigation more or less confirmed the general trend that has been prevailing in rest of the state. The people are found to be simultaneously caste and community conscious and seem to have stakes in continuation of the caste system. This is understandable given the nature of the caste system that prevailed in Kerala wherein the Hindu community was divided vertically into numerous castes. In electoral politics, caste is still an important factor and parties select candidates depending upon caste/community composition of the constituency. The political parties on their part made a compromise with the existing fragmentation. They swim along with the current and not against as benefits flowing from opportunistic politics far outweigh the disadvantages.

Groups representing various communities play a significant role in politics of the state. Some of the well known communal groups include the Nair Service Society, Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogan and the Christian Churches. Politically they operate as pressure groups and guard the interests of their respective communities. The sharp division of different communities coupled with the mosaic nature of politics made various community interest groups far more important. They play a crucial role in the making and unmaking of governments.

The high level of caste consciousness is also one of the contributing factors in the shaping of political behaviour. As already pointed out, the Hindus are divided on caste basis and hence cannot take a united stand in the electoral game. As a result their voting preferences changed from election to election. This is in contrast to the Muslims and Christians who are more organised and show a 'solidarity' in electoral exercises. The reasons for Muslims and Christians taking an organised stand could be on account of their minority character and absence of caste factor. It certainly helped them in having greater bargaining capability in securing concessions from the government. It is the claims and counter claims on the bargaining capacity that reinforces the communal polarisation of these communities giving rise to uncertainty and contributes to instability of the political system.

Further analysis of micro level data indicates a significant association between communalism and the educational level of the respondents. The communal orientation is found to be quite high among the least educated and showed a downward trend with those with higher level of education. Among the parties, Congress (I) appeared to be more communal than CPI (M) or the other parties. Congress (I) has been preferred by those respondents who fall in the zone of high communal orientation while CPI (M) was

preferred by those with lesser communal orientation. When the membership was taken into account, it was found that a majority of the respondents with high communal orientation were members of Congress (I) followed by the BJP. This indicates that parties like Congress (I) which claim secular credentials, instead of secularising the society, are found to be becoming a party to the communal processes. Consequently, the communal divide in the society gets reinforced and the possibilities of a consolidated secular base for the political system gets narrowed down.

In the study of political instability, another important factor is the leadership and its relationship with its support base. Political leadership can shift from one class to another or one party to another in the continuous interplay of political forces. The reasons for stability or instability may not lie in leadership alone. But it is in the interaction between the people and leaders that the nature of the political system is determined. In this context perception of people about leaders and their expectations go a long way in determining the stability of the system. Among the perceived traits, it is personality of the leaders and not ideological background that is considered significant.

Since the respondents hold lofty ideals, their expectations from the leaders being quite high, the

limitations and gaps in the leaders results in rejection of the leaders. Data from the micro level study indicated that people expect ideal traits in the leaders. In concrete reality, neither those type of leaders nor those traits are present. The gap between the expectations and the existing reality accounts for the unstable and fractured support to the leaders. This results in instability in political leadership.

Participation of the people and communities is yet another important variable determining the stability of the political system. Through increased participation, people make greater demands on the political system. As long as the political system is capable of meeting the growing demands, the system remains stable. But once the system fails to meet the increased demands, there is a potential possibility of political system becoming unstable. The problem becomes acute in a fragmented society like Kerala where each community strives to mobilise its own voters to take more active participation in the democratic process. In a situation where a 'consensus' approach is missing and political resources are scarce, increased participation puts greater strains particularly on its electoral system.

The micro level analysis corroborate the general supposition that there is growing political participation in

the state. If voting is taken as a parameter, the data indicates that as many as 95 per cent of the respondents had taken part in the elections. This high degree of participation in the elections, which indicates the levels of participation, seem to be giving rise to electoral debacles. This is partly a result of high expectations from the system in general and political leaders and parties in particular.

As against the high participation in elections, the number of respondents who were members of political parties was only 34.4 per cent. Since they are not members of political parties, there is no mechanism to pressurise the party on its political alignments. Political parties act as the medium through which the expectations of the people can be realised. But to a large extent, political parties are mere electoral parties which become active only at the time of elections. They remain unorganised during rest of the time and give least importance to enrolment of members in it. As the people are not members, the parties cannot influence their voting behaviour. An average voter is both a political and a social being. The absence of a strong political base results in the social label becoming more important, i.e., his attachment to the community. The parties and political processes instead of buttressing the secularisation process, are lending support and legitimacy to the communal and caste divide.

Though the people have both ideological and caste/community orientation, 51 per cent did not openly participate in election campaign. These people retained their option of party preference and did not want to get identified with any single party. Thus the voter finds it convenient to vote either on basis of ideology or on communal considerations. This implies that the voter is not indifferent to the political reality of the state. This lends us to a formulation that while the parties indulge in politics of opportunism, voters indulge in politics of convenience.

The micro level data also revealed that the voter is influenced by the ideology of the party at one level. He is influenced by social factors at another level. The overlapping of these two diverse identities and interests gives rise to a lot of ambiguity. This may be the reason why political processes have been becoming complex. This contradiction may be a result of the voter's own machinations to project of an image in which he may not believe. The electoral behaviour constantly changes depending upon the situation. It is quite evident that the voter is not ideologically oriented. When political parties are opportunistic, it is difficult for the people to be ideologically oriented. For orienting the voters to an ideology is essentially the function of the political parties.

The absence of a formal commitment to a political party results in shifting of his voting pattern from election to election. Though a majority of the respondents in the study area showed no shift in their voting behaviour, there was about 31 per cent who shifted their party preference from election to election. In the present system of electoral politics with single transferable vote, even a small group of voters can play a decisive role. This is all the more true in a situation like the one in Kerala where the two fronts are evenly balanced and a slight shift in the voting pattern of the uncommitted voters tilts the scales either way. This shift in voting is noticed among a small section of the poor and particularly of the higher castes.

To conclude, an average voter is more attached to his/her community than to political parties or ideologies. Since there is a social polarisation of people among various communities, the political system is found to be relatively weak. It is not able to form a stable government on account of pressure from the diverse communities. The high degree of expectation of people of their leaders can be explained by their religious background. The religious teachings about high moral values make the people think that there could be persons with extraordinary traits. In reality, the political parties are not able to throw up leaders of this calibre. The high expectations invariably result in quick

dissatisfaction with the leaders. Added to these factors, the average voter is highly participatory. The participatory culture have been exploited by the political parties for the purposes of democratisation and secularisation of the political system. The parties are unorganised and are not ideologically oriented. They are active only at the time of elections. Since they are not well organised, they take advantage of communal groups to improve their prospects of winning the elections. With the result the voters' participation are reduced to a ritualistic exercise. The voters are reluctant to take up membership of political parties. As a result, the people remain primarily as members of their own community. This, in turn, makes voters indulge in politics of convenience. Thus, the communal divide, high expectations from leaders and parties, political participation without alternate ideological orientation and weak political formations largely account for political instability that the state of Kerala has been experiencing during the last four decades.

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Appendix - 1

APPENDIX - 1

1. Kerala had a number of elections in the past. In how many elections did you participate?
2. What has been your voting pattern from one election to another?
 1. Voting for the same Front/Party
 2. Changed from election to election
 3. Do not know
3. The Ninth General Election was held on 23 March, 1987. Did you cast your vote in the election?
 1. Yes
 2. No
- 3(a) If yes, to which Front/Party did you cast your vote?
- 3(b) If no, what are the reasons for not voting?
4. Did you vote for the same party in the last election?
 1. Yes
 2. No
- 4(a) If no, to which party/Front did you cast your vote?
Give reasons for the difference in voting behaviour?
5. What factors weighted in your casting the vote for the party? Is it :
 1. Ideology
 2. Non-Ideological
- 5(a) Why do you attach importance to these factors?

6. What are the grounds on which the party candidates appealed to you for voting in their favour? Did they

1. Appeal to party loyalty
2. Appeal to caste loyalty
3. Best candidate
4. Pressure and threats

7. What factors you think motivate candidates to contest the elections?

1. Public service
2. Prestige and power
3. Ideology
4. Religious factor
5. Class factor

8. Are you a member of a political party?

1. Yes
2. No

8(a) If no, do you sympathise with any political party?

1. Yes
2. No

9. Have you participated in the election campaign of political parties?

1. Yes
2. No

LEADERSHIP

10. What qualities do you expect in a leader?

11. Do you think that these qualities are present in ■
of the leaders?
1. Yes
 2. No
12. Has there been any change in the leadership patt
after the recent elections.
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Do not know
- 12(a) If yes, what type of change is there?
- 12(b) If no, why has there been no change?
13. Has the leader of your village got majority votes fi
his own caste?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Do not know
14. If no, do you think that he is largely supported by :
1. Poor people
 2. Middle income group
 3. Rich people
15. Are you satisfied with the present leadership in yo
village?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Do not know

16. What is the nature of interaction between people and the leaders?

1. People go to meet the leaders
2. Leaders go to meet the people
3. Both
4. Do not know
5. NR

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Name	:	
Sex	:	Male Female
Family Size	:	Adults : Children :
Education	:	i) Below primary ii) Primary and below SSLC iii) SSLC and undergraduate iv) Graduate v) Professionals
Caste/Religion	:	i) Nairs ii) Ezhavas iii) Scheduled Caste/Tribe iv) Namboodiri v) Christians vi) Muslims vii) Others

Occupation	:	i) Cultivators ii) Labourers iii) Business and trade iv) Organised sector v) Unemployed
Economic Background	:	i) Upto Rs. 500 ii) Rs. 501-700 iii) Rs. 701-999 iv) Rs. 1000 and above
Landholding	:	i) Landless ii) Upto 25 cents iii) 26-99 cents iv) 1 Acre and above

Appendix - 2

Appendix - 2

APPENDIX - 2

ATTITUDE ITEMS USED IN THE PRELIMINARY COMMUNALISM SCALE AND RESULTS OF THE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS RELATING TO PILOT SURVEY

S.No	Statement	Mean difference	t ratio (d.f.)	Product moment correlation
1.	I feel that community consciousness is very intense these days	0.65	3.62	0.33 **
2.	I feel people belonging to same religion should come together to improve their economic interests	0.25	1.17	0.16
3.	It is good for everyone to be a member of one's own community association	0.11	1.06	0.05
4.	I see no harm in people belonging to different communities dining together	0.26	2.05	0.25 *
5.	I feel it is good if people marry within their own community	0.90	4.89	0.41 **
6.	I wouldn't oppose an intercaste marriage	1.19	9.09	0.57 **
7.	Intercaste marriages are acceptable to me only when a member of my caste marries another belonging to a higher caste	1.11	7.41	0.50 **
8.	Division of people into different caste groups has served our society very well	1.06	6.29	0.44 **

9.	I feel our society cannot survive without distinct caste boundaries	1.16	6.74	0.48**
10.	Religious institutions usually make more harm than otherwise	-0.13	-1.28	-0.02
11.	Conversion from one religion to another does no harm to our society	0.62	3.13	0.29**
12.	It is good if political parties with strong religious overtones are banned	0.30	1.71	0.19
13.	I feel it is impossible to have harmonious relationship among different religious groups because of their divergent backgrounds	0.79	3.95	0.35**
14.	I would rather advocate further division of our country on religious basis	-0.02	-0.42	-0.06
15.	Groups with strong religious identity should keep away from formal educational activities	0.86	4.40	0.42**
16.	Effective governmental control on school/college run by community groups would be a welcome step	0.34	2.46	0.33**
17.	I would be a willing participant in festivals celebrated by different communities	0.19	1.62	0.19