BACKGROUND
OF THE STUDY

I. MASS COMMUNICATION - THE KERALA SCENARIO

History of Kerala unfolds the rich and varied tradition of its communication forms and practices. In early times oral communication was the only mode of communication for the masses. Written communication was confined to the educated elite. (Vilanilam 131) Mass communication at grass root level took place mainly through the word of mouth. Festivals, trade fairs, melas, places of worship were the early forums of communication. On these occasions people came together and renewed their friendships and established new contacts. These public gatherings provided them a platform to share their experiences and opinions (Iyer 124). Such social interactions encouraged the flow of information and reinforced the communication system to a large extent. In the case of the educated class, debates and literary discourses acted as the major forums of communication.

Apart from these indigenous communication forms, there existed a wide variety of folk and traditional art forms. Being a great repository of various folk and traditional performing art forms, Kerala had a long history of social communication. Folk forms like
Njattupattu, Vadakkanpattu, Tekkanpattu, Pulluvianpattu etc. were recited and remembered without any script and communicated orally from generation to generation (Iyer 138). Traditional performing art forms like Villupattu, Theyyam, Thira, Kummatti, Padayani, Kakkarissi nadakam, Vellari nadakam etc. functioned as vehicles for the transmission of knowledge, cultural and moral values. Usually these folk arts were "... centered round social customs and values practiced or accepted within the community and serve to heighten the harmony of people..." (Iyer, 131)

Krishna Iyer in his book Social History of Kerala stated that, these folk arts "... not only include folk beliefs, folk customs, superstitions, folk songs and games, but also other manifestations which keep up the traditions and culture of bygone ages and ancestors ..." (131) It is obvious that the social communication at grass-root level took place mainly through these folk media. For the rural mass it was a medium for expressing their social, ethical, moral and emotional needs. Apart from mass entertainment these folk media provided a platform for mobilizing public opinion and acted
as the chief instruments of social change. (Varier 313-314; Parambol, 19-20)

Arrival of Christian missionaries in the early half of 16th century paved the way for the development of mass communication in Kerala. Introduction of printing by Christian missionaries, their educational and literary activities nurtured the mass communication sphere of Kerala to a great extent.

Introduction of Printing

Introduction of printing was a momentous event in the history of communication, which made it possible to reproduce information cheaply and disseminate it to a vast audience simultaneously. It was the Portuguese Christian missionaries, who came in the last decades of 16th century introduced printing in Kerala. Though their educational and literary activities were aimed at religious propagation, it also made possible for the majority of people to become literate. They established several schools and free education was given to all irrespective of caste and creed. They also had set up printing presses at various parts of Kerala. (Raghavan, 30-31;
Vilanilam, 65). Both these attempts enlightened the society in general, and mass education and mass communication in particular. Increased literacy, extension of education and emergence of newspapers have fostered social, political and cultural renaissance in Kerala. This in turn shaped the thought patterns of people with new reformist ideas and opinions.

**Era of National Movement**

As anywhere else in India, national movement made its repercussions on the socio-political milieu of Kerala as well. The mass communication sphere also underwent subsequent changes. Increased literacy and high percentage of media diffusion made communication process more effective and triggered the rise of public opinion tremendously. People showed keen interest in the ongoing socio-political reformation in the state. All these developments in turn gave vigorous impetus to the mass communication sphere, especially to the print media. More and more newspapers came into existence. *Swarad, Swadesabhimani, Malayala Rajyam, Bhaje Bharatham, Bhaje Keralam, Poura Prabha, Malayali, Deenabandhu, Malayala Manorama, Mathrubhumi,*
Prabhatham, Desabhiman, Janayugam, etc. were important among them. (Raghavan 236-255) When nationalism gathered momentum and grievances of people against alien rulers multiplied, press was in the vanguard of this movement. They fought fearlessly against British imperialism. Though they suffered the wrath of authorities they bravely carried on the fight for freedom and posed serious challenge to the authorities with sharp criticizing articles.

(N. Kumar, 62) Asok Kumar in his study The Press and Nationalist Movement in Kerala observed that,

... native newspapers in Kerala were able to provide the much needed political education to the people. They acted as an instrument of political education to the people of Kerala. A large number of people of Kerala came to know about the political events in the country through the political journalism through Kerala. Even the illiterate people of Kerala understood the political ideology and national consciousness through their literate brothers. People of Kerala, even the illiterate, were drawn into the struggle for freedom.
because of the patriotic and inspiring writing in the columns of the nationalist press. The press in Kerala have to be proud of the part they have played in the national movement. (106)

As part of the national movement, social reform movement also intensified during this period. These movements were spearheaded mainly by communally organized social organizations like SNDP (Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam), NSS (Nair Service Society), Nampoothiri Yoga Kshema Sabha, Sadhujana Paripalana Sabha, Kalyanodayanthi Sabha, Vala Samudaya Parishkarana Sabha, Sahodara movement etc. (Cherian 515-16)

Besides nationalistic organizations, socio-communal organizations like SNDP, NSS etc. have also played a significant role in the socio-political reawakening in Kerala. Socio-communal organizations too have extensively utilized print media as an effective weapon for social change. Periodicals like Vivekodayam, Mithravadi, Kerala Kaumudi, Sujana Nandini, Sthree, Velakkaran (SNDP), Nayar, Service (NSS), Unni Nampoothiri, Yogakshemam (Nampoothiri Yogakshema Sabha), Sahodaran (Sahodara movement), Al Ameen, Chandrika
(Muslim League) have all contributed much to the social reawakening in Kerala.

Nampoothiri Yoga Kshema Sabha went a step further by manipulating a comparatively novel communication practice, the theatre (A. Kumar 30). V.T.Bhattathiripad, M.R.B (M.R.Bhattathiripad) and Premji (M.P.Bhattathiripad) were behind this innovative propaganda strategy. Dramas like Marakkudaikkullile Mahanarakam by MRB, Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekku by VT and Ruthumathi by Premji etc. made far reaching repercussions in their community. (B.Nair, 97-112) These dramas were propaganda oriented and have successfully explained the sufferings of the Nampoothiri women in their home and also mobilized public opinion against the age-old customs and conventions existed in Nampoothiri community. The organizers of the theatre movement were of the opinion that the medium of drama will be much more effective in changing the minds of conservative people. (Prasad, 123-126; A. Kumar, 42-43; Kali, 128-140)

The period of the nationalist movement and social reform movements presented the diverse picture of innovative strategies,
models and patterns of communication experimented in Kerala. Though all these movements extensively utilized the facilities of various media, none of them formulated a comprehensive communication strategy to tap the potential of various communication forms and channels available here. It was the Communists, who made the first systematic attempt to exploit all available communication forms and channels for propaganda activities. In manipulating the media Communist have a notable difference with that of other movements. Communists formulated an exhaustive communication strategy appropriate and accessible to various sections of the society. They successfully exploited the complementary role of various communication media, by forming a well-knit communication network of various communication forms like word of mouth, press, publications, theatre and art forms. After Christian missionaries, Communists did much contribution to the development of mass communication in Kerala.
II. COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN KERALA (1930-1957)

Background

Socio political milieu of Kerala witnessed a radical upsurge in early 30s. It was the global revolutionary mass movement of peasants and working classes under the Communist umbrella that sowed the seeds of revolutionary activities in Kerala. The slogans of socialism and revolution had a powerful appeal on educated youths, who were inspired by the radical ideas of social reformists like Swami Vivekananda, Sree Narayana Guru et al. The enthralling victory of Russian Communists over capitalism and autocracy has boosted the aspirations of the younger generation. (Cherian, 524-27)

Emergence of Radical Organizations

The beginning of Communism in Kerala can be traced from early 30s, with the emergence of radical organizations. The first political organization, which brought a new, radical and revolutionary element into the political scene of Kerala, was Communist League. It was formed in 1931 in the princely state of
Travancore under the auspices of N.P.Kurukkal and some other radical youths. After the formation of Communist League, more and more radical organizations came into existence. All Travancore Youth League and The Radical Group were important among them. Though they had no formal connection with the Communist Party, their activities have created ample ground for the growth and development of Communist Party in Kerala. (Cherian, 28; Kumar, 164)

Formation of Congress Socialist Party

Compared to other parts of the country, nationalism came very late in Kerala. Though the first meeting of Indian National Congress was held at Calicut in 1903, it was not active in the political scene of Kerala until the 30s. It was the Civil Disobedience Movement that drew Kerala into the vortex of freedom struggle. But the activities of Congress were confined to the educated upper class, especially teachers, advocates, Nattupramanis etc. (Cherian, 529; Balakrishnan, 40) Large section of the population was still beyond the pale of their activities. Younger generation who were stimulated by the worldwide developments and ongoing socio-political
reformations, wanted to give a radical direction to the national movement. They were also discontented with the non-violence and non-co-operation methods of the Congress party. The apparent failure of Gandhian political teachings and his withdrawal of Civil Disobedience Movement also disappointed the young generation. (Wood Cock, 243; S. Menon, 85-86)

It was during this period that Mathrubhumi, the mouthpiece of Congress Party in Kerala, published the Malayalam translation of 'Wither India', by Jawaharlal Nehru, a series of articles with socialist ideas. This in turn stirred the imagination of the young congressmen, who were groping for a new ideology that can give a concrete shape to their aspirations. (Balakrishnan, 69) The younger generation who imbued socialist ideas was organized under the leadership of EMS Nampoothiripad, K. Damodaran, P. Krishna Pillai, K.P. Gopalan, A.K. Gopalan, et.al. These developments brought a sharp polarization in Congress party. Those who went with radical ideas were grouped as leftists and those who stick on to the old policies of Congress party were as rightists. This left-right polarization intensified in mid 30s and later the same led to the
formation of a Congress Socialist group within the Congress. The resolution declaring the formation of Congress Socialist Party (hereafter C.S.P.) was passed in a meeting held on 12th May 1934 at Calicut town hall. The meeting was presided over by K. Kelappan. C.K.Govindan Nair was elected as the president of the party and P. Krishna Pillai as the secretary. They constituted a committee with the following members: P.Kumaran, K.P.Gopalan and H.Manjunatha Rao. Having its base in Malabar, C.S.P. soon established itself in the princely states of Travancore and Cochin. (Balakrishnan, 69-75) While working within the Congress, C.S.P. established contacts with workers, peasants, students and teachers. This enabled them to extent their activities in each and every sector of the society, thereby laying the organizational foundation of the Communist Party.

Communist Party

At the outset of the Second World War, political scene in Kerala once again witnessed an ideological polarization. It was due to the attitudes of Congressmen and Congress Socialists towards the war. Radical youths in C.S.P were displeased with the attitudes of
both Congress and C.S.P. towards the war. They thought that both parties have failed in developing a correct attitude towards the world war and freedom movement. They were attracted by the Communist policy of intensifying the struggle for freedom through direct action of the people, during the time of war. The Communists mobilized the entire mass against the war and intensified the freedom struggle by strikes of peasants and working class. This policy turned the young turks of C.S.P towards Communism. Their extensive contacts with the central committee members of Communist Party of India (hereafter C.P.I.) like S.V.Ghate, P.Sundarayya, G.Adhikari, S.Batliwala, P.C.Joshi et al. facilitated their transition from Congress Socialists to Communists. (Balakrishnan 245, Balaram 151-52)

During these periods Ghate and Sundarayya have made several visits to Kerala and exerted their influence on personalities and practices of C.S.P. As a result of these developments, the Kerala unit of C.P.I. was established in July 1937 in a secret meeting at Calicut. The meeting was organized under the leadership of S.V. Ghate, EMS Namboothiripad, K.Damodaran, P.Krishnapillai, and
N.C. Sekhar. (Balaram 147, Balakrishnan 149) Though they have established an independent organization, they still remained in the parent organization as Congress Socialists due to the political ban imposed on C.P.I during those period. Since Congress was a legitimated organization, Communists found it safe to conduct training camps and organizational activities in the name of Congress Party. While working within the Congress they carried on the organizational activities in accordance with Communist ideology. (Balakrishnan 151, Balaram 147)

The activities of the Communist group attracted more and more people towards Communism and made them aware of the philosophy and programmes of the Communist Party. It was their activities that played the pivotal role in the mass conversion of Congress Socialists to Communists. The secret conference of C.S.P. held at Pinarayi, a village near Tellicherry taluk in Dec. 1939, formalized the transformation of Kerala C.S.P. into Kerala Communist Party. The meeting was presided over by K.P. Gopalan and about 100 delegates from various parts of Kerala took part in the meeting. It was in this meeting that Krishnapillai disclosed the
existence of the Communist group, which had been working within the Congress since 1937. (Balaram 153, Blakrishnan 207).

The expanded organization formed at Pinarayi in 1939 was also an underground organization. The kind of secret existence and activities, continued until July 1942, till it become a legalized organization.

After the formation of Kerala unit of C.P.I., organizational structure of Communist Party began to expand throughout Kerala. They formed small party units called "cells" at various parts of the state. In Malabar, cells were formed at Chirakkal, Kasaragod and Ponnani. In Cochin State, cells were at Trichur, Amballoor, Kochi, Kodungalloor, Chalakkudy, Tripunithura and Azheekkal. In Travancore state, cells were constituted at Cherthali, Alleppey, Koothattukulam, Punaloor, Vaikom, Kottayam and Trivandrum. (Balaram 157, Balakrishnan 162)

**Emergence as an Electoral Force**

Elections to the provincial assemblies, held in 1945 was an epoch - making event in the history of Kerala Communist Party. It
was the first time that Communist Party came before the voters in its own name, under its own flag and with its own statement of policy or election manifesto.

In Malabar there were three types of constituencies i.e. general, Muslim reservation and labour constituency. Though Communist Party fielded its candidates in all constituencies, none of the party candidates won the election either in general or in Muslim constituency. One candidate from the two labour constituencies (the Southern Railway constituency) was elected to the Madras Assembly. In Malabar proper, Communist Party contested in five constituencies. Though the Communist Party candidates were defeated in all constituencies, they secured enough votes to retain the security.

The first free election based upon adult franchise was held in 1948 in the princely states of Travancore and Cochin. Out of 120 seats in the Legislative Assembly, Congress secured 111 seats. All candidates of Communist party were defeated, though they had contested in 17 seats.
First General Election 1951-52

The first general elections were held in Dec. 10, 1951 to Jan 5, 1952. Assembly seats were increased to 122 after the merging of two princely states of Travancore and Cochin. Congress contested in all the 122 constituencies but won only in 52 seats. Communist party fielded its candidates in 53 seats and secured 29 seats. The strength of Congress was shot down from 111 seats (in 1948 election) to 52 seats (in 1951-52 elections). On the other hand Communist Party emerged as the second largest party by a sudden spurt from zero point in 1948 elections to 29 seats in 1951-52 elections.

Midterm Poll 1954

In 1954-midterm election, the state of Travancore-Cochin was reorganized and the numbers of assembly seats were reduced to 118. Congress contested in all the 118 constituencies and won only in 45 seats. Communist Party fielded its candidates in 30 constituencies and won 23 seats.

In Malabar, Communist Party emerged as the majority party by securing 50% of the total poll and the strength of Congress was reduced to 31.2%.
Second General Election of 1957

The second general election was conducted just after the formation of united Kerala State. In 1956, Malabar (part of Madras province) and state of Travancore-Cochin merged to form the united Kerala State. Election to the first Legislative Assembly of Kerala State was held on March 1957. Of the 125 Assembly seats, Communist Party contested in 100 seats and won 60 seats. Congress won only 43 seats though they contested in all the 125 constituencies. In the parliament election, out of the 18 Loka Sabha Seats, Communists won nine seats and Congress secured six.

The progress made by Communist Party during this period was phenomenal compared to its own record in the previous elections and with that of the record of other parties. The electoral victory of 1957 would be a sufficient proof for their subsequent success in acquiring mass support. Using imaginative forms of propaganda techniques and communication strategy appropriate and accessible to the masses, Communists made their strong hold in the soil of Kerala.
III. STRATEGY AND PRACTICE OF COMMUNICATION

Right from the beginning Communist party was the most organized one and engaged in a continual process of politicization of their cadres and communicating with the followers. Party cadres and workers are well informed about their party and its ideology and policies. On the other hand local bodies of other parties did not know precisely what the goals of their party were nor its ideals and programmes (Joseph 380). Though an alien concept Communist had succeeded in propagating their ideology among the public in an effective manner. The most outstanding feature of the activities of the communists was their introduction of Communism in the social and intellectual realms. This move helped Communist Party in maintaining a strong hold in the social, cultural and intellectual realms of Kerala. In order to see the whole picture of Communist efforts at persuasion in Kerala, it is necessary to examine the means by which Communism carries its message to the public.

Even in the early stages of its development when its membership and organization were negligible, Communist movement in Kerala maintained an effective and impressive
communication programme. They utilized all media resources like theatre, press, publications, art forms, word of mouth to popularize Communist doctrine in Kerala. A detailed examination of the communication practice of Communists will show how intensively and persistently communist party has designed its communication network to mobilize the public. Major components of their communication system can be categorized as follows:

1. Study classes and Night schools
2. Publishing Programme
3. Cultural Activities
4. Demonstrations

1. STUDY CLASSES AND NIGHT SCHOOLS

Study classes and night schools form a regular communication programme of Communist Party. During the early stages of the movement study classes and night schools have functioned as effective channels of communication and party education. Through these classes the party workers got adequate knowledge about the party's lines and principles. Besides party education general
education was also given to the party workers. Fundamentals of Marxism - Leninism, global revolutionary movements, national and international political situations, regional matters like caste oppression, feudalist exploitation, untouchability, issues related to agricultural and industrial labour and all kinds of social matters were discussed in these classes. Besides this, general education was also given to them so as to enable them to read and write and thereby raise their consciousness. Instructions in English, Hindi, training in public speaking etc. were also part of the classes. (Jayadevdas, 161)

Following statement points to the importance the party given to the education of party cadres.

... it must be remembered that in order that the party may acquire firm base in the working class and peasantry, education of cadres from these classes is a key task. This task in view of the general cultural backwardness of the country, involves not only education in Marxism, but also and as a step towards general education, general raising of their cultural level, including literacy... (Doc. Vol. VII p. 245)
During the periods of insurgence of popular movements in Travancore and Cochin areas, AKG, EMS, A.V. Kunhambu et al. used to visit Alleppey-Cherthalai areas and gave workers instructions and classes. The party at the outset has established an education centre at Alleppey on the eastern bank of Kommady bridge. The education activities staged a substantial progress that there was eight study centres in the area on the eve of 1938 general strike. (Jaydevdas, 161)

Study classes and night schools were conducted on all Kerala basis. Party leaders camped at various parts of the state for the purpose. The classes were not only intended to give ideological orientation to the party cadres but also to raise the general educational standards as well as the socio political awareness of the party workers.

2. PUBLISHING PROGRAMME

Throughout its history, Communist movement has devoted a large part of its resources, human and material to maintain an official party press and publishing programme. Even in early stages
of its development, Communist Party has maintained an impressive array of publications. Even in the periods of disruption, such as years of 1947 - 48 when the party was under political ban, they maintained a steady flow of publication under various titles.

The resolution on party organization adopted in the meeting of central committee of Communist Party of India in March 1953 states that:

... The party committees in general and central committee and provincial committee in particular, have to make it a most important immediate task of theirs to strengthen and improve the quality of *party journals*. Party leaders and leaders of mass struggles must write regularly for the journals, the Central Committee and Provincial Committee must regularly discuss the journal with a view to improve it, a campaign has to be launched in the entire party to increase the circulation of the journals, to suggest improvements, to collect funds. Without this, it will be impossible to stabilize and consolidate the influence of
the party, improve the quality of our agitation, enthuse the sympathizers and supporters of the party, spread to new areas, heighten the political consciousness of the masses and the best of them into the party... (Doc Vol. VII, p. 320 - 321)

Prabhatham

In 1934 radical youths in Congress formed Congress Socialist Party. Within a few months they started a new Malayalam weekly under the name Prabhatham, which means the 'The Dawn'. Initially it was a small newspaper owned by K.S. Nair and published from Palghat. Later EMS and Ramachandran Nedungadi purchased it and released it as a weekly from Shornur. It became the official organ of Congress Socialist Party and EMS was its editor. The first issue came out in 1934. When Prabhatham published a poem on Bhagath Sing's martyrdom, the government ordered to deposit Rs.2000/- as security. But the management had no money to deposit and therefore the publication had to be discontinued. After three years the license was restored and shifted to Kozhikode in 1938. (EMS 17, N. Kumar 149)
Prabhatham published translated articles from the 'Congress Socialist' official organ of All India Congress Socialist Party. It also gave adequate importance to labour struggles and popular agitations that were making a beginning in Kerala. During 1935 Prabhatham published a series of articles, which laid the basis for the subsequent development of the peasant movement in Malabar. It also published articles, write-ups and other materials, which gave a picture of the developing struggle of the working class, peasants and students.

Although published from Malabar part of Kerala Prabhatham had wide circulation in Cochin and Travancore areas, not only among trade unions, students and youth movements, but also among the growing political movement. Cochin and Travancore had political problems developing in such a way that they were bound to fuel a powerful political upsurge. Prabhatham intensively studied those problems, trying to help the emergence of a vigorous political movement in both states. (EMS - Com. 19)

The paper paid great attention to the popularization of ideas of socialism, explaining how these were being put into practice in
the first land of Socialism. Articles, a regular column of reader's question and editor's answers - all these helped readers to understand what socialism was and how it is worked.

*Prabhatam* proved to be a potent vehicle of radical nationalism and carried the message of class struggle to the toiling people and wind of socio-cultural modernization to the intelligentsia. Its appearance did not indeed herald the dawn of a new epic, even if its name was acquired by an accident of history. (EMS. Com. 20)

*Deshabhimani*

August 1942, the month of quit India movement began, brought the Communist Party of India into the open. The party's central office was established in Bombay. A weekly organ of the party 'People's War' began to be published. It was in the wake of these new developments at the centre that the open office of the party in Kerala was established in Calicut. Like people's war in Bombay, the party organ in Malayalam, *Deshabhimani* was published as the official organ of the party. (EMS. Com. 69)
The word *Deshabhimani* means 'Patriot' and the name was symbolic. *Deshabhimani* came out at the very time that anti-Communist feelings whipped up by the Party's opponents for its stand on the quit India movement. The Communist Party's stand, evolved in the larger context of the invasion of the Soviet Union by Nazi Germany, was that opposing Britain at that juncture would be tantamount to helping the spread of Fascism. Citing this opposition of the Party Communists were branded as 'anti-nationals'. It was in defiance of this anti-Communist mood of the people that the Communist Party decided to name their official organ *Deshabhimani*. (EMS. Com. 69-70, Frontline. 114)

Like *Prabhatham*, *Deshabhamani* also acted as a potent vehicle for the dissemination of socialist ideas in Kerala, which brought the news of labour strikes and peasant struggles going on in various parts of the world. Though its circulation was very limited and was often interrupted by the intervention of police authorities and bureaucracy, the available copies were widely read and discussed by the party workers.
Other Publications

In 1953 Travancore State Committee of C.P.I. began to publish *Janayugam* daily from Kollam. Initially it had a circulation of 7500 copies and during the midterm election of early 1954 its circulation increased to 11000 copies (C.P.I. Travancore State Committee report to the state conference 1956-p.34). They also started another daily *Navalokam* from Ernakulam during the period 1952-53. *Navajeevan*, another daily from Trissur, under the editorship of Prof. Joseph Mundassery also played an important role in the dissemination of party news in Travancore - Cochin region. (Baskaran.74)

Besides these dailies party also published dozens of weeklies and periodicals. *Munnani* (Trissur), *Theeppori* (Thiruvananthapuram), *Janasabdam* (Thiruvananthapuram), *Communist* (Kozhikkode), *Ikya Keralam* (Trissur), *Pravaham* (Iringalakkuda), *Viswakeralam* (Thiruvananthapuram), *Republic* (Trissur), *Navayugam* etc. were important among them (Bhaskaran, 73-75).

Throughout the rest of the decade, party press continued to grow both in size and in significance as a purveyor of party news
and as a shaper of ideas. During the fight for the attainment of party's goals party press played a significant role as propaganda agents.

In addition to official party publications, there are the publications of the Communist influenced mass organizations and front groups. While these publications are not all equally subject to party discipline, they must be counted among the channels through which the party disseminates significant parts of its message to the public. Most of the mass and front organizations maintain regular journals. *Krishikkaran* (Malabar Kisan Sangam), *Trade Union* (Trade Union Workers), *Railway Thozhilali* (Railway Labour Union), *Thozhilali* (Travancore Labour Association), *Vidhyarthi* (Thiruvithamcore - Cochi Vidhyarthi Federation), *Adhyapakan* (Malabar Elementary Teachers Federation), *Party Samghadakan* (Communist Party Malabar Committee) etc. also contributed to the shaping of public opinion on issues related to the community concerned.

Books and Pamphlets were another important source of propaganda. They are somewhat limited in circulation and seldom
have mass readership. The opportunity to develop specific ideas in
depth makes the book a particularly potent source of propagandist
information. Throughout the history of the movement books and
pamphlets have played a pivotal role in the shaping of ideas and
attitudes on a large scale.

About the role of pamphlets in party education, party
resolution states that:

... Pamphlets not only educate the masses, but also
activise the party ranks, sharpen their understanding of
party policy and unify them politically, thus play a most
important part in the strengthening the organization of
the party. They make it possible to swing the entire
party into action in a disciplined and organized way on
issues confronting the people. It is necessary, therefore,
for the party centre as well as party committees to plan
out the production and sale of such pamphlets, which
must be written in a simple and effective language ...

(Documents Vol. VII, p.321)
During the general election of 1951-52 the party propaganda machinery supervised by the State Committee published 2,14,000 copies of leaflets and booklets, 21,128 copies of daily newspaper (per day) and 7000 weeklies. (Balakrishnan, 432)

The State Committee of the party started a publishing house 'Prabhatham Printing and Publishing Company Ltd' in January 1953. In 1953 itself it published Thoppil Bhasi's *You made me a communist* and 35,000 copies of this was sold in 1953, and 50,000 copies in 1954 and 20,000 copies in 1955. Altogether within 2 years it sold more than 2,00,000 copies. Besides this, Prabhatham published 1,30,000 copies of leaflets during 1954 mid term election. (Balakrishnan, 433)

Prabhatham played an important role in introducing foreign publications especially Chinese and Soviet publications in Kerala. Chinese publications like China pictorial, Peoples China, China Reconstructs and Soviet periodicals, like Soviet Union News, News Times, Soviet Literature, Soviet Women and hundreds of Soviet and Chinese books were distributed in Kerala.
3. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The best elements of national tradition and cultural heritage of Kerala was its songs and art forms. They served the society as tools for social communication for ages. Apart from mass entertainment they provided a platform for mobilizing public opinion tremendously and acted as chief instruments of social change. Communists have the credit of be first to have initiated systematic attempts, in exploiting and manipulating the socio political potential of various art forms and cultural activities in bringing out social change. They utilized songs, folk and classical art forms, theatre etc. for the propagation of Communism among the public.

Songs

Songs form an important propaganda medium for the dissemination of Communist ideology in village areas. Thousands of songs were composed by the party activists and made it a practice to sing them during Jathas, meetings, party conferences etc. These songs were embedded with revolutionary ideas and called for the working class to fight against exploitation. The impact made by
these songs on the public was clearly evident that many of the veteran party workers were still able to recite the lines of these songs fluently. Songs like:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ недоходнті аsemanticі підняли подати} \\
\text{ тоді відомий куратор} \\
\text{ змовився відомий кураторів} \\
\text{ тоді відомий куратори...}
\end{align*}
\]

(For a long time
the feudal land lord took tax
completely destroyed were the farmers
from now on by forming groups
let us catch the sword.......)

were asked the peasants to join *Karshaka Sangam* in order to fight against exploitation and colonial injustice.

Songs depicting the plight of labourers and peasants and asking them to unite and agitate were written. Folk aspects and style of these songs attracted peasants and workers in thousands. In many places they sang these songs during the sessions of paddy sowing and harvesting. Communist Party used these songs to stir up hope
and faith in the classes, who were engaged in the movement for transforming the society. (Kurup, 12)

T.S. Thirumumbu, V.T. Kumar Master, M. Kumar Master, K.P.G., R. Sugathan, P. Bhaskaran, Vayalar, S.K. Das, T.M. Prasad, Ponkunnam Damodaran et al. were the famous revolutionary lyricists of that time.

During the period of II\textsuperscript{nd} world war, Japanese invasion, food crisis etc. songs were effectively utilized for political propaganda. They played a crucial role in politicising and drawing them into the party and its struggles. Many of these songs were banned by the government that as they are found to be "... highly prejudicial and inflammatory, when songs are set to be music and sung freely its effect will be to rouse feelings against the government and present social order." (C.S.F. No. 102/1948, 1923/1944, 8/1947)

Art Forms

Besides songs various types of art forms both folk and classical were extensively utilized to mobilize the public in lines with Communist ideology. In Malabar \textit{Thacholikali}, \textit{Kaikottikkali}, \textit{Kummi},
Kolkali etc. were widely used in Communist campaigns whereas in Travancore area Kathaprasangam, Ottanthullal, etc. were used for the dissemination of socialist ideas among the rural public.

Poorakkali, an important art form of Malabar, was widely used to propagate revolutionary ideas. Under the leadership of Keraleeyan and Koran Master, a political Poorakkali troop was formed at Parassinikadavu in Kannur. The troops toured various parts of the state as well as other parts of the country.

Poorakkali was extensively used to create public opinion during Japanese invasion period. Many songs were written to mobilize public opinion against Japanese invaders and for the victory of anti-fascist alliance.

Thacholikkali, another popular folk art form was also used by the Communist to mobilize the public in Malabar. It was widely used in Vadakara, Onchium areas of Kozhikode region. Communists utilized these folk art forms for convincing the rural mass about social, political and economic issues like caste oppression, feudal exploitation, colonial injustice etc.
In Cochin and Travancore area *Ottanthullal*, *Kaikottikali*, *Kathaprasangam* were extensively used for the propagation of Communist ideas. Besides these other art forms like *Kummi, Kolkali, Vattakkali, Thalipeelikkali, Ivar Kali, Porattu, Thiruvathira, Padakam* etc. were used widely for propaganda purpose. They successfully utilized the social and political potential of these art forms and transformed them as effective weapons for the dissemination of their ideology.

**Theatre**

Like songs and art forms theatre also acted as a successful propaganda device to disseminate socialist and revolutionary ideas. Several plays with revolutionary themes were staged at party meetings, peasant conferences etc. Damodaran's *Pattabacki* (Arrears of rent) was pioneering among them. The drama depicted the plight of the peasantry and evils of landlords in a touching manner. It aroused consciousness of the peasants and workers and exhorted them to fight for the cause of social equality. It had been staged in many places. Popularity of this drama paved the way for the emergence of a number of plays with socio-political significance.
In 1937 Communists organised a large campaign against art for art and in favour of art for the people, and the Communist sponsored dramatic clubs performed a number of plays written by progressive writers. Cultural centres and drama clubs were established adjacent to each and every village units of the party. They staged dramas depicting the problems of peasantry and working class. Dramas like *Inquilabinte Makkal*, *Aaradi Mannu*, *Koottukrishi*, *Ithu Boomiyanu*, *Nammalonnu* etc. made far reaching repercussions in the society.

Increasing popularity of dramas with socio-political themes inspired party workers to establish a professional troupe for spreading the gospel of the burgeoning Communist movement. In 1950 Kerala People's Arts Club (KPAC) formed as the cultural wing of Communist Party. They presented a number of popular plays of socio-political significance. All of these were written by Thoppil Bhasi. Among the plays *Ningal Enne Communistakki* (You made me a Communist) became a box office hit. There were 40 bookings for the play at the inaugural day itself. The troupe toured all over India and held performances.
The popularity of the play swept like a storm for months up and down not only in Travancore but also in the whole Kerala. The plays symbolized Kerala's changing political culture. The fact that audience responded so enthusiastically indicated that they sympathised with the ideas of equality and struggle that the play sought to convey. In March 1953 the District Magistrate of Thiruvananthapuram instigated by the Congress Government of Travancore-Cochin state banned the play. A year later the High Court of Travancore-Cochin state ruled that the ban was invalid. Meanwhile the play was widely and illegally performed at hundreds of stages. The efforts to ban the play itself proved the impact it made on the socio-political sphere of Kerala.

This period can be considered as a golden era of Malayalam drama, as a medium achieved heights of popularity.

Cultural activities form an important factor in political activities during that time and had played a pivotal role in the dissemination of Communist ideas. During the period cultural activities has been largely subverted from their status as arts and
converted into instruments of mass communicators designed to mobilize the public in lines with Communist ideology.

4. DEMONSTRATIONS

Demonstrations form another form of propaganda activity, which constitutes *jathas*, meetings, campaigns, fairs etc. All these performances were intended to create public opinion against the existing social order and to mobilize support from the public.

*Jatha*

The most important propaganda activity designed by the party to mobilize the public is *Jatha*. (March). *Jathas* were mostly organized to show party's dissatisfaction with government policies or actions. The *jathas* toured all parts of the village/district shouting slogans like *Inquilab sindabad* or long live revolution, down with imperialism etc. Touring of *jathas* helped very much to create public opinion against existing social order and bureaucracy. *Jathas* were also treated as a device to demonstrate the support the party enjoyed, the strength of its backing among the masses.
The year 1935-1936 saw intensive work at village level in the form of propaganda, conducted by small jathas (touring squads on feet); village meetings and local conferences. The jatha became the most popular method of disseminatory propaganda and mobilizing the peasantry. They also held a series of meetings on topics related to national and international issues with constant theme of peasant problems and how to solve them. (Mahrubhumi 18 Oct. 1935)

As The Hindu says,

... following in 1936 an intensive propaganda strive was initiated in all taluks from the setting up of pradesh (regional) Karshaka Sangams. C.S.P. propaganda jathas toured the taluks for hundreds of meetings covering on an average 10-15 miles a day on foot. In Valluvanad, the Taluk Karshaka Sangam took a decision in February 1936 to set up Sangams at village level. In March a propaganda team toured all parts of the taluk under the leadership of E.P.Gopalan and P.V. Kunhunni Nair. According to C.S.P. General Secretary
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EMS, the response of the peasantry was very encouraging. (The Hindu 23 Aug. 1935)

Campaigns

Campaigns form another important means of propaganda. The campaigns were organized to draw public attention to specific issues like peasant or labour problems, national or international issues etc. and make them aware of its seriousness and far reaching impact on the society. Songs, art performance, cultural activities etc. form part of these campaigns.

During Japanese invasion period, *Jaap Virudha Mela* (Campaign against Japan) was conducted at various parts of the state to create public opinion against Japanese invaders and for the victory of anti-fascist alliance. Grow more food campaign, campaign for responsible government in Travancore etc. were other important campaigns organized by the party.

Fairs

Fairs form another device for propaganda activity. Fairs were mostly organized to rouse party fund or *Deshabhimani* fund.
Whenever the publishing of *Deshabhimanis* interrupted, either because of government imposed bans or fines for anti-establishment propaganda, or because of lack of fund, party leaders conduct *Deshabhimanis* melas all over the state. Whenever melas conducted, people responded enthusiastically to the party's call for help.

**Meetings**

Meetings form another effective forum of communication. These were organized to draw public attention to the immediate demands of the party and to mobilize support from them. Meetings were helped very much to create public opinion against the existing social order and to mobilize mass support for party's activities.

**Vayanasalas (Reading rooms)**

*Vayanasalas* form another forum of communication for the masses. Mostly the study classes and night schools were centred round the village *Vayanasalas* or reading rooms. During the period 1934-36, a spate of reading rooms were opened by party workers in
every village and taluk centres. The reading rooms played a crucial role in attracting young men to the anti-imperialist revolutionary movement and politically educating them. Meetings of youth league, Karshaka Sangam on Congress Socialist Party were mostly centred around the reading rooms, which became the venue of meetings of workers, peasants and students. In these meetings many illiterate peasants and laborers learned to read and write and also delivered speeches. The network of such reading rooms soon took the shape of a movement and in June 1937 a Malabar Vayanasala Conference was held in Calicut. A committee was formed by the conference with K. Damodaran as convenor and M. Sankaran, M. K. Kelu and K.P.R. Gopalan as members to guide the work of advancing the Vayanasala movement.

**Mass/Front Organizations**

The most important auxiliaries of Communist Party are the mass/front organizations. It is through them that the Communists endeavored to mobilize the full might of the working class and its allies for the tasks of the revolution.
The role of the mass/front organizations and their relationship to the party were defined by Stalin in 1924. In *Foundation of Leninism* he said:

... The party is not the only organizations of the working classes. The proletariat has also a number of other organizations, without which it cannot properly wage the struggle against the capital: trade unions, cooperative societies, factories and work organizations, parliamentary groups, non-party women’s associations, the press, cultural and educational organizations, youth leagues, revolutionary fighting organizations, etc. The overwhelming majority of these organizations are non-party and only a certain part of them adhere directly to the party or represent its offshoots. All these organizations, under certain conditions are absolutely necessary for the working class. (Stalin, p. 115)

These organizations serve two purposes. As propaganda forum they help to create a climate of public opinion favorable to the
party activities and as a source of recruitment they provide a sphere where political activists of all sorts can be observed, influenced and drawn into the party apparatus.

They ostensibly represent and express the views of occupational, cultural or other sectors of the society and used as 'transmission belts' for the implementation of agit-prop propaganda lines. Youth and women's organizations also helped in rousing the interests of many politically indifferent proletarians and in drawing them eventually inside the Communist Party. During the period of political ban these organizations were acted as intermediaries between the party and the public.
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