APPENDIX

UNIVERSE, UNITS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The empirical data for this study was collected from the social history of Travancore. Three religious groupings - Nairs, Ezhavas and Christians were identified as our units of study. These three religious communities were chosen because:

(a) Nairs were an entrenched group;
(b) Ezhavas were a depressed group; and
(c) Christians were an ascendent group.

By looking into the social dynamics of these three kinds of social reality (or groups with differential social bases) a social scientist could discern the social dynamics involved in the process of social mobility over a period of time in which the three communities reached more or less the same positions wiping out the once time wide disparities.

We were exploring the interaction of time and space on specific units. Because, if we give diachronic analysis and synchronic analysis free play, as Galtung observes, "It would give the kind of analysis (nomothetic variety) towards which social science is no doubt heading".

The social history of several princely states in India at the end of 19th century and the first half of 20th century presents certain interesting features for a student of sociology of religion to understand the influence of religion in mobilising people to achieve material gains. The attempt in the present study was to isolate the important variables of religion which affect the social development. Our units of study were social segments (communities) whose identity was in
terms of their religious faith and sentiments. The social process of secularisation and communalisation of communities based on religious affiliation (religious community into which one is born) formed the focal point of our research.

The study also took into consideration, on an exploratory level how basic group identities and primordial loyalties in which religious factor is common, play a sustaining role in social movements with the ultimate result of initiating a secularisation process. The other aspect was to see how traditional (ascriptive) loyalties like religion (caste is included under religion) were made instruments to demand modern, secular ends.

Interviews with ex-leaders of the communities - men who once played important roles in the social history - could generate valuable data. Besides, the researcher's own participant observations as a member of the society has helped to see the unfolding of the intricate social relationships and the actors in it, at a closer view. Following Herbert Blumer who had suggested the four dimensions involved in estimating the value of such materials as source data; care was taken to see that (1) representativeness, (2) adequacy, (3) reliability and (4) validity of the theoretical interpretation were obtained. This is a modest attempt in sociological interpretation and throwing light on perplexing problems of societal development which is nonetheless important in sociological understanding.

History books, journals, souvenirs, magazines published by these communities on special occasions were studied to generate data. Old volumes of newspapers have formed
an important part of our investigation. Historical writings on Kerala and specially on Travancore were studied. Biographies, autobiographies, diaries and memoirs of some important leaders formed another source of data. Files of some notable social leaders kept in Nehru Memorial Museum and Library were helpful. Another important source was the rare book collections of certain individuals in Kottayam and Quilon. The minutes and other records in the offices of the All Kerala Catholic Congress (AKCC), the Nair Service Society (N.S.S.) and the Sree Narayana Dharam Paripalaya Yogam (SNDP) at Kottayam, Changanacherry and Quilon were examined. Content analysis of reports of associations were also undertaken.

Thus, the materials used in this study could be roughly classed into two categories, documentary and live. Documentary materials are the ones historians use. The live material is the information collected directly by interviews, case studies and direct observation of events in progress. One of the main strategic problems of sociology is, as Marshall puts it "how to combine the use of these two types of material so as to produce something greater than the sum of the products of the two sources taken separately". Historians used to say that events like wine, need time to mature and for sociologists too, sometimes must pass before they can see events in perspective. A sociologist by combining 'historical' and 'live', get over the disadvantages inherent in each, taken separately. Again to quote Marshall "...he (sociologist) is less concerned than historian with the sequence of events in the unique setting of a
particular time and place; and more with generalised knowledge of the social processes of which these events are an example. To a considerable extent he can substitute comparison, or horizontal perspective, as it were, for the temporal or vertical perspective of the historian. This is a point on which the European Sociological tradition has an edge over American.
1. Johan Gahtung, *Theory and Methods of Social Research*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969, p. 25. By nomothetic variety we mean sciences that "deal with phenomena that (at least in principle) can be found over a wide field of non-contiguous space-time regions (the relation between rapid industrialisation and political stability)."


4. Ibid., p. 37.