CHAPTER - IV

CONTINUATION OF TRADITION

In this study, the focus was on how secularism is operationalized in the relationship between the state and a Hindu temple. When state does not interfere in matters relating to religions, is state intervening in matters relating to Hindu religion, because Hinduism being the religion of the majority and the state has to play a balancing role to ensure that majority does not impose its ways on governance. According to the provisions in the Constitution, state should be impartial towards all religions; state should be governed democratically according to rule of law; and state should ensure that the religion of the majority or the minority does not dictate the way the state should be governed. Historically, world over, when religion has been used by rulers to safeguard their territory, perhaps India is the first newly independent democracy to adopt secularism; especially in a multi-religious, multi-party context, the state’s secular credentials are repeatedly tested.

With a mixed legacy left by erstwhile local chieftains, by the practices adopted by erstwhile princes belonging to different sects of Hinduism, and by the accommodation of Christianity and Islam introduced by traders and invaders in the early days, religion came to serve as a fulcrum of the moral social order. The political class to retain their paramountcy had to desist from changing the moral social order. In the pre colonial Hindu kingdoms, the kings’ relationship with temples was vital to the maintenance of sovereignty of the rulers. It will not be wrong to state that religion and governance were closely linked. Though, rulers accommodated Christianity and Islam, Hinduism was the state religion.

With the entry of the British, in an attempt to separate state from religion, the concept of secularism, an Anglo-Saxon principle, was introduced in the public administration parlance. Province-specific laws were introduced in different provinces and protectorates of the British in an effort to preserve local cultural traditions and facilitate smooth relations between civil society, places of worship, the rulers and itself. Despite the fact that even today Hindus do not have anything like a church or a jamat, these steps somewhat consolidated the idea of a Hindu place of worship as an organization and paved the way for distinguishing the sacred from the secular.
Evolution of temple worship and caste monopoly

The embryonic beginning of the temple worship started in the tribal areas of Kerala prior to the 1st century A.D in which images of deities were made of clay or stone. It was in the 9th century AD that the hereditary monopoly of Brahmins in the priesthood of temples came into being as a contribution of Tamil rulers. The systematic development of temples as social institutions in Kerala started in 12th century AD.

By the 14th century AD, Kerala Brahmins known as Namboothiris had established a priestly hierarchy in temples with the help of a basic text dealing with all matters related to temples, especially the performance of poojas known as ‘Thantra Samuchiyam’; The public and the administration of temples in the pre-independence period accepted this as an authoritative book based on which rituals were performed in temples. After independence, all the three wings of government: - the executive, the judiciary, and the legislative – continued to accept it as the basic text on which decisions were taken. As a result, even today the priestly hierarchy of Namboothiris in temples continues without any change.

The priestly hierarchy in Kerala is followed in the temples owned by the state. Temple’s priestly community consists of three groups: the first and most spiritually important of these is the family whose men head temple’s religious pyramid and have the hereditary right called Tantri Namboothiris (Brahmin). It is the birth right of every man in that family to call himself a Tantri Namboothiri provided he satisfies his elders that he is capable of performing poojas. The Tantri Namboothiri is considered as the father of the deity consecrated by him. A Tantri Namboothiri controls the rituals of those temples consecrated by him.

The second in the hierarchy of priests is the Melsanthis, chief priest who is in charge of the day to day poojas. The difference between the Tantri Namboothiri and the Melsanthis is that the Tantri Namboothiri’s appointment is hereditary and he is not an employee, where as, the Melsanthis, whose appointment is not based on heredity is an employee. The Melsanthis of the temple is also a Brahmin selected on the basis of the traditions followed in the temple.
The third category of Priests is known as Keezhsanthis, which literally means lower priest. Keezhsanthis assist the Tantri Namboothiris and the Melsanthis in performing rituals. From the study of the temple it is also understood that, in Kerala there is a system to substitute Tantri Namboothiris and Melsanthis when they are ‘polluted’. That is the period when they are not able to enter the temple due to the birth of a child or a family bereavement. Oothikkans having hereditary rights to substitute them also form the priestly class of Kerala. However all the priests namely Tantri Namboothiri, Melsanthi, Keezhsanthis and Oothikkan in the temple owned by the state are Brahmins.

In Kerala, unlike in the North Indian states, only the priests of the temple can enter the sanctum sanctorum and offer worship. The public or the devotees cannot enter the sanctum sanctorum. The priests, during their duty time in the temple, are not supposed to touch anyone other than other priests. Priests cannot touch even their family members when they are engaged in performing rituals in the temple. It should be noted that it is not the caste that matters in this case but their position as priests. As a result, in Kerala, the devotees cannot touch the deity nor can they seek blessings from the priests by touching their feet.

The hereditary monopoly right of the Namboothiris, Brahmins in the temple which was established during the period of monarchy continues even today. Khilnani (2004) says that the social and cultural order remains unchanged despite change of rulers in India. He argues that Brahminic pattern survived because without involving in politics, it cultivated a high tolerance for diverse beliefs and religious observances (ibid:19). It is true in the context of the state- temple relationship in Kerala where caste system remains unchanged. The social structure has not changed and hence it was found that the Tantri Namboothiri continues to control the sacred area and activities carried out there. From the overview of the writings of the scholars and reports explained in the 2nd chapter, it is also understood that other temples owned by the state have not changed the importance of Tantri Namboothiris despite the backward caste movement and growth of backward caste organizations in Kerala.

**Caste, social movements and temple reforms**

In the neighboring state of Tamil Nadu, the state had ended the monopoly of hereditary rights of the Brahmins and allowed replacement of
reciting manthra/hymns in Sanskrit with Tamil in public temples. These are some of the reforms in the scared area of the management of temples introduced to break the Brahmin monopoly. Fuller (2004) states that the strong social and cultural movements took place in Tamil Nadu in the pre and post independence periods gave impetus for the reforms. From the study of the temple and overview of writings of scholars it is understood that the contemporary social movements in Kerala differ from those that took place in Tamil Nadu.

Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogham (SNDP) founded by the spiritual leader Sree Narayana Guru is an important backward caste organization of Ezhavas, a backward non-Brahmin community accounting for 27% population in the state. The backward caste social movement led by Sree Narayana Guru in the first half of the 20th century was aimed at social equality. Though he opposed the monopoly of the hereditary rights of the Brahmin priests to perform temple rituals, he was not anti-Brahmin like the Dravidian leaders of Tamil Nadu (Parameshwaran;1980:40). Instead of rejecting Brahmanic practices in temple rituals E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker led an anti Brahmanic movement in Tamil Nadu. Sree Narayana Guru advocated adoption of Brahminical rituals by the backward caste in Kerala. As a result, the Ezhavas and other backward communities started learning Sanskrit, began using Sanskrit manthras and used Brahmanic rituals of worship in the temples established by SNDP. This practice helped the Ezhava community to overcome their sense of social inferiority. As a result of this, Ezhavas concentrated on their temples and did not insist for any change in the temples owned by the state.

In their study of the backward caste Ezhavas, Filippo and Caroline Osella (2000:9) show that in their pursuit of social mobility, Ezhavas deliberately chose to repudiate the past and to embrace in modernity a future oriented present. It is true that modernity and progress for Ezhavas are not always about rejecting tradition; in the religious domain in particular, emulation through sanskrization – which necessarily implies a certain acceptance of traditional Brahmin or high caste values and practices – has been a salient component of their social mobility. More important is the fact that there are many social practices that Ezhavas “self consciously undertake or avoid for the sake of progress”(ibid:8-9). In this context it can be seen that SNDP did not initiate movements for ending Brahmin monopoly in the sacred area of the temple management in the state. The study of the temple also points out that SNDP did not take any initiative either in the form of a
public demand or a judicial intervention to end the monopoly of the Tantri Namboothiris as priests in the temples. They appear to be satisfied with the control of the sacred area of their own temples.

Pulaya Maha Sabha, another important backward caste organization of the Pulaya community in the state formed under the leadership of Ayyankalli has also initiated movements for removing social inequalities. The organization participated in the temple entry movement lead by national leaders. Unlike SNDP, founder of Pulaya Maha Sabha did not consecrate temples. Their interests in temples were not with regard to the sacred area-the conducting of rituals- but equality with regard to offering prayers with others. They focused more on creating government employments for the community. There is no instance found in the study of the temple where Pulaya Maha Sabha demanded employment of the Pulaya community in performing temple rituals.

The important reason for the non-involvement of the Pulayas in movements like the backward castes in Tamil Nadu that ended the Brahmin monopoly is due to the fact that the vast majority of the Pulayas were peasants who were actively associated with the communist movements (Namboothiripad;2008). According to the communist philosophy, economic inequality and its removal is more important than the issue of social inequality. The Pulaya community concentrated on communist movements to remove economic inequality and the Pulaya Maha Sabha as a social organization did not involve itself in ending Brahmin monopoly.

The study points out that the Nair Service Society (NSS) an important upper caste organization of Nairs (constituting 21% of the population of Kerala), always stood for the protection of the Brahmin monopoly in the sacred area of the temple. With the important backward caste organizations namely SNDP and Pulaya Maha Sabha never demanding the end of the Tantri Namboothiri monopoly in the temple and the Nair Service Society (NSS) insisting for the continuation of hereditary monopoly in the priesthood of the temple, the social order established during the period of monarchy continues till date despite many state interventions in other areas of management of temples.
**State and temples**

State interventions in the affairs of the Hindu temples can be grouped under four different periods of history - pre-colonial, colonial, post-independence and the period subsequent to the formation of Kerala state. From the study of the temple in the third chapter and overview of the writings of the scholars referred in the second chapter, it has to be noted that the nature of state involvement was different in each period.

Monarchs built temples, appointed priests, granted hereditary rights to Brahmin families in priesthood during the pre-colonial days. The rulers of the princely states funded many temples and also organized the administration of temples. It was during this period, when the temple acquired wealth which necessitated the separation of the administration of assets and rituals that the management of the temple was bifurcated into sacred and non-sacred area.

During the Dutch and Portuguese invasions, the rulers protected temples from the invaders. Those temples destroyed by the invaders were renovated and necessary funds were allotted. During the period, the rulers promoted feelings of religiosity (bakthi-devotion) in their subjects to withstand attempts of religious conversion by the invaders. Monarchs also made arrangements for the safety of the deities during invasions. It was during the Mysorian invasion under Hyderali and his son Tipu Sultan, many temples were destroyed and temple wealth was plundered. Many who supported the Kings to save the temples from physical and financial destruction were given the post of administrators in the temples. Some of them were conferred honorary titles that made them respectable in the society.

During the days of princely state in Kerala, rulers intervened in the religious affairs when there were disputes between the religious authorities and the ruling elite. They intervened especially when such disputes threatened their sovereignty. From the overview of the literature, it can be inferred that, the rulers also took over the management of many temples whenever the Ooraalaars were found to be corrupt and inefficient in managing temples in the second chapter.

The British period was different from the Dutch and Portuguese. The methods of regulation of the temple practices introduced by the British were modern. Under the British the state allowed the monarchs to protect the
temples as they had done earlier. By using the Anglo-Indian legal system, the British enacted laws such as Madras Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Act of 1927. For the first time this law authorized state intervention in the religious affairs of Hindu temples at least in non-sacred areas. The British legacy has continued even after independence.

The rulers of the princely state of Travancore introduced two important social reforms in temples deriving authority from the laws legitimizing state intervention introduced by the British. The first reform was introduced in 1925; Sethu Lakshmy acting as the Regent of the Travancore state, as Sri Chithira Thirunal Bala Rama Varma was a minor, abolished the Devadasi system and animal sacrifices in the temples under the Travancore Devaswom.

During the decades just prior to independence, there were two important localized social movements demanding temple entry for the former untouchables and other low castes. One was in the Travancore and Cochin area organized by the leaders of all castes and political organizations of the state. In 1936, Chithira Thirunal Bala Rama Varma threw temple doors open to all sections of the Hindu society. Until then temples were not open to backward castes like Ezhavas, untouchables and tribals. In the Malabar region the movement was organized by the Kerala Provinsional Congress. The Madras Temple Entry Act of 1947 opened the temples in the region to all the Hindus irrespective of caste. The year 1947 also witnessed the introduction of this reform in his state by the ruler of Cochin.

After independence, the question was, if the state is supposed to be secular, can or should government manage temples. As there were enough challenges facing a newly independent nation-state, the democratically elected state government did not want to upset the governance system too much lest anarchy is unleashed and national integrity is threatened. In the absence of a viable alternative, the state government took over the role of monarchs in managing the temples. By doing so, it is argued that the state was able to uphold the value of secularism by not allowing Hindu majority tyrannize followers of other religions.

Such a situation did not arise in the case of religious institutions of non-Hindus. During monarchy, the religious heads of churches and mosques were given full freedom to control their places of worship. After independence, as there was no need for any state involvement, the same
System continued. It is important to understand that the autonomy enjoyed by minority communities in their places of worship cannot be considered as the bestowal of any special privilege by the majority community.

Tamil Nadu leaders were able to mobilize backward classes and gain broad based political support to come to power. State was able to introduce some of the reforms in the sacred area also because favourable public opinion has been created by Dravidian Rationalist movement. Though the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Act permits the Tamil Nadu state to intervene even in the sacred area, the issue is yet to be settled.

Unlike Tamil Nadu the Kerala government did not intervene in the sacred area even after independence. Tantri Namboothiri (Brahmin) continues to control the sacred area. The Brahmins enjoy hereditary monopoly in priesthood. Many upper castes also enjoy hereditary monopoly in certain jobs in the sacred area of temple. This system remains unchanged from the period of monarchs till date. Based on the reports and writings explained in the second chapter, it can be confidently stated that the social order remains unchanged despite changes of governments.

After independence, Communist movement gained momentum in the state as peasants were attracted towards it. Majority of the peasants were from backward castes. The Communist leaders maintained religious and caste neutrality in their political activities. And due this stand of the Communists there were no reform movements by the backward castes with regard to the administration of Hindu temples owned and managed by the state.

Kerala politics was dominated by the Communist movement. Reflecting the social and political environment that prevailed during the period, governments formed in the Travancore – Cochin states did not introduce laws empowering government to intervene in the religious affairs and management of temples. Fuller (2003) says that in Tamil Nadu, the political and social environment compelled state involvement in the sacred area of temples.

The Communist movement in Kerala aimed at a casteless and classless society. With this objective, the Communist party organized agitations for the equitable distribution of agricultural lands, better wages for the workers and for the introduction of social security schemes for the
employees in the state. The Communist movement gave thrust to the removal of economic inequalities. For them, social equality accounts to nothing without economic equality. The study finds that the Communist movement did not directly attack caste system or any such social order. They did not initiate movements for introducing changes in the management of the temples as religion was considered to be opium to the masses that blinded them. They did not bother to spend time on reforming the religious matters in Kerala.

The political environment thus created by the Communist movements in the decade immediately after independence, in the newly formed Travancore – Cochin State had an effect on the policies of other political parties like the Congress and the Socialist party. The study also notes that none of the political combinations after independence demanded reforms in the sacred area of the temples. In addition to this the caste organizations like Nair Service Society, SNDP, Kshathriya Sabha and Pulaya Maha Sabha also did not demand any change in the systems followed in the temples.

The political parties in Kerala concentrated on economic policies and social reforms and kept away from involvement in religious affairs. Political parties in Tamil Nadu, on the other hand, were involved in reforming the sacred area of the temples and in ending Brahmin monopoly. The study finds that reforming the sacred area of temples in Kerala was not a political issue in the state after independence.

The first elected government of the Travancore – Cochin State took over the management of temples which were under the control of monarchs. The private temples were allowed to continue outside the ambit of the state. The caste hierarchy in the priesthood of the temples owned by the state also continued without change. The only difference brought in was regarding the structure of organization of the temples under the state. Travancore – Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act was adopted and the Travancore and Cochin Devaswom boards for managing temples in Travancore and Cochin areas were created. Since Malabar continued as a part of Madras province, the temples there were governed under the Madras Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Act until the formation of Kerala state.
State and secularism

All debates on secularism in India occur in the context of the European experience; the church - state relationship, which was central to the development of secularism in Europe, is the starting point of the discussion. But the Indian situation is different. What is important in India is not places of worship - state dynamics but state – society relationship and more specifically being a multi religious society, relations within society (Panicker, 26 th Feb.2010.26.).

In England the Church and the state were separated by the protestant movement. Today though England is constitutionally a Christian country, religion does not influence political decisions. England practices democracy and secularism. India is also a democratic state practicing secularism. In India, the state involves itself in religious affairs without deviating from secularism. The state by getting involved in religious affairs such as state managing temples and giving subsidies for Haj pilgrimages has not led to religion influencing political decisions.

The Indian form of secularism professes uniform respect for all religions by the state. The process of secularization in India is not necessarily similar in all states of India. In Kerala, the system with regard to the temples owned by the state is different from that of Tamil Nadu. State governments have adopted different approaches in tackling issues related to caste hierarchy in rituals and practices. In Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the governments formed after the re-organizations of the states shaped the relationship between the state and the temples. The policies of the ruling political parties are reflected in the laws that govern the temples in both the states.

In Kerala, the first elected state government under the leadership of the Communist chief minister E.M.S Namboothiripad laid the foundation of the relationship between the state and management of temples. The state adopted a policy of non-interference in religious affairs including Hinduism. This is because in the initial years, the first communist government had to face resistance from caste and religious groups in implementing reforms in the social and economic spheres of the state. Instead of concentrating on removing social inequality, the first Communist government initiated changes in the economic scenario. The bitter experience of resistance from the caste and religious groups which resulted in the dismissal of the state
government when it tried to implement educational reforms prompted the Left democratic combination to stay away from religious matters.

The first Communist government under E.M.S. Namboothiripad did not publish the report on the fire that destroyed the Sabarimala temple in 1950s even though it was one of the important promises made in the election manifesto of the Communist party in 1957. Describing the incident E.M.S. Namboothiripad (2008) says that it is safer not to touch sensitive areas which will create communal backlashes.

Subsequent government led by the Congress party also realized the potential of the caste organizations in influencing political decisions in the state. The realization led UDF coalition also to desist from introducing reforms in the sacred area of the temples.

In order to be inclusive and egalitarian, the state continuously has been making an effort to bring about changes in the social relations among caste and religious communities. As mentioned in the third chapter, when a Christian convert was nominated to the managing committee of the temple in 1987, the SNDP, the NSS, the Kshathriya Sabha and the Pulaya Maha Sabha objected the move. And the move was abandoned fearing a communal backlash. This resistance gave impetus to the growth of Hindu Munnani – a Hindu communal political party in the state.

The political power of the NSS and the SNDP is an important factor in determining the nature of the relationship between the state and the management of temples in Kerala. Both Left Democratic Front and United Democratic Front of Kerala gave consideration to the view points of these two caste organizations. It has been proved beyond doubt that these organizations are capable of voting the combinations in and out of power. As explained in the second chapter, in the 1982 assembly elections the political outfits of NSS and the SNDP namely National Democratic Party and Socialistic Republican Party were the coalition partners of the United Democratic Front government.

In the 1987 assembly elections the Left Democratic Front came to power with the support of the NSS and the SNDP. The political power of the NSS and the SNDP is well established and political combinations are dependent on them. No reforms can be introduced especially in the sacred area of temples against the wishes of these caste organizations. The NSS is
opposed to bringing about changes in the monopoly of Brahmins in performing rituals in the temples. Since political combinations are dependent on them for electoral gains, reforms have not been initiated.

The erstwhile rulers were not dependent on caste organizations to continue in power and were able to bring about reforms such as the abolition of Devadasi system, animal sacrifice and temple entry for all Hindus irrespective of caste. On the contrary democratic leaders are not able to do so fearing the loss of a large chunk of Hindu votes. They also fear that Hindu Munnani or any such communal outfit will rake up communal issues and polarize people of Kerala along communal lines.

**Politics of religion**

Politics of religion in Kerala is closely connected with the rise of Hindu nationalism and its ideology of Hindutva in the late 80s and early 90s. Fuller (2003) says that accompanying the rise of contemporary Hindu nationalism, the character of the public sphere changed in India. That change was visible in both Tamil Nadu and Kerala. It was evident in the practice and expression of religion in the public sphere. Because of the growth of Hindu nationalism in Kerala, the government maintains status quo in the affairs of temples and religions.

In this context, the formation of Hindu Munnani, as a political ally of Bharathiya Janatha Party (BJP) in 1987 in Kerala had a definite impact on both the United Democratic Front and Left Democratic Front governments. It is noted that the two major caste organizations the NSS and the SNDP maintain links with Hindu Munnani. Reforms have been stymied to avoid polarization of people and accompanying backlash.

Status quo resulted in the continuation of the monopoly of Tantri Namboothiri and the Brahmins in the sacred area, denying the entry of non Hindu devotees in the temple and the imposition of a dress code for entering the temple. In a democracy, it is also important to reach a consensus on issues affecting different caste groups especially when they are potential political pressure groups capable of changing governments. Since temple entry for non Hindus, removal of the monopoly right of Brahmins in the sacred area and dress code for temple entry are issues having different view points, the state has to wait till a consensus is reached. It is noted that many scholars and social leaders have voiced their concern on these issues. The
state being secular and democratic and bound by the constitution has to wait till a social organization takes the initiative and settles the issues through consensus.

There are more than 18,000 private temples in the state. Private temples are outside the ambit of the state control. The state does not monitor the funds and assets of such temples. It is found in this study that like the minority worship places, there are many private Hindu temples which are not regulated by the state. It is noted that by allowing the private temples to exist without state regulation, the state upholds the freedom to profess one's own religion under secularism guaranteed by the constitution. This has great significance especially in the context of the findings of the study that there are many private temples owned by the SNDP and other backward castes.

The priests and the temple functionaries are appointed according to the traditions followed during the days of princely states. The sacred area is controlled by the Tantri Namboothiri and all appointments in that area are also subject to his approval. Monopoly of caste is maintained in the appointment of priests and temple functionaries in the temple owned by the state. There are two types of monopolies, namely, caste monopoly and family hereditary monopoly. The laws governing the temple empower the state to monitor the functioning of the priests and to take the necessary and corrective steps if they are found corrupt and negligent in duties. So far, there has not been an opportunity for the state to change things in the sacred area.

In the non sacred area, the organizational structure and human resource management underwent changes after independence and after formation of Kerala state. The non-sacred area is the establishment section which deals with administration of finance, maintenance, and human resources. The Sree Krishna temple at Guruvayoor and its 12 sub temples are managed by a managing committee nominated by the state government. The officers and other employees of the organizations are appointed by the managing committee. And the Kerala state government rules (KSR) govern the employees. The state does not intervene in the decisions of the apex body managing temples with regard to the emoluments of the employees of the Devaswom. Their promotions and pension system are also in accordance with the KSR. The duties, designations, and grades of the employees are fixed by the governing bodies. It is noted that the employment provided in the non-sacred area is an important source of employment in the state. Ten
percent 10% of the posts of each grade are reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the non-sacred area.

The temples coming under Travancore and Cochin Devaswom boards are governed by the Travancore-Cochin Hindu Religious and Charitable Institutions Act of 1950 constituting Devaswom boards. The President and the two members of the board are nominated by the state. The officers and employees are appointed by the boards. The priests are appointed by the board under the supervision of the Tantri Namboothiris. For administrative convenience there are divisions monitoring non-sacred areas of management of temples.

The important difference between organizations controlling temples during the period of monarchy and after independence noted in the study is that the erstwhile rulers are not given the power to nominate or appoint anybody in the governing body or in any of the hierarchical structure of the organization after the formation of Kerala. The nominations and appointments are made transparent in accordance with the secular commitment of the state. Only Hindu ministers and legislators are authorized by the Act governing these bodies to nominate the president, members of the board and committee managing the temple owned by the state.

The state also upholds secular values by the continuation of traditions in appointing priests in temples. However the state is authorized by the law to intervene when there are disputes between the priests. The study of the temple points out that there has been no instance where the state had to intervene to settle the right of the priests due to disputes. It is found that the Tantri Namboothiri overseeing the appointment and the performance of the priests is given the authority to settle them. This is the reason for the absence of disputes among priests in temples. In the neighboring state of Tamil Nadu, the state intervenes in the sacred area with regard to the issues of disputes between the priests many of which are yet to be settled.

Today only one Ooraalaan family namely Mallissery Namboothiri and only the Zamorin of Kozhikode continue to find a place in the managing committee as permanent members. But they do not enjoy any special privileges which they had enjoyed as joint trustees prior to the implementation of Guruvayoor Devaswom Act 1978. From the literature review it is noted that erstwhile rulers and Ooraalaars of Travancore and Cochin state have no role, not even as ordinary members in the Travancore
and Cochin Devaswom Boards.

**Accountability in State owned Temples**

There are three types accountability practices in the temples owned by the state. Preparation of annual accounts, getting it approved by the commissioner and forwarding the approved budget to the state government form the first part. Maintenance of accounts under the double entry system of accounting conducting concurrent and external audit by Chartered Accountants forms the second part. The third part consists of the preparation and publication of annual reports. The budget, audit and annual reports are submitted to the commissioner of Devaswoms who in turn forwards them to the state government. The budget, standardized accounts and audits and annual reports control and evaluate the performance of the persons in charge of fiduciary responsibilities of the temples.

The state monitors the funds of the temples. The executive, the legislature and the judiciary are involved in the monitoring of the funds of the temple. In a temple owned by the state it is found that the receipts of money from the devotees are monitored by a committee recommended by the court. The movable assets like jewellery, other valuable metals antiques are also monitored by the state and made transparent through publishing discrepancies if found.

Other assets are also managed with a great degree of transparency. Immovable assets like land, building, and movable assets like furniture, equipments, jewelry and cash are valued and published annually. The study of the temple has found that the state doesn’t use the revenue from temples directly for meeting state’s expenditure. Revenue from the temples increases the liquidity of financial institutions of the state through deposits. There are other economic contributions of the temples to the state. The temples promote tourism. Many foreign and domestic tourists throng the temples to watch colourful festivals and cultural programs.

Pilgrim tourism grew rapidly after the formation of the state in 1956. The study has identified temples and pilgrim tourism as important sources of revenue and contribution to Gross Domestic Product. The developments of the hospitality industry, the transport and communication industry and real estate have been important reasons for not upsetting the golden goose.
Despite the constitutional commitment to secularism and equality, it appears that it is difficult to bring about changes in a democracy especially in the areas of religious faith. Secularism is defined in terms of regulating only limited area in the management of the temple. In order to be inclusive and egalitarian, the state has to continuously make an effort to bring about incremental changes through state interventions in the management of temples.

**Recommendations**

The study of the temple is basically an investigation into the nature of the relationship between the state and state owned temples. There are many private temples outside the ambit of state control. The revenue of the private temples, the reforms in the sacred area and accountability are also an important matter to be understood. Further investigation into such issues with regard to private temples in Kerala is recommended.

Kerala’s private temples also attract tourists. The economic contributions of private temples in comparison with the state can be another area of research which will be of great relevance. It is also recommended that the role of other religious worship places in promoting tourism in the state should be studied.

Unlike Tamil Nadu, the priests of Kerala are not engaged in disputes regarding their rights. Dalith monk appointed by the Tamil Nadu state as the hymn reciter in the Nataraja temple at Chitambaram Vs Dikshitars is pending in the High court of Tamil Nadu. With regard to the state temple rows it is reported that there are so many such cases pending before the courts in Tamil Nadu for judicial intervention. A comparative study of the systems in temples of Tamil Nadu and Kerala may lead to interesting conclusions regarding the social and cultural order followed in these two states.

The potential of temples as an important source of employment is a conclusion derived from this study. In the modern days outsourcing of jobs is accepted as an important method of enhancing efficiency and economy in management. It will be of use to analyze the nature of the works of employees in the non-sacred area and to examine the scope of outsourcing the jobs.

Non-Hindu religious institutions are engaged in many charitable
activities like running orphanages, Cheshire homes, holding free medical camps etc. The temples owned by the state in Kerala irrespective of having plenty of surplus income are not engaged in such social activities. The reasons for this have to be understood in the context of Devaswoms being charitable institutions.

There has been a change in the economic and social order in the country after globalization. The standard of living of the people has increased. In this context how far the state can give up the responsibility of managing temples can be explored. What kind of changes in the laws governing temples will be required for establishing temples in foreign countries can also be explored.