Communist concept of communication has gained prominence in communication studies in the latter half of 20th century. Communication strategy of Communists and the resultant radical restructuring of the society in Soviet Russia and China had turned the attention of sociologists and communication scientists towards their communication practice. Because of the specific nature of communication practice of Communists, several studies had been carried out on this aspect. Social Change in Soviet Russia by Alex Inkeles, Soviet Doctrine on the Role of Propaganda by Frederic Barghoon, Communication and Politics in Communist China by Frederic T.C Yu, Communication and National Integration in Communist China by Alan.P.Liu, Mass Communication in China by John Howkins etc. are important studies on communication practice in Communist regimes. These studies have explained the specific nature of the communication practice of communists and pointed out how it differs from the western models of communication.

Exhaustive studies on the process and pattern of communication and media use in Communist countries rooted out
the false notion that the highly developed communication is a western phenomenon. From these studies it is evident that Communists have shown more attention in the development of communication than non-communists. (Pye 37, Pool 234) Though Communists placed different controls upon social communication and used it for different political goals, their communication practice has been successful in bringing out social development. (Pye 37, Hedebro 76-78)

Historically, Communists have realized the strength and power of the mass media to mobilize the masses. They recognized the importance of communication and information management, as decisive elements in the acquisition of power. Making this point explicitly clear, Mao-Tse-tung, the Chinese Communist Leader argued,

... to overthrow the existing political system, it is always necessary above all else, to create public opinion and to work on ideological domain. It is thus that the revolutionary class proceed as well as the
counter revolutionary classes. (Marxist Theories of
Communication, 481)

Frederic Barghoon in his study Soviet Doctrine on the Role of
Propaganda observed that,

... Words and pictures had played a more continuous
and perhaps a more vital role than bullets or rubles in
Moscow's struggle to undermine the social order of
capitalism and to reconstruct the society on Marxist-
Leninist foundations ... (368)

Barghoon further observed that "... the success and very
survival of Communism as a movement depend largely upon the
energy and skill of the Communists as communicators." (362)

Maxwell in his book Political Propaganda in Soviet Russia
noted that,

... To achieve their ends, the Soviet rulers erected an
immense network of propaganda that included
massive programs of political as well as practical
education. Lenin mobilized every available form of
communication (and entertainment) to meet this goal: the press, educational institutions, the arts, and even science all became part of the intensive internal propaganda system designed to play the central role in the creation of a Communist state. Controlled from the top, the arms of the Soviet propaganda machine reached into every aspect of Russian life, down to the local level where clubs and other quasi-social organizations received political education from trained propagandists. The establishment of reading rooms in even the smallest village encouraged guided discussions, while films were accompanied by questions and answers sessions. All of this was under the control and tight supervision of the Agitational Propaganda section of the Central Committee of the Communist party, known as Agit- prop, which was attached to every division of the Communist party down to the smallest local cell. (61-79)
Essentially the same thing can be said about the communications in Communist China. Motivated by the general goals of Communism, "... Chinese Communists have developed an efficient communication system which reach almost every segment of the population and controls virtually all the avenues of Chinese mind." (Yu, 267)

Because China is so underdeveloped, Chinese Communist propaganda has been engaged primarily in the developmental activities. It has emphasized the achievement of mass literacy, the establishment of control over regional propaganda media, the use of such techniques as big character posters, wired radio and small group discussions. (Laswell, 241)

In countries like Soviet Russia, China, Cuba, Tanzania, North Korea, Vietnam etc. Communist propaganda has played a major role in political and economic development and in mass mobilization for these purposes. (Laswell, 257; Hedebro, 73-78) To do so its organizational mechanism has been structurally integrated with the Communist Party or organization itself. Its strategies and factors have varied according to the stages of political and economic
development. The less developed the society, the more Communist propaganda has concentrated on face to face communication.

Studies on the communication practice in Communist countries have shown that their communication pattern had some distinctive features, which increased mass participation in social and political activities. Even though Communists did not form any theory on communication, they realized the importance of communication and its crucial role in social change. (Hedebro, 74; Pye, 254-58; Inkeles, 280-83) Major Contribution of communists in communication studies springs from their experience in the massive utilization of communication for the molding of their society and to mobilize their people for the purpose of development. (Hedebro, 76; Pye, 254-56; Liu, XIII) Communists considered communication as a major social force to attain their ideological goals and to bring about changes in social structure. With the effective use of this powerful weapon, Communist movement achieved success under various geographical, cultural and socio-economic conditions.

Present study intends to probe on the communication practice of Communists in Kerala and it's significance in Communist studies.
From its inception in 1939, Communist Party had played a very important role in the social, political and cultural milieu of Kerala. The growth and development of Communist Party has been phenomenal and significant over the past 68 years and has grown as a major political force in Kerala.

Though Communism came to Kerala as part of an international Communist movement, it has gained power through a democratic electoral process. Unlike the communication practice of Communists in totalitarian societies like Russia and China, Communists in Kerala succeeded in propagating their ideology in a democratic system which already had been enlightened by the radical ideas and activities of social reformers like Swami Vivekananda, Sree Narayana Guru et al. Communists gradually filtered into the socio-political and intellectual realms of this enlightened society with their well organized propaganda techniques and persuasive political preachings. In 1957 election, Communists came out as the single biggest party in the state by securing 38% of the vote polled. Apart from the tiny Italian principality, San Marino, Kerala emerged as the first case of a
democratically elected Communist government in the world. (Nossitter, 1; R. Nair, 20)

Whatever be the factors behind this victory, it is obvious that the Communication strategy of the Communists had played a significant role in it. Social reawakening on socialist lines and ideological influence on art and literature during that period also substantiates the impact of Communist propaganda and persuasive mode of communication on the social life of Kerala. (Fic, 94-95; Balakrishnan, 190-91; Offredi, 140-47) Most important of all, communication strategy of Communists had been successful in communicating with different sectors of the society, irrespective of their literacy level or socio-economic status.

In this aspect the communication practice of Communists in Kerala deserve considerable research attention. Ensuing chapters will discuss the specific characteristics and the methods they utilized to overcome the barriers in the communication process like illiteracy, limited media exposure, variations in socio economic status etc. in detail.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies on the Communication Practice in Communist Countries

Alex Inkeles's study on Social Change in Soviet Russia is an attempt to analyze various factors that contributed to the social changes in Soviet Russia. In this study Inkeles observed that Soviet mass communication system had played a key role in mobilizing public opinion in gargantuan programmes of economic reconstruction and social transformation. By analyzing the Soviet mass communication system, Inkeles stated that Communist Party has developed a complex propaganda apparatus and elaborate communication network to shape the thinking of Soviet people. This highly centralized, carefully controlled and vigorously utilized communication system is motivated for a single purpose - to bring the Soviet people for the needed support of the Communist Party's efforts. By analyzing Soviet mass communication system, the author opined that their mass communication strategy had maximum impact in mobilizing popular support for the policies of Soviet government.
Frederic Barghoon's study on Soviet Doctrine on the Role of Propaganda, evaluated the role of propaganda as an instrument of foreign policy of Soviet Union. By analyzing the Soviet interpretations of some international issues like, ban the bomb propaganda, Suez crisis, Algerian conflict, situations in Congo and Angola etc. Barghoon stated that Soviet propaganda played a key role in shaping the attitudes of 'neutral' countries in a pro-Soviet direction. He has also observed that Soviet propaganda has succeeded in intensifying and channeling in directions desirable to the Kremlin attitudes such as fear of war, anti-colonialism, anti-western nationalism etc.

Similar communication studies had also been conducted in China. Frederic T.C. Yu's study on the Communication and Politics in Communist China forms an important study on Chinese communication practice. In this study the author gave an elaborate view of the structure and policies of the Chinese communication system. By analyzing the basic characteristics of Chinese communication policy Yu opined that three aspects of Communist ideology i.e. class-consciousness, mass line approach, unity of theory
and practice, form the very basement of Chinese communication system. By examining the structure and functioning of communication system in a typical 'Chinese Commune', Yu argued that Chinese Communists have developed an indigenous but strangely effective communication network. Besides the conventional mass media such as newspaper, radio etc. they have employed many traditional and indigenous communication methods, like street plays, poetry, folk songs, oral propagandists, blackboard newspapers etc. This innovative communication strategy enabled the Communists to bring a large number of people into direct and close contact with the party as well as the Government. Yu further stated that even if the communication system of Communists was not always successful in producing particular thoughts and attitudes desired by the party, it transformed much of the old, traditional China and introduced a new pattern of socialization and political activity that had never existed in the country.

Alan P. Liu also has analyzed the Chinese mass communication system in terms of its role in achieving national
integration. In his study *Communication and National Integration in China* Liu pointed out that the specific characteristics of Chinese communication system is the linkage of mass media and informal communication channels. He further stated that Communists had overcome the barriers of social integration such as, regionalism, lack of common language, low literacy etc. by acting as intermediaries between mass media and interpersonal communications. Liu further analyzed the components of Chinese mass communication system - Mass Campaigns, Television, Radio, Press, Film etc. - in terms of their structure, content and audience response. Liu concluded the study by stating that, the penetrative political communication of Communists has greatly enhanced the substantive integration of the country.

John Howkins's study on *Mass Communication in China* gave a contemporary view of Chinese mass communication system. By analyzing the very structure and functioning of mass communication system in China, Howkins argued that, the main medium of mass communication in China is not broadcasting or newspaper or cinema, but the Chinese Communist Party. Chinese
Communist Party forms a real mass medium in terms of the involvement of its members at all levels. Howkins also traced out two major trends developing in Communist China i.e. increasing professionalism and consciousness of modernization at all levels, especially in the field of mass communication and in party sectors.

**Studies on Communist Movement in Kerala**

The literature on Communist movement in Kerala is comparatively rich. Communist victory in 1957 election had drawn worldwide attention towards Kerala. The interest shown by international community is clearly evident from their writings on Communist movement in Kerala. *Kerala - The Yenan of India* by Victor. M. Fic and *Communism in Kerala* by T.J. Nossitter are two important works among them. In his work Fic analyzed the class - communal characters of the movement, whereas Nossitter's attempt was to trace its socio-political aspects. Though these two works have given a comprehensive picture of the growth and development of Communism in Kerala, they did not mention anything about the communication aspects.
Communist Party Keralathil (Communist Party in Kerala) by EMS Namboothiripad, Keralathile Communist Prasthanam - Adyanalukalil (Early Phase of Communist movement in Kerala) by N.E. Balaram are two authentic works on the history of Communist movement in Kerala. Both these works are found useful to the present study, since they gave a detailed account of their communication system and propaganda activities.

A good number of academic studies also had been carried out on various aspects of Communist movement in Kerala. History of Communist Movement in Kerala by E. Balakrishnan, History of Communist Movement in Travancore by P.J. Cherian, Extremist Movement in Kerala by Dr. K.K. Kusuman etc. form indepth studies on Communist movement. They also gave authentic accounts of the communication practices and propaganda activities of Communist movement in Kerala.

In addition to these works, there are biographies and autobiographies of eminent communist leaders, their reminiscences, which form a great repository of literature regarding Communist movement in Kerala.
By reviewing these works, it is obvious that most of them are confined to the social, political and economic aspects of the Communist movement. As a part of the main topic, only casual references had been given to their communication aspects. An in-depth or serious study on this topic has not been undertaken so far. This study attempts to analyze the communication practice and propaganda activities of Communist movement in Kerala, so as to give a comprehensive picture to their victory in 1957.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1) To find out the communication strategy of Communist movement in propaganda and agitation in Kerala.

2) To evaluate how far their communication strategy helped in the propagation of Communist ideology.

3) To find out the unique features of communication pattern and propaganda techniques of Communist movement in Kerala.

4) To identify the measures used by the Communists to overcome the barriers in Communication process.
The mere implementation of western communication models does not serve the purpose of development in a third world country like India. Communication policy for such a country must be necessarily to be local specific and should serve the needs and aspirations of local people. But in India, indigenous communication practices do not get adequate importance in communication studies. Present study aims to bring forward such an indigenous communication experiment that succeeded in bringing out social change. The researcher hopes that this study will develop some tentative answers that might serve as a basis for the formulation of a communication strategy for development programmes.

Though Communism has made far-reaching impact on the social life of Kerala, it is difficult to carry out a detailed examination on the entire aspect. Due to constraints of time the researcher focuses her attention only on the organizational and operational pattern of the communication system of Communists and the specific features of their communication practice and propaganda activities in Kerala.
CHAPTER PLAN

The study has been divided into five chapters. The introductory chapter constitutes the conceptual framework of the study, review of literature and objectives of the study.

Second chapter delineates communication practice and political background of the Communist movement in Kerala up to 1957. It has been divided into three parts. Before assessing the communication practice of Communists some background analysis on the mass communication sphere of Kerala is imperative. First part is an attempt to examine the mass communication scenario of Kerala up to the beginning of communism. This part constitutes a narrative account and analysis of various developments like the educational and literary activities of Christian missionaries, introduction of printing, socio-political reawakening, that contributed to the development of mass communication in Kerala.

Second part deals with the historic review of Communist movement in Kerala, from the beginning to their electoral victory in 1957. The period chosen have represented the peak period of communist activity in Kerala.
Third part examines the communication system and propaganda activities of Communist movement in Kerala, which give a detailed account of their communication system viz. press, publications, art forms, study classes, literary forums, campaigns etc. and the methods they utilized to carry their message to the people.

Third chapter constitutes the definitions of operational terms, basic concepts, methodology etc. and forms the empirical part of the study.

Fourth chapter forms the analytical part of the study, which interprets the communication practice of communists in Kerala on the basis of the information collected through field study and literacy survey.

Fifth chapter discusses the findings and conclusion drawn from the study.
WORKS CITED


Nossitter, T.J. *Communism in Kerala - A study of political adaptation.*


Souvenirs


