CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

Like all the other states of India, especially the so called ‘Cow Belt’ North Indian states, communalism- understood as the misuse of religion, religious idioms and religious sentiments, by the groups or associations or communities, they having vested interests, to acquire and get hold of secular economic, social and political benefits and advantages in an existing social set up. In other words it is the religionised political or social or economic strategies of people or communities or associations to embezzle and siphon off the secular things or benefits in a prevailing social set up - and communal riots – defined as purposefully planned, deliberately and precisely unleashed violences, arsons and killings by people belonging to one community on those of another, within the territorial jurisdiction of the same state system - are the major predicaments and threats to the Kerala state, which once was the fertile land for many renaissance movements and an excellent replica of communal harmony. 711 During the last three decades the state also had been seriously threatened by the communal ulcer and communal riots. Communalism, in Kerala, was the creation and result of the colonial modernity and its rule. On the other hand, communalism grew in the state with the active support and prop up of peculiar political coalitions, murky politics and various social situations. Even the national secular parties were openly joined hands with the communal groups and organisations, at least during the pole times.

Therefore the general belief on Kerala, that it is free from communal inhibitions and troubles is inaccurate and erroneous fact. Because, during the last three decades the state was very much concerned and troubled by the

711 See Asghar Ali Engineer, Communalism in India…, Op.cit., p. 75
communal mobilisation process and communal riots. Recently, the state is seriously troubled by the flames of communalism and communal mobilisation of the society. This communal mobilisation process of society is mainly carrying out with the active support of the democratic and secular parties in the state.

It further proves and substantiates the diverse opinions and evaluations of various scholars and political leaders. On 26th November 2006 the former state minister for water resource and present M. P. Sri N.K Premachandran said that it was a shame to our democracy that those responsible for the unfortunate Marad incidents are still active in the State politics. Then he stressed the need for promoting a politics free of communalism to counter the evil designs of the communal and fundamental forces. He even strongly alleged that the United Democratic Front (UDF) is trying to polarise people in the State on communal lines by raking up a controversy over the support extended by the Peoples Democratic Party to the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) in the 2007 general elections to Lok Sabha. While Marxist ideologue and thinker P. Govinda Pillai had said that Communalism is proving to be an important factor in the contemporary Kerala politics. In fact one thing is sure that communalism and communalists have definite and strong alliance and association with the so called secular and democratic parties in the state. Thereby communalism and communalists have strong holds over the state affairs. It paved and cemented the way for communalisation or communal mobilization of Kerala society. For the purpose they used all the possible tactics, patterns and sources. That led to the communalisation of Kerala society and resulted in the communal violence and riots in the forms of Marad riots, Poonthura riots, Cheriyathura riot and so on.

712 The Hindu daily on 26-11-2006
713 At present his political organisation Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) is a part of the UDF
714 The Hindu daily on 31-03-2009
715 The Hindu daily on 19-03-2006
716 Not as en mass
These facts clearly indicate that communal mobilisation and communalisation process is very clear and active in the state. For the purpose communal forces and communalists in the state have used divergent patterns and tactics. Such as historical misinterpretations, usage of religion, religious symbols, religious festivals and culture, making competitions for economic and other material things, creation of segregation between ‘we’ and ‘they’ or ‘other’, construction of community identity, creating violence, especially, communal violence, propagation of ideology through the mass media, particularly through electronic media and so on. Through these endless efforts and processes communalists were able to mobilise the people for their vested agendas. They also organised people against other religionists, for the purpose they used religion and religious idioms. It is the fact that communal activists can easily attain their vested interests and aims by craftily utilising religion and religious sentiments in a society, where people are economically and educationally so backward and they consider religion at the emotional level. The best instance of the process can be seen in Gujarat, where communal organisations, especially the Hindu communalists, are using religion and religious idioms for communal mobilisations. Similar process also happened in the Kerala society and still is going on, as a result communal violence and killing witnessed in the state. The Naduvattam riot in 1954 is the best example for that.

After the formation of modern Kerala state on November 1st 1956 and during the 1960s and 1970s the state had witnessed only a few communal violence and clashes like the Thalasseri riot in 1971. Even though, the state able to keep its fame of communal harmony and secular traditions. But during the last two decades of the twentieth century and the first sixteen years of the present century, the number of communal riots occurred in the state is high and the rate is on the increase. Among them Eravipuram riot in 1992,

717 In the context of Kerala generally this kind of people can be seen in the coastal regions like Marad, Eravipuram, Vizhinjam, Poonthura, Poovar, Cheriyathura etc.
718 See Paul R. Brass, The Production of Hindu-Muslim op.cit. and “Genocide in Gujarat” in The Hindu on 30/02/2002
Nadapuram riot in 2001, Pathanamthitta riot in 2001, the two consecutive riots in Marad in 2002 and 2003 and very recent Beemappally-Cheriayathura communal violence in 2009 are severe and brutal in every respect.

The major reason for these riots is the communal mobilisation or communalisation of Kerala society. At the same time there are many other factors and causes for the outbreak of these riots, also. The present study has briefly reviewed these factors and grounds, already. Moreover, among these riots the Eravipuram riot of 1992 and the Marad riots of 2002 and 2003 are discussed in details as samples. Through these cases the study tried to point out and illustrate the way and pattern of communal mobilisation and communalisation of Kerala society.

Additionally, for the purpose of inquiring into the process of communalisation of Kerala society, the present study made an attempt to trace the origin and genesis of communalism in Kerala. As has been seen earlier, communalism originated in the state with the British colonial rule over Kerala. But the steady growth and further spread of communalism was happened mainly after the formation of modern state and this progression was ensured by the emergence of communal organisations and communal parties in the state. These communal forces employed and utilised communalism as a political doctrine to reach and cherish their vested socio-political and economic ends. In the course of action they allied themselves and with secular and democratic parties like the Indian National Congress and the Communist parties. Through these immoral and unholy political alliances, communalists and communal associations were able to become effective socialisation agents of people, even at the local level and thereby able to accomplish their dreams and thoughts.

Thus, up to the last decade of the twentieth century communalism remained and slowly spread in the Kerala society as a political doctrine. But with the demolition of Babri Masjid, by the Hindu communalists and fanatics,
on December 6th 1992 and subsequent communal riots in the country, communalism in the state took a big turn and threw away its disguised figure and unmasked its face of political doctrine. Instead it assumed more violent and virulent form of destruction of a religion for the betterment of the other religion. In other words, gain of a particular religious group at the cost of other religionists became the main aim of the communalists. Thereby Kerala witnessed unprecedented communal mobilisation and severe communal competitions in every sphere. This marked and drastic change of attitude and nature of communalism and communalists also directly reflected in the state politics.

As a result of these developments communal segregations became evident in the society and a number of severe communal violence and riots occurred in Kerala. In these violence and riots the Hindu communalists, the Muslim communalists and the Christian communalists had clear roles. The Marad riots are the exact example of that. Even in the Beemappally-Cheriyyathura riot the role and participation of the communalists from the Muslims and the Christians are evident and strong. So it is clear that, at present, communalism in the state is in an omnipotent form and it further spreading and deepening into the grass root level of the society.

In addition, the study also analysed the anatomy of Marad riots and Eravipuram riot and illustrated its social contexts. The anatomy of Marad riots and Eravipuram riot are more or less similar to that of the riots in the other parts of the country. Even though, the study found that two dominant factors had played the key role in the outbreak of these riots and these factors can be grouped under the macro as well as the micro factors. The macro factors are ideological in nature and have nationwide sweep. Above all, it prepares the fertile ground for the growth of communalism and communalisation of the society. It also enhances chances for the formulation of communally constituted spaces or communal spaces by neglecting or destructing the existing secular spaces.
The micro factors may be non-ideological and local in nature, which provides the much needed light to the communal fuel. In the case of Marad, these are the results of the marginal decrease in the quantity and volume of sea products collection, over population and economic tensions of the oppressive life of the coastal poors carried forward to religious divisiveness and expressed as inter-religious competitions of the communally divided settlements with the background of the political culture of violence perpetrated through communal organisations and exploded as a chain of a retaliations and counter retaliations.

Whereas, similar kind of developments were also can be seen at Eravipuram. Here the drying up of water channel and subsequent economic debacles and decline of Chettinada market set the stage for the communalists and for communal activities. Later it turned towards religious centres and inflamed the communal fuel. In this process both the Christian communalists and the Hindu communalists had dominant role.

It is the nature of communalists that they are always trying to strengthen their hold over the society by inciting communal elements and issues. For that they use community identity and with which they create exclusiveness among groups or communities. In Marad this role was played by the Arayasamajam and the Mahallu Committee (communally constituted spaces) and later by Hindu communal organisations like the BJP, RSS and VHP and the Muslim fundamentalists like the PDP and NDF. In the case of Eravipuram these roles had played by the BJP-RSS-VHP combination and the Church Committee under the influence of Christian brotherhood and the diocese (Roopatha).

After getting roots in these regions the communalists and its organs move to the next stage i.e. communalisation of society. Communalisation of a society is not a sudden process, but it takes a long time and way. To communalise a society the communalists use different patterns and ways, for

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721 Field Survey, Op cit.,
instance: Hindu communalists learned that temples are great emotional force around which Hindu community could be organized. Construction of old temples, renovation of dilapidated or imaginary ones and organizing and conducting ceremonies and festivals are the other methods. On the other hand, the Muslim communalists tried to attract their Muslim brethrens by using religious symbols, slogans and great religious saints. Moreover, they organised religious celebrations and processions to ‘unify’ Muslims. Whereas, the Christian communalists are using proselytisation and other humanitarian activities as the best means for the organisation and communal mobilisation of the community.

Accordingly, it is the agenda of the Hindu, Muslim and Christian communalists alike that to ignore occupational and internal socio-cultural differentiations within the religious communities. Instead their aim is to shape and carve out unified and well-organized monolith Hindu or Muslim or Christian identity of an individual. To reach such ends they use idioms, cultures, symbols, myths, invented legends and re-interpreted history.

In the case of Marad similar process, according to the field survey, carried out in the line of homogenisation of Arayans and Muslims. Arayamajam with the help of the RSS and BJP forces unified the Arayans under the ‘Sanadana Hindu Dharma’ and as the devotees of ‘Sri Kurumba Bhagavathi’. Now they have a common deity, way of living and, even, their contact and way of thinking is on the common line and same way. At the same time, Muslims are well organized and unified under the Mahallu Committee, but in the Committee there are different groups like- Sunni A P wing of Kanthapuram Aboobackar Musliyar, Sunni E K wing of E.K. Aboobackar Musliyar, Jamaate Islami and Mujahids. Even though, the Mahallu committee can move backwards and forwards the Muslims of Marad for their vested interests. It exactly happened before the outbreak of the riots.

723 Aneesudheen PK, “Anatomy of …”, Op cit.,
724 Chief Deity of the Arayans of Marad.
725 Field survey, Op. cit.,
At Eravipuram this homogenisation process of Hindu community was carried under influence and auspicious of the BJP-RSS-VHP combined force and the temple committee. They able to swing at least a certain group of Hindus for their well targeted or vested aims and ends. While among the Christians this process was undertaken and forwarded by the church committee and brotherhood. The diocese is also a moving force behind the process. Thus ‘community’ based homogenisation process carried out in the state, in general, and in Marad and at Eravipuram in particular. At the same time, these factors never nullified the possibility of a common cause. So this stage can be termed as ‘proto-communalism’. Through these organizations and various activities of communalists communalisation of society was carried out. When clashes or violence took place, people shrunk more and more to their shells by the tendency of organising under the belt of their own community or religion. Thereby the possibilities for communal ghettoisation of people are increasing in the Kerala society.

In short, communalism is present, obvious and on the go in the Kerala society since the time of the British colonialism. However, the growth and spread of communalism became steady and fast only after the formation and establishment of modern Kerala state. Since then it grew further and further with the feeding and protection of secular and democratic parties in the state. At present it is in an omnipotent form and dividing and segregating the Kerala society on communal or religious line. This process is escalating and mounting the chances and number of communal riots in the society. So in order to wipe out communalism and its process from the Kerala society, first of all, the so called secular and democratic political parties have to immediately stop their dangerous and malicious secret play with the communalists and communal organisations in the state. In other words, the so called secular and democratic parties should stop their practise of making alliances or pole time secret relations with the communal parties and the communalists in the state. Then only, communalism and communalisation process can control and curtain in Kerala.