INTRODUCTION
Communalism¹ is one of the serious threats to the integrity and progress of India. Because of it, the nation has witnessed innumerable number of severe communal clashes and riots in the past and present times, as well. It is a matter of grave concern and apprehension to the states of India, especially the North Indian states, the so-called ‘Cow Belt’.² However, the South Indian states were/are comparatively free from this menace, mainly due to their uncompromising stand against communalism, high literacy, strong secular attitude and so on. But, during the last two decades of the twentieth century and first decade of the twenty first century these states, particularly Kerala—well known for its religious tolerance, social amity, better standard of living and high life-indices such as literacy, primary health, public distribution system, higher education and high life expectancy rates,—had witnessed communal riots and killings. It had, also, directly affected the secular fabric of Kerala society. It raises a serious question: why a state likes Kerala, while had attained high degree of political literacy, is experiencing communal discord and hatred? The answer is simple; the roots of this malady can be located in the communalisation of the Kerala society.

The present study makes an attempt to unveil the problem of Communalism in the state and to investigate how communal mobilisation process is taking place in the Kerala society, since the formation of Kerala society on 1st November 1956. The modus operandi of communal mobilisation process is, as discerned from the study reveals, by inflating the communal feelings and rupturing the social amity among the different religious communities against each other, culminating in the riots. Therefore, in order to

¹ The concept is analysed and defined in the first chapter of the present study
get a better understanding of the process, the present study takes Marad, in the Kozhikode district, communal riots in 2002 and 2003 and subsequent communal mobilisation in the Marad society as a case. It also is studying the communal riot at Eravipuram, in the Kollam district, in April 1992 and subsequent developments in the Eravipuram society for a factual comparison. The selection of these riots is not arbitrary, but based on specific study which shows explicit communal overtones in the recent history of Kerala.

The Two geographical spaces have been selected to analyse the communal orientation and its outcomes as a sample study. The first case, Marad is situated in the Kozhikode district of the northern part of Kerala (Malabar) while the other, Eravipuram is situated in the southern part of Kerala (Travancore). These two cases have more differences than similarities. One is continuously experiencing communal problems, at the same time the other (Eravipuram) is comparatively calm, especially after the riot in April 1992. With the help of these cases the study is striving to answer to the queries on the process of communal mobilisation in a society and believing that it may opens up the vast avenues of blurred realities of communalism and communalisation process in the Kerala society. Besides theses the present study also probes into the history of genesis, outcome and impacts of communalism in Kerala. Concurrently, the investigation traces the history of major communal violence and riots in the state up to the Beemappally-Cheriyathura riot, in Thiruvananthapuram, in 2009.

**Literature Review**

It is a fact that, there are voluminous studies on communalism and communal riots on all India level. But very few in-depth studies are available on the regional level, particularly the case of Kerala. Studies by George Mathew *Communal Road to Secular Kerala*, K. N Panikkar’s two works *Before the Night Falls* and *History as a Site of Struggle*, and P. Ramadas’ unpublished Ph. D thesis in the University of Calicut are specific studies in this area. But these studies lack the orientation to the complex nature of the
communalisation process that takes place in Kerala, which is different from caste identities. For instance George Mathew’s work is mainly concentrating on the emergence and spread of the caste organizations in Kerala. Besides these studies there are some occasional papers and articles also. But many of these are not analytical in nature and makes empirical observations only. Therefore, the present study makes an earnest attempt to fill the existing gap in the issue. That is the primary significance of the present study. With the above intention the following are chosen as the objectives and hypothesis of the study.

**Objectives**

1. To conceptualise and define the term of communalism.
2. Trace the genesis and growth of communalism in Kerala.
3. Examine and analyse the communal riots in Marad and Eravipuram as the riots, and at the same time as the outcome and reason for the communal mobilisation of both social groups in these regions.
4. To study the communal undercurrents in Marad and Eravipuram coastal regions, as these are taken as cases to understand the communalisation process/communal mobilisation in a society.
5. Epitomize the communalisation/communal mobilisation process in the contemporary Kerala society.

**Hypothesis.**

It is the general belief that Kerala state is free from the problem of communalism. But this understanding is incorrect, because a detailed analysis of Kerala history shows that it is stricken with the communal issues, ever since the first half of the twentieth century.\(^3\) Even after the formation of

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\(^3\) In the colonial Kerala castes and communities were taken together as one entity’ and major studies show that communal riots as caste conflicts. For example C. Haridas, *Nationalist Movement in Cochin 1900-47: The Dynamics of Political Change*, South Zone publications, Ernakulam, 2012.
modern Kerala state on 1st November 1956, the problem became serious one and the state witnessed a number of serious communal riots and communal movements. Now communal elements and forces are using communal violence and riots as the best weapon for communalisation of the society. Because, communal violence and riots are enough powerful to compartmentalise and ghettoise the society, the history of modern Kerala proves it. For that reason the present study believes that communalisation/communal mobilisation process is still going on in the Kerala society.

**Relevance of the study**

The study solely focuses on the issue of communalisation of a society; since the formation of Kerala state. It is possible only through a case study, that one can specifically locate the dynamics of the process of communalisation in Kerala. So, it takes Marad as a case and it also examine Eravipuram for a factual comparison, in the context of contemporary Kerala. Here the important point to be noted is that there is few and far no or, at least, only a few studies on communalisation of Kerala society. The present study, therefore, makes an endeavour to do so. Moreover, the study is also trying to unveil the very problem with the help of existing theoretical knowledge.

**Methodology and Sources**

Both the ethnographic and explanatory methods are used for the analysis and interpretation of the study and psychological factors are also considered. However, as source, both primary and secondary sources are used. The primary source includes field survey, private documents and interviews and the secondary source is consisted mainly of the existing literature.

**Analytical Framework**
The study consists of nine chapters. The First chapter is titled as *Conceptualising Communalism*, which analyses and conceptualises terms like ‘communalism’ and ‘communal riot’ in detail. After the detailed examination of the different definitions of these terms, the study attempts to present its own understanding on them. The Second chapter is the historical review of the problem under study and tracing the construction of ‘Community’ identity in Kerala. It also critically examines the various factors responsible for the construction of ‘Community’ identity in the state. The Third chapter examines the genesis, growth and nature of communalism in Kerala. It includes the historical overview of major communal riots in the state. The fourth chapter explores the communal riots in Marad and thrash out its width and depth. The fifth chapter is scrupulously analysing the communalisation process in the Marad society and its undercurrents. The sixth chapter deals with the communal issues and riot at Eravipuram- in the Kollam coastal region. Chapter seven is an inquiry into the problem of communalisation of Eravipuram society and the communal undercurrents in the society. Chapter Eight analyses and theorises communalisation of Kerala society by applying Marxian ‘Production theory of society’. The ninth one is concluding chapter that seeks to state and present the observations and major findings of the study.