Chapter VII

SECULARISATION AND COMMUNALISATION: CONTRADICTION AND CHANGE IN KERALA: 1890-1980

The 90 years' social history of Travancore which we surveyed unfolded several contradictions which need sociological explanation. We have attempted in the preceding pages to delineate two social processes which affected that society's structure and function. The two identifiable processes were secularisation and communalisation. Within the limited canvas, we looked at several variables which affected the origin and development of these two processes. Under the influence of certain societal conditions, the variables helped the process of secularisation and communalisation; so much so, they have become important social factors determining the texture of Malayalee society. Looking at the social, economic, political and religious (cultural) happenings in that society from a social scientist's point of view, the foci of our analysis moved on to see whether there is or not conflicting interests of primordial collectivities such as kinship, caste, tribe, religion on the one hand, vis-a-vis the interests of the emerging civil collectivities such as workers, students, peasants, bureaucrats, business and tradesmen. The former we defined in terms of 'communal' and the latter in terms of 'secular'. Communalisation was a manifest attempt of specific communities in an agrarian setting to promote their interests while secularisation was the result of subliminal choices with the breakdown of feudal relationships and feudal system. Subterranean forces appeared on a large scale in society facilitating subliminal choices. This social phenomenon threatened the 'form' of
primordial collectivities as they existed at that time. The resulting situation was such that the primordiality, instead of stopping the secular subterranean forces; recognised its presence and in many cases consciously and in some cases unconsciously fostered it. We saw a continuous mobilisation of communities taking place to achieve economic and political (secular) ends but invariably it involved employing religious symbols and primordial sentiments. This movement, if one were to take conventional sociological wisdom and contemporary social theorising seriously, should have resulted in a secularisation process which would endanger the very existence of primordialities. In other words, 'primordiality' and its manifestations like communalism as a category ought to have disappeared. But the Malayalee society witnessed and still experiencing a rather contradictory social process which not only carried with it the primordial collectivity but used it as an instrument of secularisation. In other words, our study shows that secularisation had not been a zero sum game. The process retained or perhaps sustained the primordial elements of individual and collectivity. However, the most crucial thing that had happened was that the function of primordiality underwent a change. It was this change which formed one of the subject matters of our investigation; the conditions or the combination of factors under which a change comes about in the function of primordiality. Class, Status and Power were important categories which were used to understand this change as they provide a three-dimensional framework by which the position of every
person, every community is 'in principle, capable of being designated as a vector in three dimensional space'.

The basic unit of social systems, says Parsons, is action. The end of 19th century with which we began our study of Travancore's social system, saw primordial collectivism at its height. People could think and act only in terms of Brahmin, Nair, Ezhava, Christian and so on. Religion or kinship or caste or tribe was the unit of one's action. Of course, caste continues to be the unit of one's action in India as a whole even today. But caste, tribe, kinship etc. underwent a radical change in its function in Travancore over the years. That is, if we take primordiality as primary and secularisation as a subsequent process then the question is: how did the latter diminished the former's central position in society in such a way as to overtake certain functions of primordial collectivities in public life?

The crux of the problem is the way in which the people perceive their objective position vis-a-vis their social consciousness. In this, religion played the most important role as it could provide a basic ideology of action. In a feudal, clanish society, religious explanations give the rationale for actions of men. In his study of religion and South East Asia politics, Francois Houtart says, "Religious explanations for social mechanisms is typical of all traditional societies because of the weak development of the productive forces and in particular of the knowledge about nature and society".
But when the productive forces developed and man's knowledge about the nature and society substantially increased, secularisation also began to take place in a substantial way. Here Parsons' paradigm of the consequence of secularisation is very significant. He makes the point that secularisation results in structural differentiation. He talks of this tendency as an opposition to organised religion in general. There is a re-ordering and re-definition of its place in the social system. A new position of equilibrium is evolved between the religious and secular elements in the social system. Not only that there occurs a separation between Church and State, religion gets relegated to the individual realm. There is progressive shedding of the earlier functions performed by the religion in terms of education, charity, health and so on. When structural differentiation takes place, these functions become the responsibility of the state. Individuals are free not to be governed by any religious body in so far as they adhere to the code of conduct expected of a citizen. Ultimately, there is a separation between the citizenship and religion. In a structurally differentiated social system, there is equality of access to facilities such as education, health, employment and so on. However, religion and religious identities persist. Because, it is a matter of concern of the innermost core of the individual personality for his own identity and commitment.

What was that the Travancore society did struggle for? It was to achieve a citizenship with new contents - social equality, economic opportunity, civil rights etc. Religion was
used as an instrument to realise this citizenship. But theoretically, it was impossible without a separation of the citizenship from religion. In the first part of the period we surveyed it did occur to a great extent. However, the change - the separated citizenship - got entangled with the religious group loyalties and it took an equally long time to get it differentiated further.

Manifest Experiences and Subliminal Choices

On the basis of the data presented in the foregoing section, I would like to make a proposition, although tentative. This is based on the assumption that for a social group there are two levels of understanding possible on their cognitive map.

First, the experiences of the people; experiences of the community and its visible expressions in the society as a whole. This is a layer which comes into the open. They are the determinants of day-to-day expressions and the guides for the future actions as a collectivity. Here, very little choice is left for the individuals or the community; everybody in the system is moved by the force of events. This we may call 'manifest experience'.

Secondly, there are certain important social forces which have their own course of development not visible always for the people in its consequences or implications. They happen in society but its logic or manifestations in terms of the day-to-day expressions are not comprehensible for the average person who is an actor in the system. But they are compelled to choose
from these factors, so that he may remain inside or outside as and when these factors take the nature of a social force. These are subterranean in its occurrence. We may call this 'subliminal choices', of the community. This is in one sense close to synergist model of social change.

The dividing line between the manifest experiences and subliminal choices is the nature of political organisation the society has.

To make it more explicit, let us consider how people are mobilised on issues. One way of doing it is, as we have seen in the case of Travancore, write petitions, sign memorials, organise public meetings, send deputations and so on. Individually and collectively, through men and material, they see to it that people participate in the movement. Here one's own primordial loyalties in terms of religion, caste, community, kinship, tribe determine the 'conscious collective' and the above sentiments are identifiably present on the terrain. There is no one in the system who can escape from these directly or indirectly. People also come to recognise that they have a particular position in social life because of certain social events in which their community is a participant. It is not far fetched to consider that the collectivity consciously organise to achieve certain goals. It may be to escape from poverty; to enhance their economic position; to have equal status with others; to grab power from another or to equalise power with the other. These are conscious efforts. As a result of the organised efforts, the assets and liabilities of
society get shared by all in their day to day lives. If there is 'tyranny' or 'democratic uprisal', the entire society is affected and it comes within the experiential realm of all members of the society. This is what we say the 'manifest experience' of a society or its members.

However, there are certain other important social factors the consequence of which are below the surface. The breakdown of feudal relations, expansion of trade and commerce, emergence of modern education, may pose the problem of choice before a community and society at large. Wilfully a person or community can opt out of it. The concomitant of this opting out is non-development of certain values (e.g. rationality or the individualism which result out of capitalist development or expansion of trade and commerce or migration or modern education).

If on the other hand, if the person or community chooses the above instrumentalities the resulting process like, say, secularisation will come about. But the point we are making is: secularisation could be a process which is latent, subterranean in the beginning. The person or community will not be choosing the factors which accelerate the process knowing that such and such a choice and participation will accelerate secularisation process. So also, the person or community may not be aware when it makes choices which brings about secularisation that their primordial loyalties have found a different function than what it had been in the past because of their choices. This is the result of the 'subliminal choices' of the individuals or a community. Why community 'A' makes the subliminal choices and
community 'B' does not, is a matter of detailed sociological investigation.

The nature of the political organisation determine the speed with which the manifest experience and subliminal choices happen in a society. It is not simply uni-directional but dialectical. Therefore, the intensity with which the two operate in a society will determine the type of political organisation the society has. That is to say, the form and content of the political organisation depend on the manifest experiences the people have and the subliminal choices. And these two factors in turn, affect the nature of the political organisation.

There are institutional structures which are visible, experiential and they are determined by congruities of blood, speech, custom, tradition and so on. Our study concentrated on religion as the central factor. Determined by these factors, people take sides in the ever present conflicts, it is a manifest experience; but they may not be aware of the linkage between certain other latent factors which has precipitated this conflict. The essential issues involved may remain either vague or elusive to them. Therefore, the manifestations are emotions, sentiments, feelings and the participants tend to rationalise their behaviour by invoking either caste or language, or tribe or kinship or religion. It is important to make this distinction between manifest experiences which touches the emotions, sentiments, feelings and the subliminal choices which are essential issues but its functions may not be perceivable to the
actor, at least at the time of his involvement, in the social system. In short, the point we are making is: the process of communalisation provide manifest experiences while the process of secularisation are subliminal choices working as subterranean factors. The choice of the factors which affect the secularisation process by a community determine the course of communalism (and communalisation) which is the manifest experience. A word of caution is necessary here. Secularisation need not always be a subliminal level. There will be periods in history when nations, communities and individuals consciously opting for secularisation. The trend in the post-independent India is a case in point. In other words, in this formulation we have to give sufficient room for social situations which could make primordial loyalties to go to a subliminal level and secularisation to manifest experiential level. All that we are saying is that given the framework of a societal development like that of Travancore in the first half of the period primordial sentiments and secularisation process were at these two distinct levels. As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter it is only a tentative suggestion, to consider them as operative tools.

Role of Religion

Our concern was the role of religion, the values it perpetuated and the norms it gave to society in its structure and function. We found that the values of Hinduism and Christianity were competing in Travancore at the end of 19th century. Though Christianity was a junior partner, it had the support of the sovereign British power and the structures and values it generate
were considered to be "superior". In contrast, some of the values and structures associated with Hinduism were considered by the elite who got western education as 'conservative' and 'reactionary'; even others came to view them as aberrations. After the arrival of Portuguese and British there was large scale conversion of the lower castes to Christianity because of their manifest experiences. When the untouchables swelled the ranks of Christian churches, as Ramachandra Raj observes, "this struck at the very roots of the caste system and undermined the social controls that sustained it".

This single factor of religious conversions did challenge the age-old practices which kept a section of the society under bondage. The ideology of purity-pollution and several cultural practices came under serious attack. The revolt for the right of Ezhava women to cover their breasts is a case in point. Mateer in his two celebrated works narrates a number of conflict events which originated as a result of conversions to Christianity. The upper castes thought that the very economic and social edifice on which the society is built will crumble if this goes on unbridled. Theoretically, it was a question of preventing that section of people which was despised from gaining status on the social ladder. Viewed against the background we can assert that what Christian missions did in the 19th century was initiating a process of secularisation in so far as their activities inculcated the values of equality, justice, liberty etc.

The Syrian Christians who were centuries old on the Keral soil was not very zealous of propagating their religion among
their Hindu brethren and winning converts to their fold. Instead they themselves adopted the social customs of the larger Hindu society and lived happily among them. It was with the arrival of Portuguese only, Christianity as a religious factor got activated in the social milieux. It was dormant till then. However, one important point may be noted here. The Christian family and social organisation were conducive for the growth of individualism and entrepreneurship - regardless of Roman Catholic or Protestant ideal types. The Syrian Christian ethnic group characteristics proved to be an asset in the changing social relations. There was no social stigma attached to occupations as far as that community was concerned. They could choose the profitable and lucrative jobs. The debilitating values of ritual degradations in occupations did not stifle their initiative and mobility. This proved to be a matter of immense significance in the changing social situation where status was increasingly being attributed to hard work and achievements, and not to idleness which ate upon others' labour. This had its demonstration effect on other communities as well. Mannam's speeches reflect this change of values.

Therefore, the nuclear family vis-a-vis the joint family; the parish organisation vis-a-vis the loose social organisation; free choice of occupations vis-a-vis the social constraints on choosing occupations etc., facilitated the Christians, to adapt to the emerging situations. When the extraneous factors like English education, trade, commerce, plantations came, Christians as a community seized the opportunity whereas Ezhavas and Nairs
were found themselves extremely handicapped.

These factors, which we tentatively ascribe to subliminal choices were the beginning of rational choices in the society. But quite ironically, the medium was religion, which was a manifest experience. Religion helped the process of secularisation to begin in a big way. On the consciousness level other than Christian religious teachings, the most revolutionary one was that of Sree Narayana Guru during this period. When Guru said that whatever may be the religion, it was enough if man could be good, he was preaching a revolutionary, secularising ideology. K. Damodaran writes about it thus:

Freesing himself from the straitjacket of feudalist thinking, he boldly proclaimed "One caste, one religion, and one God for all men". This resounding slogan was at once a challenge to a decadent society and a call to build up a new culture suited to modern times. (14)

His movement was for the elimination of "exclusive" gods and goddesses and establishment of unity of all people with one God. This was nothing short of a rebellion against the higher castes. This religious legitimation in the quest for a new society encouraged the community to take to modern education, culture and industry. The Ezhava community had the rare distinction of organising the first industrial exhibition in Kerala as we saw earlier. The significance of this must be seen in the fact that it was a religious Guru who took the initiative along with others like Dr. Palpu in the progress and development of 'materialist' culture in the community. K. Damodaran highlights this point, namely, the use of a religious platform for secular ends, when
he remarks, "Although clothed in the religious garb, his teaching played a great role in the anti-feudal struggle of the people of Kerala". This was an ideology of far-reaching consequences, determined by powerful subterranean factors. Guru's appeal to the consciousness of the people was against communalism, but religious and secular.

Needless to say, blending of religion and politics could appeal to the susceptibilities of masses for a secular end, but the appeal to religious faith as an instrument for higher secular values had its negative results too. Our data support the statement of Damodaran when he says, "The appeal to religious faith helped to preserve the feudal instincts in the popular mind and this tended to restrict the scope of the anti-feudal upsurge". And, it was precisely this appeal to religious faith and the resultant dichotomous existence which made people to organise as Christians, Ezhavas or Nairs from 1891. That tendency persisted for a long time, perhaps till about 1956. But then the criterion of organisations changed to a more rational, secular plane because of several subterranean factors.

The beginning of our survey has another important aspect which needs consideration. That is the question of citizenship. This was very much in the realm of political organisation. As Marshall puts it, 'citizenship is incompatible with medieval feudalism'. Nairs, Ezhavas and Christians agitated for citizenship rights. The hold of feudalism was loosening. Citizenship and status are related. "Citizenship is status bestowed on those who are full members of a community", says Marshall.
The three communities we studied, as they were organised on religious/caste basis, were trying essentially only to get full membership in society. Nairs vis-a-vis the foreign Brahmins thought that they were not 'full members' of Travancore society. The condition of Christians and Ezhavas was no better.

All those who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed. Throughout the period which we surveyed, the communal organisations were striving for this status collectively. Status was for the collectivity and not for the individual. In societies where the citizenship is an evolving notion, those who lead the struggle will have in their mind an image of an ideal citizenship. It is against these that 'the achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed'. This results in a fuller measure of equality and equalisation of status. The demand for proportionate representation in legislatures of Travancore, demand for abolition of property qualification for voting, right to enter temples were all part of this citizenship rights.

There is correlation between education (a factor in secularisation) and the rise of communal consciousness in the initial stages. This continues till equality of all citizens is achieved. As early as 1931, the Census report of Travancore had put this issue sharply. It had said

The spread of education instead of helping the break up of barriers separating one caste from another has only strengthened them in some respects. Subcastes are no doubt getting fused into wider castes, but these latter
show no signs yet of fusion. They remain as exclusive as ever. Education has aroused the civic consciousness of the people. The castes which have been kept suppressed have begun to assert their rights and press for their due share in the administration of the country....

Each caste wants to continue as a separate unit of the body politic so that its interests may not suffer from want of advocacy. This desire is a natural instinct for self-preservation and self-advancement. Each individual possesses this instinct and the individuals constituting a caste exhibit it in a collective form. Individuals could unite into a nation without the intermediate agency of the caste, but only when the inequalities created by past action have been removed and opportunities for advancement are provided for all alike. (21)

Theoretically, the feeling that the individuals could unite without an intermediary of primordiality was achieved not until universal franchise became the norm (1952 general elections) after about 60 long years of the first epoch making political agitation in Travancore. A feeble attempt was made in 1938 when the State Congress was formed. Throughout these 60 years the constant demand for citizenship was pioneered on communal lines, and it was always a live issue. Because of that, when finally the citizenship was bestowed on all, the system could absorb it without any traumatic experience. But the citizenship rights changed the social function of communal groupings substantially. Citizenship right was, needless to say, the result of continued secularisation process and that reversed the hitherto understood role of primordiality. It was precisely because of this important subliminal secularisation phenomenon that little less than two decades following the abstention movement, Travancore saw intensive struggle by communities for
status through politicisation. Abstention movement saw the peak of politicisation of communities. Till the independence it continued through the new political party, viz. the State Congress. And with the attainment of independence and universal citizenship rights, the hitherto pursued political role of communal organisations theoretically ended. A.F. Pollard is correct when he says about the early parliaments that "representation was nowise regarded as a means of expressing individual right or forwarding individual interests. It was communities, not individuals who were represented". Regarding civil rights, it may be noted that in the West, civil rights began not from a community to individual basis but on an individual basis. This was so because (a) the basic unit of society in the west was individual and in India it was communities and castes; (b) the kind of oppression that existed in India was absent in the west. Where it did exist, for instance in the case of North America, on a group basis as in the case of Blacks the community was the basis of civil rights movement. Obviously, in Travancore, it was from community to individual. Eshavas or Christians did not try to get basic rights on an individual basis but for the community as a whole. As we have seen, the discrimination by the state was also community based. Perhaps this gave the rationale for the communal leaders of those days to say that once the discrimination based on communal thinking is abolished the entire society will benefit and therefore one must fight on communal basis.

In the initial periods, when the communities were
agitating for representation in the legislature, it was not
directly connected with economic status, but only related to
social status. They thought that by virtue of being represen-
ted in the legislature their social status will go up. But in
the second stage when economic opportunities expanded the
leadership could find a correlation between the political
power and economic power. Therefore wealth, status and power
became so closely interwoven. This played a crucial role in
the agitations to get maximum wealth, thereby status and power
or power (political) so as to get maximum wealth and status.
The argument is not that power 'is' wealth as electromagnetic
waves 'are' light waves (Runciman) but simply for a number of
well known reasons there is in practice a close correlation
between the two. Runciman shows that the relation between
wealth and power may be directly reversed depending on the
stage of economic or political development reached by the
society in question. For instance, it has been said that
in pre-market societies, wealth tends to follow power, but in
the market society power tends to follow wealth. In the new
nations, the party, rather than being the expression of the
economic interests of a class, is itself the opening to economic
opportunity. "Wealth derives from political power, it does not
create it" says Peter Worsley. Runciman comes to the conclu-
sion that no claim for the consistent and universal primacy of
one dimension over the others has yet been successfully put
forward. Both have a dialectical relationship more than a
cause and effect one.
Our data are consistent with this explanation. Here I am not indicating that the importance of ritual dimension totally disappeared and only the secular aspect mattered. Secular had begun to assume a definite edge over the ritual and hence political positions as power, and wealth as power had the dimension of status. Acquiring one was a sufficient condition for the other. When communities realised it, they spared no efforts to maximise their power and status through the acquisition of greater share in politics, share of employment, share of resources of the state. So the creation of institutions which have status symbol was a necessary condition. According to the latest available data, the three competing communities have institutions which are symbols of status and power as follows:

Table XXIV

Ownership of Institutions by Ezhava Christian and NSS in 1976

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>EZHAVA</th>
<th>CHRISTIAN</th>
<th>NSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2792</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estates</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unions</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Parish*</td>
<td>3465 Karayo-3500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Churches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ezhava: Figures supplied by the SWDP Head Office, Quilp Christian data computed from information supplied by dioceses to the editor, St. Thomas Centenary Souvenir, 1972.

* Parish Churches Edavakapalli (Mal.) means a cluster of parishes under a main Parish. This is a Roman Catholic usage. If we take individual parishes of each church the number will be manifold.
Note: There are many institutions owned by individuals and local groups belonging to these three communities. They are not included in this table.

If we go by the number of institutions in this table Christians had higher power and status according to the parameters we had used. This could be contested because Nairs still claimed higher ritual ranking and the consequent status and power cannot be easily dismissed as insignificant. To a certain extent, Nair ritual superiority persists in several parts of Kerala. But the importance of subliminal choice was that all this happened as a result of the secularisation process which was consciously pursued by a section of the community.

The individualism which developed in Travancore as a result of the ideals of capitalism, saw the Malayali 'diaspora'. They went out of their communities and the state boundaries in search of new opportunities to better their social and economic life. Underlying the phenomenal migration, there was also the subterranean factor of secularisation. When people began to live in societies with different cultures not only outside the state but also outside India, the resulting interaction between the home community and outside was an important factor of accelerating secularisation and breaking down the boundaries and functions of communal collectivities. Because, frequent home coming was an important characteristic of a Malayali and it had created an unprecedented climate for a new outlook - weltanschauung - and a non-traditional approach to social problems. It is correct to say that the secularisation process
helped the Malayalees to migrate and in turn the process of secularisation itself was accelerated.

However, one important point may be taken note of. Those who went outside the state did not sever their connection with the 'roots' but they tried to reinforce it. The family pride of Ezhavas, Nairs and Christians were so great that for all important functions they visited their parental home. Marriage was an important occasion. Parents wanted their children to marry from their own community, if possible hypergamously. The family bond and special occasions have significant aspect in continuously reminding oneself of one's primordial connections and loyalties. Therefore, the basic group identity and loyalty to family and the cultural community to which one belongs remains, in spite of rapid secularisation process.

Today what has happened is, after the secularisation process the manifest employment of primordiality for status and power has been withdrawn to a private realm. Majority of Travancoreans no more vote in terms of the dictates of the family or the caste or religious leadership, but they do it consciously taking into consideration the individual understanding and preferences. Therefore in terms of political choices, in the same family there will be Communist Party and Congress Party supporters. This differentiation even within primordial collectivity is the most important development as result of secularisation.

When the political organisation underwent a radical
change with 'values of individual liberal humanism' and democratic culture, authority of religious tradition was the first casualty. This loosened the grip of religion on the people, and the organisation of community on religious terms underwent a radical change. If the beginning of 20th century saw communities organising and agitating to get places in the government bureaucracy, it was closely followed by an urge to establish institutions (educational, medical and so on) symbolic of status and power. This meant, the anxiety of religions, communal organisations to provide employment and education on the secular lines to the members of their own community. It was an investment in secular (material) institutions. These centres were sure symbols of social status and power of the community. However, in the beginning of capitalist development, this was a function cutting into the functions of what an ideal state ought to have done by itself. But the state was ill-equipped to provide the facilities of modern education to its citizens because most of its revenue as we saw earlier was spent for religious functions; temples and so on. But when movements of secular character changed the nature and function of the state and enriched the status and content of citizenship, the very work of the community (both by individual members and organisations) had to be controlled or taken over by the state. But this was not an easy task and that is why throughout the period we surveyed there is conflict between state and communities, whenever the state attempted to control educational institutions. For the community, educational institutions were symbols of
power and status and sources of wealth. But ultimately as in the case of all educational agitations of private managements, from Dewan Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar onwards till the 1972 agitation, the communal organisations had to give way to the forces of secularisation though bit by bit.

Who were the losers in the game? It was not the community as a whole, but the middle class and the elites in the community who were the custodians of these institutions. Since the opportunities for higher education were appropriated mostly by the well to do sections of Travancore, the leadership and control of the community's prestigious institutions were in their hands. The bishops and priests in the case of Christian communities and the Board of Management in the case of Nairs and Ezhavas found that they will be lost without the new status and prestige symbols, if only secularisation is allowed to take an upper hand. Therefore, they attempted a losing battle to stop secularisation process by invoking the communal dimension of personal and societal life. It is interesting to recall that when state interference in educational institutions became apparent, the Catholic hierarchy passed a resolution against 'secularism'. The role of secular institutions and the fact that religious institutions created an atmosphere for secularisation could be compared to a Frankenstein monster. The created try to devour the creator. The churches, the NSS, the SNDP, through their modern organisations and institutions were trying to create prestige, status and power for their community. But in the subliminal level the forces of secularisation as a
result of the spread of education were so powerful as to ques-
tion and discredit the very basis on which they built up the superstructures. This explains why in colleges, schools, hos-
pitals and other institutions run by private managements in Kerala there is an extra emphasis on organisations catering to each community's sentiments. They are officially patronised and there is proliferation of such organisations all over Kerala and outside wherever Malayalees have migrated. Unconsciously the leadership is attempting a backward pull after letting loose the secular forces on their own initiative. Therefore they are able to mobilise the common man by blending religious sentiment with the material status symbols. They know from history that masses are susceptible to religious feelings and sentiments and to a certain extent they will follow the commu-
nity leader. However, they could not comprehend the seculari-
sation process which made a marked decline in the communal appeal. Today the call to protect the institutions run by community leaders do not evoke the same old instant response. Many have the feeling that if the government takes over the institutions at least theoretically everybody has an equality of opportunity in the government-run institutions. Nepotism and corruption are open secrets in the running of private 'secular' institutions. Therefore, two aspects of primordiality are to be noted:

(a) The primordiality which is inherent and hallmark of every individual in terms of religion, style of life, names, physical looks and all that. "Can the Etheopian change his
skin or the leopard his spots?" is a biblical refrain worth noting here. This is involuntary and hard to change but shows its degree or intensity according to context.

(b) The second is the context and circumstances in which the primordiality assumes functional significance. We have come to the conclusion that after the rapid secularisation process the ability of the elite leadership of the communities to invoke the communal factor to mobilise masses has shown a marked decline. The public expression of primordiality in politics, education or social gatherings have assumed a low value on the scale.

It is a fact that for the last several decades in Travancore and Kerala, anything communal was looked down as conservative, reactionary. This change of value is significant. When Sri Narayana Guru said of one God, one caste, one religion for man, the seeds of contempt towards communal boundaries were sown. He wanted SADP Yogam to rise above Eshava community to include specially people from low origin without prejudice to other communities. The values of democratic society, western liberalism and individual humanism also created a favourable atmosphere for the growth of secular thinking, transcending the communal approach. Even when communal leadership was trying to fan the communal feelings because the state discriminated against communities, there were men within the respective communities who could say that parochial, narrow thinking is harmful for the totality of society. Changanacherry Parameswaran Pillai in the Nair community is a case in point.
Kumaran Asan in Ezhava community also could create thinking in those lines with his literary talents praising universality of love and humanity as a whole as the centre of man’s activity.

Among the Christian churches also there was an articulate section which could rise above parochial community bound thinking. Dissent was very much among the active members of the church.

In 1966 a newspaper run by Christian management from Kottayam wrote editorially against communalism:

The very feeling that the (Catholic) community has disabilities is the result of fostering old mentality generated in those days of outdated system of government. It is the Public Service Commission which appoints people in jobs. The candidates get or do not get positions not because they are Catholics but on the basis of whether they were successful or not. If we have disabilities it is because our youth do not study well and compete successfully. There is no necessity for the community to jump after that. Communal bargaining is an attempt by a section of Catholic community who wants to gain power and privilege by handling politics communally. Although they put up a garb of the saviours of the community, they are doing something destructive to the community. (37)

The spread of education in the state promoted a universal outlook and questioned the legitimacy of projecting communal bargaining to secular areas. As we have seen, the beginning of independent journalism and literary activities could be attributed to the spread of high rate of education, giving birth to a powerful library movement and Malayalam stage. They were the subterranean factors; the subliminal choices of the community.

The scholars who have studied the SNDP Yogam, the Nair Service Society or the Christian communalism in Travancore have put the focus of analysis on the 'middle class' or 'elitist'
nature of the movements. They consider them as caste associations. Caste associations, according to them, are only a 'constituency' in order to raise the bargaining power of some individuals based on caste appeals in local and provincial government.

To attribute caste mobilisation just to 'middle class' or 'elite' is a simplistic explanation. What is important to remember is that underlying all these middle class, elite leadership was the important factor of secularisation and primordial loyalties and it was these two factors - secularisation and primordial sentiments - which threw up the middle class, the leadership and communal bargaining. Behind the 'complex economic and political forces invading the community' were the forces of secularisation irrepressible and sweeping, and it was percolating down the system. Srinivas has noted the birth and proliferation of caste associations as a modern adaptation of traditional caste forms. These associations function as welfare and improvement associations and also as political interest groups, for the whole community. The point to be made clear is that the individual or individuals' status mobility without the total segment was impossible. Arnold, Jeffrey and Manor are of the opinion that even if a caste association had no more than a dozen members who are concerned with their own and not their community's advancement, it might express the embryonic ideas and aspirations of a larger social group. "It might", they say, "by its very existence serve as a matrix in which previously distinct elements mix and solidify". Taking
cognizance of the subliminal choices they continue, "It might be a response by part of a caste to complex economic and political forces invading the entire community".

There was differentiation taking place within the society. It meant occupational diversity, greater wealth and resulting disparity. To face these challenges which were the results of secularisation the community's unity was important, their common heritage, was the rallying point. The outsiders or its rivals got the impression that the community is united against them. Thus the caste organisations operated as a social mechanism of a self defence against the subterranean factors which were beyond the comprehension of ordinary man.

From Communalism to Communalisation

Religion, caste, region, language, culture, ancestral origins, social organisation, family, kinship - all have served as foci of basic group identification and loyalty and have played significant role in Travancore society and later in Kerala. The most important source of identity in Travancore politics had been the persistence of sentiments of solidarity and identification with primordial groups. It is this primordial group which was being referred to in this study as 'community'.

The term 'community' was used to denote "a people who share a common sense of identity and think of themselves as constituting a unique and separate group". We had taken religion as the basis of separate group identity under which caste, culture, ancestral origin, family, kinship - all could
be subsumed. For Travancore, language was not a relevant basis for mobilising people because the three communities we surveyed had Malayalam as the common language. Our units of study: Nair, Ezhava, Christian, were distinct communities based on religion. As we have argued, Nairs and Ezhavas both had distinct religious traditions - they worshiped different gods and goddesses, they had different places of worship inaccessible to each other - cultures, in that they were strictly endogamous, different life styles, occupations etc., and the 'communal boundaries' were exceptionally strong.

We had used communalism as an attitude which emphasises the primacy and exclusiveness of the communal group delimited by religion and demands the solidarity of its members in socio-political actions. The common characteristic of communal organisation is the exclusive concern of each with the interest of a particular segment of society. Since this is segmentary, it is parochial, divisive and dysfunctional to a healthy national society. For Kripalani, communalism means either of the following:

(1) A particular religious community considers itself the nation, the rest of the population is relegated to a second class citizenship.

(2) The second is that a religious community seeks some special advantage or advantages for itself at the expense of other communities or of the nation as a whole.

Fr. Jerome D'Souza puts the entire issue succinctly when he says:
Our ancient civilisation, rich in many aspects did not however develop the notion of community as a political unit attached to a certain territory with equality of rights and obligations for all the individuals of the territory. Our notion of community was racial or religious or linguistic: a community based upon family and caste, a community which lives and moves and subsists independently of territorial attachment or form of government. All our interests of social loyalty, all our capacity to sacrifice for the good of others, we directed towards the members of our community and not to citizens of our state whatever their community. (46)

Therefore in the hierarchy of values, communalism is on the lower scale after the secularisation process has taken an important role in the development of societies. Today it has reached a point where communalism is a favourite epithet to tar the opponents in society. That is to say, communalism had in it the underlying meaning that the people are mobilised by whipping up primordial loyalties, baser feelings by the communal leadership - some people feel more and more that it is not the ideal thing to do. The question we were trying to answer in this study was whether this appeal to primordial loyalties have undergone a drastic decline and if it has, under what conditions that has happened.

It is our contention that under the pressure of secularisation process communalism had undergone a 'devaluation' in Travancore (now in Kerala) and its social functions have changed though the primordial sentiments persist. As Parsons puts it, in the nature of the primordial groups, there are "limits beyond which the 'reduction' of function is unlikely to go even in an extreme case of differentiation of structures. Functions may be transferred to other agencies". The question
is whether the communities have reached the limits! One thing is certain: the communities have begun to understand languages other than religion and religious categories.

When secularisation made a profound impact on a society which was guided in its entirety by primordial sentiments, people's perception changed about themselves and the societal forces. The new perception made people to think whether communalism is "the disguised expression of the struggle between the vested interests belonging to different faiths who gave a communal form to that struggle". The people at large began to realise that "one of the most effective methods to combat communalism was to unite the lower strata of different communities in a movement for securing their common economic and other interests". This trend, helped the victory of those political parties which were not directly appealing to primordial sentiments in Kerala politics, within a decade after independence.

The three major communities: Nairs, Ezhavas and Christians had more or less a balancing position in Travancore. Social status-wise, the Nairs had a plus point - being people in military service as well as their women being married to by Brahmins. When social proximity to the king and Brahmins were the standard bearers of social status, Nairs by virtue of their accessibility to these two points climbed up the status scale, although they were only sudras in the traditional caste hierarchy. Ezhavas as ex-untouchables were outside the caste Hindu fold and below the pollution line. The Christians were outside the scheme. The enviable height in which the "foreign
Brahmins" reached in Travancore made all the three communities, Nairs, Christians and Ezhavas, to forget their status differences. They came together to fight the common enemy. But that was only a temporary phase. Since the disabilities were based on ascriptive categories like birth into a community, the leadership wanted to get the rights of the community by dismantling the ascriptive disabilities. Representation in high places which meant status and power, according to the population of each community, was therefore a secularising demand. This was the only way for Ezhavas for instance to move from their marginal position to the centre of the social system. Therefore what was inherent in the entire social process which took place in Kerala was competition between three major communities as communities. But that in itself does not invalidate the proposition that the moves were secular in character. They were aimed at acquiring more wealth, controlling more institutions of learning and charitable institutions and fundamental to all these was the demand for share in the governmental jobs and representative assembly, the identified symbols of status and power. A paradigm emerges in this process.

It was the secular forces which lay behind the communities in this competition and their goal was enhancement of secular institutions because status and power shifted from ascriptive religious categories to secular categories of achievements and rationality. But the medium for achieving the latter ends was primordial loyalties - (religious feelings, sentiments). This had to be so because the political organisation of the time
recognised the primordial categories only. But at the end of this competition the character of the political organisation itself undergoes a change and the old medium becomes irrelevant. But the medium does not disappear. It persists with a different function. Community became active through communalism but communalism resulted in communalisation by acquiring secular status symbols. This process of communalisation under secularising factors in a plural society cannot be easily brushed aside. From a historical point of view it helps the overall development of society. Communalisation need not be looked upon as a vulgarised form of social development; but on the other hand, it could lead to the flowering of several institutions and instrumentalities for the total development of society if the state - the political organisation - is insensitive to the demands of the times. Deprived groups have a greater tendency to organise communally under those conditions.

J.B. Kripalani has put this issue in the following words: "It is not communal if different communities separately or jointly do something for the good as they conceive it. Their aims are not in conflict with each other".

The emphasis of communalisation is that a community advances its legitimate interests without injuring the legitimate interests of other communities or the nation leading to a situation where the entire society will benefit ultimately. It may be a narrow outlook but not a vicious one. It is a different stage of development than communalism if communities separately or jointly do something for the common good as they conceive it.
Our data shows that no institution run by a 'community' is exclusively for the members of that particular community. For the starting of colleges in a locality other community members also help financially. In the case of appointments, preferences will be, of course given to the community which runs the colleges. But they take on the staff, members of other communities too at least as a token of 'communal representation'. In the case of admissions of students to these institutions, the situation is much more open. The following table XXV illustrates this point.

In founding a college or a hospital, the people of the locality participate. The local residents feel that, even if the institution belongs to a dominant community in the area, benefit will percolate down to the local residents. Economic opportunities are generated, educational avenues are opened and an overall development of the area takes place. This has resulted in an inter-weaving of social factors helping the process of communalisation.

The relative communal harmony existing in Kerala on the horizontal level may also be a function of communalisation. Mannam, after his campaigns against the enviable economic development of Christians would go to a Syrian Christian to dine. The social functions, anniversaries, of even communal organisations saw on the dais leaders of different communities. One who studies the souvenirs and special publications of each community will be struck by the fact that invariably leaders from different communities wrote appreciating the work of the
### Table XXV

**Participation of/sharing benefits by communities in a locality though an institution is owned by one community**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>INITIAL INVESTMENT</th>
<th>1964 (Year of starting)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution by the owning community</td>
<td>RS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others: Christians</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,75,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1</th>
<th>STAFF: Faculty</th>
<th>1964</th>
<th>1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members of the owning community</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others: Jacobites</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brahmins</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ezhava</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marthoma</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.2</th>
<th>Non-Teaching</th>
<th>1964</th>
<th>1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members of the owning community</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>STUDENTS</th>
<th>1964</th>
<th>1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members of the owning community</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>50*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>50*</td>
<td>1360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All the 3 belong to Pente-costal churches.

* approximate.

**Source:** Computed from the figures obtained from the office of the institution.

**Note:** This is the case study of a Degree College owned by CSI (Anglican Syrian) in the Travancore area where Nairs, Ezhavas and Jacobites are influential communities besides CSI. Numerically members of the CSI will come last.
particular rival community and its leaders. The ecological factors too helped communal harmony. The inter-community living greatly affects the inter-religious actions positively. Actual religious community enclaves are few though there are areas where a community may be dominant. "The living and working conditions compel the members of the different communities to associate together in regular and normal patterns" says Roland Miller after a study of Mappila Muslims in Kerala. The dwelling/settlement patterns in Kerala requires a great extent of toleration and mutual help. "Kerala represents" writes Miller, "a unique religious picture. Nowhere else do adherents of the three major world religions live side by side in such large numbers.... ...Inter-religious living in Kerala is not only a possibility, but it is an everyday fact of life. The relative success of that effort has symbolic value both for the nation and the world". The remarkable feature, therefore, as far as the basic group identity in Kerala is that there is a principle of optimisation. The principle of optimisation means, where interests cannot be reconciled and where there is an inevitable conflict of interests in individual's varying allegiances, "there will be a tendency to choose that set of allegiances which maximises material and social gains in the society at large and minimises survival risks". The primordiality and near primeval intensity of involvement with and allegiance to one's community will be always present but if certain conditions are present, the members of the community will rise above the allegiances in search of newer combinations.
These conditions are the process of secularisation which makes communalisation possible. So what finally happens in such a situation is the co-existence of communalisation and secularisation.

This leads to another thrust, namely the economic gains. Today, the adventurous spirit of Malayalees for material gains has become a hallmark of their social life and this can be explained largely through secularisation and communalisation. The phenomenal material gains each community could make over the years through, (a) mobilising resources from within the community, and (b) communal bargaining with the state - the custodian of all resources - point to the fact that a group or section of the community develops a vested interest in maintaining the already acquired material wealth. They want to preserve it under their domain and if possible gain more.

This is an important factor compelling the communities to co-exist without the urge to suppress or annihilate. Therefore, when any of these institutions is touched by the government all communities unite. The class interests have the upper hand today in deciding the communal affairs. Perhaps the thread could be seen from the very beginning (1891) of political agitations in Travancore. From this angle there is truth in saying that caste is being used as a vanguard of class in Kerala's social history. Caste blocks have found their place in secular parties too. The same point Hardgrave makes focussing on the differentiation that occurs in the parties. He says about 1965 -
The erosion of the political solidarity of the Ezhava community by the Congress may reflect the initial stage of differentiation within that community. Under the impact of economic changes each community becomes increasingly heterogeneous, political interests within it will get differentiated and as this happens the polarity between the communities in terms of party support may be expected to decline. (62)

The ideology of success finds its expression in material possessions and mobility in the social ladder. This growing materialism characterised the life in Travancore from the very beginning of the onset of capitalism. Notwithstanding the religious nature of Sree Narayana Guru's mission as we have noted, he was a great advocate of material advancement of the community on the secular lines. It affects the value systems and priorities. Therefore, the survival means, the struggle to reach the economic goal and thereby the success standard. This success ethos as a sociological factor is very important if we consider that a Malayali's 'goal of life is to survive in a crowded and economically backward region'. The secularisation process in terms of mass education, communications and travel have given a new definition of survival. This quest to minimise survival risks on the principle of optimisation line has seen in the Malayalee society new permutations and combinations communally expressed on the political level. It has altered each community's policies and political affiliations. The 90-year period we surveyed saw this extra ordinary combination of communities according to contexts. We get the following picture if we plot the community alignments in terms of conflicting postures during the milestones of Travancore (Kerala) socio-politic life.
FIGURE 4
Selected community alignments at important socio-political situations

STAGE - I
Communal consciousness crystallising for social status maximisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year and important social events</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1895 onwards</th>
<th>1919</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malayali Memorial</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Ezhava Memorial</td>
<td>Year of Civil Rights movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivals</td>
<td>Ally I: Foreign Brahmins</td>
<td>Nairs &amp; other savarnas</td>
<td>Nairs and other savarnas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ally II: Ezhavas Christians</td>
<td>Ezhavas Christians</td>
<td>Ezhavas Christians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STAGE - II
Communal consciousness sharpened in economic status maximisation and politicisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year and important events</th>
<th>1932</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1947</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Congress formation</td>
<td>Abstention movement</td>
<td>State Congress</td>
<td>Year of Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivals</td>
<td>Ally I: State Nairs</td>
<td>Dewan Sir C.P. (State) Nairs</td>
<td>Dewan (State)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ally II: Ezhavas Christians Muslims</td>
<td>Ezhavas Christians Muslims/under political party</td>
<td>Nairs, Ezhavas Christians and other under State Congress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Contd.)
### STAGE - III

**Communal consciousness heightened for economic gains through political parties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year and important events</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1959</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First General Elections</td>
<td>First Election after Formation of Kerala State</td>
<td>Vimochana Samaram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ally I**
- Christians (Congress - ruling party)
- Nairs (PSP Communists)
- Communities in Communist Party

**Rivals**
- vs.
- vs.
- vs.

**ally II**
- Ezhavas
- Christians (Congress)
- Nairs, Christians, Ezhavas, in all the political parties except CPI to fight Communists

(Needs further clarification)

### STAGE - IV

**Diffused communal consciousness because of differentiation and multiplication of communal political parties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year and important social events</th>
<th>1960-64</th>
<th>1966/67</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Split in Communist Party; birth of Kerala Congress</td>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>Anti-Marxism Mid-term poll</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ally I**
- Ezhava (Sankar Congress)
- Nair, Senior Partner CPI (Congress leadership)
- Community leadership Cong.I

**Rivals**
- vs.
- vs.
- vs.

**ally II**
- Nair Christian (Kerala Congress)
- Nair Christian Marxist (different parties)
- rank and file of Marxists communities

(Note: This does not mean that the boundaries of these units were neatly drawn. We have taken the dominant trends only.)
It is interesting to note that progressively the alignments have led to a diffusion of communal consciousness and differentiation of communities. No more communal solidarity is a distinguishing mark of Kerala's social life. The rank and file defy communal leadership. The conflict situation provides the scenario of communal leadership versus common people in the community. 1980 election proved how the communal leadership got isolated.

These strange combinations of communities in a given social context proves our thesis of maximising economic gains by the community and minimising the survival risk. This helped tremendously the communalisation process. Today this is all the more clear when individuals emphasise the trait which is convenient to them for their principle of optimisation. As already noted, the nature and character of the state has changed; the communal bargaining has lost its relevance. But the communal leadership would be benefited if the communal bargaining continues. The demonstrations and debate about reservations between Ezhavas and Nairs is a case in point. But the fact that it is not catching the imagination of the ordinary people can be explained largely through the process of secularisation. The dialectics of communalisation and secularisation is one explanation of the social change in a plural, traditional society where primordial loyalties are conspicuous but all parameters of secularisation co-exist.
All systems preserve some aspects of their past. Therefore what is necessary in any attempt of engineering social change is to see how certain institutions or aspects of the past or tradition could respond to stimuli and how best they could be made use of as the instruments to bring about a society with secular values. Since even in revolutionary changes, all the traditional aspects cannot be replaced, historical experience shows that we must "opt for conscious planning and intervention in social system" and hence some social scientists in India have pleaded for "selective retention and replacement". A corollary of this theoretical position is that some of the traditional social institutions can be utilised to enhance secularisation.

The political leadership in independent India had realised this twin aspects - traditional and secular instruments - of building a modern Indian society. Soon after independence, the leaders were keen to press for a modernising path. As a primary condition for this goal they opted for a secular state and they wanted the Indian society to assimilate the secular values. Nehru said as Prime Minister of free India

I am convinced that the measure of India's progress will be the measure of our giving full effect to what has been called a secular state. That, of course, does not mean a people lacking morals or religion. It means that while religion is completely free, the state, including in its wide fold various religions and cultures, gives protection and opportunities to all and thus brings about an atmosphere of tolerance and co-operation. (66)
Philosopher-Statesman of India, Sarvepalli Radha Krishnan had maintained that the secularisation path in India is not without India's religious and spiritual heritage. In his own words "I want to say authoritatively that secularism does not mean irreligion. It means we respect all faiths and religions. Our state does not identify itself with any particular religion".

Apart from the political leadership, the legal experts and judiciary have upheld the above emphasis of 'secular' in India.

We had seen that the nature of the state (whether it is monarchy, dictatorship, democracy, theocracy or secular) and the resulting content of citizenship has an important bearing on the process of secularisation and communalisation. The ideal of a secular state is clearly embodied in the Indian Constitution and our leaders have time and again sworn by it. Admitting that an ideal secular state exists nowhere, a secular state could mean either a state which aids all religions impartially or a state which aids or promotes any religion. Donald Smith has put the inclination of Indian secularism towards "no-preference" than to "wall of separation" doctrine. He conclusively says that India is a secular state.

This secular nature of Indian state which takes into account the tradition seriously gives enough scope for furthering the values of secularisation in our traditional, plural society.

The most important point emerging from the representative sayings of Nehru and Radha Krishnan quoted above and
Smith's study is that secular without the religious and the religious without the secular are not feasible in this country. That is, tradition-modernity is not a bi-polarity but a continuum leading to a dialectical intertwining of both. This recognition of the importance of tradition and traditional values had been central to our argument of secularisation and communalisation in the preceding chapters.

The Kerala experience shows that competition among communities to enhance their economic position, status and power could ultimately lead to a situation where the process will subvert the communal aggregates and the primordial base (in our case communalism) and broaden the scope for the secularisation process as a whole. This is applicable to a great extent to an all India level too.

This position leads us to take the basis of several social mobilisations happening in India for the last several decades seriously. They were, of course, traditional and often sectarian. Communal thinking and communal group mobilisation were important phenomenon among them. There is a general thinking that this kind of primordial group consciousness, conflicts and competition among communities are pathological and obstruct the secularisation process. The backward class tensions which have taken place in the Hindi heart land in the last few years or the widespread atrocities on Harijans in the recent years as a result of their rising awareness about the exploitation they were subjected to or the anti-Brahminic movements in Tamil Nadu, all these have a primordial base and character about them.
Our argument is that these cannot be dismissed as obstacles to a secularisation process; if we go by the Kerala experience. They have potentialities to facilitate the emergence of secular forces.

When the resources of the state and society are not accessible for members of a particular community because they are discriminated against on an ascriptive basis, the only way to get over this discrimination is primordial collectivism. That is, the structure of deprivation determines the basis of collective dissent and protest. The Dalit Panther movement is a case in point. It is our contention that in so far as the goal pursued is instrumental in orientation, that is, a legitimate share in the cake (social status or economic power), the sectarian, parochial, primordial sentiments will be gradually transformed into a non-communal secular force. To this extent, the mobilisation of primordial collectivities for instrumental objectives are fundamentally different from the attempts at the revival of religious fundamentalism or establishing a communal style of life.

We have found that the existence of certain exogenous factors like modern education, money economy reference group or groups and so on are a necessary condition for communities to demand secular gains for themselves. The awakening in Bihar among the Backward Classes in the last few years show that the conditions existed in Travancore towards the end of 19th century has come into being in these areas only now. No doubt, there are situational variations regarding the nature and condition
of exploiters and exploited. However we get a pattern from our data. The mobilisation of the people and the resulting conflict has 3 stages. (a) based on regional-linguistic factors, (b) the second stage exploits caste or religious sentiments and (c) at the third stage, the mobilisation and conflict will be based on class. Therefore, the situation today has become conducive for the deprived sections of Biharis to agitate for their rights now, the mobilisation of the people is based on primordial collectivism — either region or caste.

But there are some constraints limiting the full flowering of secularisation through communalisation on a pan Indian scale. They are:

(a) The slow process of these communities taking to the secular instrumentalities like owning schools, colleges, hospitals or other institutions which foster values like individualism, rationalism, entrepreneurship and the like.
(b) The relative weakness of communities in a particular region vis-a-vis the dominant community. In many regions numerical and ritual status of several communities are too inferior to that of the dominant community. Hence a competition to acquire power, status and wealth cannot be carried out to its logical end.
(c) Since the state has come on a big way into the field of education, health and so on, it may not be necessary for communities as communities to mobilise their resources and organise themselves to take to secular instrumentalities. Their challenge is to wrest from the government the due share.
Notwithstanding the fact that the state provides, theoretically all avenues for development and all facilities for growth for its citizens, because of the peculiar nature of our society anchored on the reality of 'community'; communal formations (however primordial they might be) can assume a role to accelerate the process of secularisation and thereby individualisation, rationality and so on. The concept of communalisation we have developed in this study gives a useful heuristic device to see the reality as they are in a traditional society caught up in the process of secularisation. In other words the structure may be communal but the process will be secular. India cannot escape the contradiction of change present in these processes.

Needless to say, taking cognizance of the importance of the primordial in social change its tremendous implication on policy aspect of the Government should be underlined. The policy planners should remember that the latent function of communalisation may be secularisation in the long run in a plural society like that of India.
Notes and References

1 These concepts are used by T.K. Commen. See T.K. Commen, op. cit., Sociological Bulletin, p. 28.

2 Cf. Ibid., p. 18.

3 Joseph R. Gusfield is an exponent of the position that modernity does not necessarily weaken tradition. He challenges the 'linear theory of change' which considers tradition and modernity as polar opposites. "In assuming that new economic and political processes face an unchanging and uniform body of institutional procedures and cultural values, the linear theory of change greatly distorts the history and variety of civilisations", says Gusfield. Joseph R. Gusfield, "Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change", American Journal of Sociology, vol. 72, January 1976, p. 352.

4 In our perspective secularisation as a value is more desirable.


7 "Caste is so tacitly and so completely accepted by all, including those most vocal in condemning it, that it is everywhere the unit of social action" says Srinivas. "Caste in Modern India", Journal of Asian Studies, vol. XIV, p. 548.


11 Synergism refers to the process wherein the isolated actions of an aggregate of individuals produce conditions of exigency which in turn result in social change. The social actors are not consciously contributing or motivated to bring about change. See Marbury B. Ogle, Louis Schneider and Joy V. Wiley, eds., Power, Order and the Economy. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1964.
The following is a telling instance of it. Aluhootttil Channar was the second person in the Travancore state to own a motor car. But since he was an Ezhava, when his car had to pass near the Mavelikara temple, he had to get down at a certain distance from the temple and go through the alleys to reach the same road beyond the temple. By the time this landlord reaches the point, the Nair driver takes the car through the road passing close to the temple and waits for the rich Ezhava man to reach the vehicle. See Jeeyitha Samaran, vol. I, p. 302. If economic power or command of resources determined status - thereby equal rights - Aluhootttil Channar could have faced no problem. But only, when the entire community got the status, the individual member however higher he may be, could get it.


All the spokesmen of communal bargaining believed in this principle. The writings and speeches of Mannam (Nair), Dr. Palpu (Ezhavas) and M.M. Varkey (Catholics) cited in the earlier chapters are clear examples of this view point.
24 Polynesian Mana is a case in point. It symbolises not only the magical power of the person but also his honour, or authority or wealth. See Marcel Mauss, The Gift (tr. Cunnison). London: Cohen & West, 1954.


26 Ibid., p. 41.


29 W.G. Runciman, op. cit., p. 41.

30 Raju Kurien, "Patterns of Emigration from Kerala", Social Scientist, vol. 7, no. 6, January 1979, p. 34.

31 Kinship and family among Malayalees is the basic unit and this helps to perpetuate the 'communal' or 'ethnic' group identity. 'Kudumbayogam' i.e., family get-together, of several generations is an interesting feature of Malayalee life. The researcher's participant observation on such occasions brings home the fact that they are occasions to perpetuate one's pride in belonging to a certain family and community. They are also indicators to measure status in terms of the number of higher ups in society (government employment, successful entrepreneurship, priests as well as political achievements) economic status in terms of wealth. Invariably such occasions have lavish feasts, releasing of book with the history of the family. These occasions result in a kind of rivalry and competition for achievements between families, inter-community and intra-community.

32 Several articles of communal leaders instead of taking offensive position took a defensive posture from 1940s onwards. This roughly coincides with the formation of the State Congress.

33 In an interview P.S. Velayudhan, the President of SNDP Yogam has emphasised this point. He asserted that even today the membership is not restricted to Ezhavas. As an example, he pointed out that the present Andhra Pradesh Governor, Shri K.C. Abraham, a Christian, is a member of the SNDP Yogam.

34 C. Narayana Pillai, Changancheery (Mal.) Autobiography of Changancheery Parameswaran Pillai. Trivandrum, Published by G. Ramachandran, 1941.

36 See George M. John, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 23ff.


38 Washbrook, "Review Article of Hardgrave's: The Nadars of Tamil Nadu", \textit{Modern Asian Studies}, vol. V, no. 3, July 1971, p. 282. Washbrook's thesis is that caste associations are only a constituency in order to raise the bargaining power of some individuals. See also R. Ramakrishnan Nair in \textit{Social Structure and Political Development in Kerala} proposes the thesis that it was the rising middle class who were becoming conscious of their rights tried to use the communities to gain status and power.


41 The term 'common heritage' used by Arnold et al has the meaning of primordial loyalties or manifest experience which we were talking of. Ibid., p. 373.

42 Robert N. Kearney, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 4.

43 On the wider national plane also, it was very much the case. As K. Damodaran puts it:

"The British rulers adopted the policy of minority representation on the basis of religion. Religion became the basis for determining a political minority. This policy intensified communal feelings and created complications in the struggle for freedom".

\textit{Indian Thought}, p. 417.


46 Quoted in Dr. K.B. Menon, "Democracy and Communalism" paper presented at a seminar at Kottayam conducted by Janadhipathyavedi, undated (1961?), TMML Papers, p. 10.


48 Dr. K.B. Menon has written about Muslim League in Kerala that 'the only language they understand is the language of religion and the league is exploiting this psychology of the Muslim masses'. *Democracy and Communalism*, p. 13.


50 Ibid., p. 354.


52 In an interview the researcher had with Fr. Vallamattom, the spokesman of the Private College Managers Association for several years, this point was clearly brought out. According to him, on an average 20 per cent of the appointments in private institutions is from other communities than the owning community.

53 However, it cannot be generalised as a feature from the very beginning of the organisation of communities. It is said about SB College that they gave preference to Catholics and other Syrian Christians before NSS got a college in Changanacherry. Only after all applicants of the management's candidates were admitted, a handful of brilliant Nairs or Ezhavas or Pulayas were admitted. After NSS College came up in Perunna, they admitted all students without any consideration of caste or religion or community. *Bharatha Kesanri* souvenir, p. 92. However Catholic statistics (1943-44) say that they give equal consideration to non-Catholics in their institutions.

According to a booklet of AKCC, there were 3299 Nair teachers in aided vernacular schools though Nairs conducted only 42 out of the 2253 such schools. But there are only 2655 Catholic teachers although Catholics conduct largest number of schools. From this, it is evident that Christian agencies, particularly Catholics employ a large majority of these 3299 Nair teachers. *Travancore Education Reform*, 1946, p. 35.

54 The researcher's informants in Kottayam narrated such instances from their experience.
For instance, in the prestigious NSS Diamond Jubilee Souvenir (1974) the second main article is written by a bishop (Cardinal Parekkattil). See also SNDP Yogam Golden Jubilee Souvenir (1953). Christian, Nair, Ezhava leaders mix and interchange positions of honour in different communities during important celebrations and social functions. This had symbolic value from the very beginning.


K.A. Mathew, a veteran political and social leader of Travancore emphasised this point in an interview.

Roland E. Miller, op. cit., p. 20.


Ibid., p. 311.

Susanna Rudolph attributed this idea to EMS Namboodiri-pad in a seminar at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems on 13 March 1980.


Ibid., p. 15.


The Hindustan Times (Delhi), 18 April 1949, p. 6.

The Statesman (Delhi), 21 August 1961.

Donald E. Smith, op. cit., p. 498.