CHAPTER - IV

POLITICS OF MINORITIES:
THE KERALA SCENARIO

Any enquiry into the politics of Kerala warrants an objective analysis of the role played by minorities especially the Christians and Muslims in the society of Kerala in general and its politics in particular. The worth of this analysis increases since there is an even division of Kerala society into four prominent communities -the Nairs, the Ezhavas, the Christians and the Muslims. Other minorities include the Buddhists, the Jains, the Jews and Anglo-Indians. They are not in a position to exert any influence in the society and politics of Kerala as they are numerically very small and some of them are on the verge of extinction. their presence is limited to only a few pockets, i.e., the Buddhists in few places in Kollam and Alappuzha, the Jains in few centres of Wynad, Palakkad and Kasargod districts, and as far as Jews are concerned only few families are left behind around Cochin and Ernakulam being unable to undertake an expedition to the New Promised Land
(Israel) due to old-age and impoverishment.

A minority is a group whose race, language or religion is different from that of the majority. According to United Nations (UN) Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (1950), minorities could be defined as, “those non-dominant groups in a population which possess and wish to preserve stable ethnic, religious or linguistic traditions or characteristics markedly different from those of the rest of the population”.¹ While the Hindus constitute the religious majority community (57.28%) in Kerala, the Muslims (23.33%) and the Christians (19.32%) form two major religious minority communities. Other minorities include the Jains, the Buddhists, the Jews and the Anglo-Indians.

The two prominent minority communities, the Christians and the Muslims, who constitute more than forty percent of the total population of Kerala, exercise tremendous influence on society and politics of the state. While the Christians concentrate mainly in central and southern parts of Kerala, Muslims exert tremendous influence in the north particularly in the Malabar region. Among the Christians the Catholics and
among the latter the Syrian Catholics play a vital role in the politics of the state in general and electoral politics in particular, which are dealt in detail in the forthcoming chapters of this thesis. In this chapter a general analysis is made of the origin and growth of prominent minorities, the Christians and the Muslims, in Kerala society and politics along with a brief historical sketch of other minorities like the Buddhists, the Jains and the Jews.

THE CHRISTIANS OF KERALA

It is generally believed that Christianity was introduced in India by Saint Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ, in A.D. 52. Regarding the earliest community of the Christians in ancient India, there exist diverse versions. According to one description, the origin of the community is entirely attributable to the mission of St. Thomas in Kerala². Another version says that the community originated from those people, who were converted to the Christian faith on the Coromandel Coast, and who later migrated to Kerala and settled down at different places there. Yet another narration combines both these two versions, that is, the community consisted of
those converted in Kerala and those who migrated from the Coromandel Coast.

The original community, whether the descendents of St. Thomas or came from the Coromandel Coast or both, came into contact with the East-Syrian (Chaldean or Persian) Christians, probably from the fourth or fifth century onwards. This is evident from the rich tradition of the St. Thomas Christians recorded by the Portuguese in the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries as well as by other later western writers. The tradition of the St. Thomas Christians is replete with stories regarding their traditions and cultural relations. Two events especially reveal how the community founded by St. Thomas came into contact with the Christian Church in Persia, one, sometime in the fourth century and the other, in the ninth or tenth century. The first is associated with the arrival of a group of East-Syrian Christians in the company of their leader, Kinai Thomman (Thomas of Cana) and the second, the arrival of another such group together with Mar Sapor and Mar Aphrod.

The Persian connection was beneficial to Kerala Christians in as much as it opened the small Christian
Community here to the larger Christian world. This relationship, as many have argued, compromised the independence and local character of the community. Tight control of the Persian Church over the Kerala Christians adversely affected the spontaneous growth of the original community into a genuine Indian Church, with its Indian Christian patterns of thought, worship, life style, etc.\(^5\) This has forced the Kerala Christians to lead a life not in one world but in two worlds at the same time – the geographical, political and socio-cultural environment of Kerala on the one hand, and on the other, the ecclesiastical world of Persia. The core elements of Christian life remained foreign, adapted only peripherally, that too in a country which possessed a rich culture, philosophy and religious thought. It is this ‘artificial’ and ‘unnatural’ kind of life, which some writers have characterized as ‘Hindu (Indian) in culture, Christian in religion and Syro-Oriental in worship’\(^6\).

With the arrival of the Portuguese (1498), St. Thomas Christians entered into contact with a new world, that is, West Europe. Attempts to bring St. Thomas Christians under the
Portuguese *Padroado* (patronage) and to introduce Latin customs culminated in what is known as the Synod of Diamper (of Udayamperoor), in 1599. Soon after the Synod, Latin Padroado prelates were appointed over the Christians; they administrated the Church along Latin jurisdictional line and started implementing the decrees of the Synod.

The reaction of the community erupted into revolt in the “Coonen (slanting) Cross Oath’ in 1653. The attempts by Rome to solve the crisis ended in the division of the community: one section continued their allegiance to Rome and the other started giving allegiance to the Jacobite/Orthodox patriarch of Antioch. This group finally accepted the West Syrian tradition of Antioch. The Christians who continued under Rome after the ‘Coonen Cross Oath’, now called the Syro-Malabar Church, obtained their own Indian bishops in 1846 and their hierarchy in 1923. Further progress towards autonomy was the declaration from Rome in 1992, raising the Syro-Malabar Church to Sui Juris Major Archiepiscopal Status.

**Present Situation**

The present Christian population of Kerala belongs to
various churches, denominations and sects. They can be divided into two broad categories—the Catholics and the non-Catholics. The former constitute 60% of the total Christian population of Kerala. The main difference between these two is that while the Catholics have as their supreme spiritual head, the Pope of Rome, each of the non-Catholic sects has its own separate spiritual head.

The Catholics are further divided on the basis of the liturgy they follow into Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara and Latin. Of these, the Syro-Malabar is the largest (34%) followed by the Latin (23%) and the Syro-Malankara (4%)\(^9\). Each has its own hierarchy of archbishops, bishops, clergy and laity. Those who follow the Syro-Malabar liturgy are generally known as Syrian Catholics. There are two ethnic groups among Syrian Catholics—the Vaddakkumbhagam or the Northists and the Thekkumbhagam or the Southists. The Southists are also known as K’nanites. They are numerically small and an endogamous community. Latin Catholics also have various groups among them, like the Seven Hundred, the Five Hundred, the Three Hundred, the Parangis, etc. The Parangis are included
among the Anglo-Indians. These groups are not rigidly exclusive\textsuperscript{11}.

Many of the Latin Christians, mainly located in the coastal areas of Southern Kerala, traditionally trace their conversion to the faith by Saint Francis Xavier, a Jesuit missionary who came to India in the middle of the sixteenth century. But this claim is disputed by many on the ground that Latin Christians had been there along the coastal areas of Travancore even before the arrival of St. Francis. But it is true that the celebrated Spanish missionary affected conversion of people en masse on the coastal regions and it is estimated that within a period of five years he converted around 20,000 fishermen\textsuperscript{12}. St. Francis Xavier is venerated by the Latinites as their patron saint just as St. Thomas is regarded as the patron saint of the Syrian Christians.

Due to their economic, social and educational backwardness, the Latins had never been in a position to influence the politics of the state in the same way as the Syrians, who, much advanced economically, socially and educationally, have been exercising tremendous influence in the social and
political formation of the state since the second half of the 19th century and in the democratic processes, after Independence. Though both, the Syrians and the Latins, consider communists as their common enemy, the intensity of enmity towards communism is much stronger among Syrians compared to the Latins. Both sections of the Catholics are the traditional supporters of Congress and the Kerala Congress (after 1964), but political segmentation that affected other communities has also affected the Christian community, though comparatively on a minor scale.

The Syro-Malankara, though numerically very small, constitute a third section of Catholic Christians in Kerala. Owing to the policy of the Portuguese missionaries in Latinizing the liturgy and indigenous customs of the Apostolic Indian Church, a section of the community broke away from the Portuguese ecclesiastical authorities and eventually got into communion with the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. Ever since the division in the Church attempts have been made to regain the original Catholic Communion, which could be crowned with success only in the first half of the twentieth century.
In 1926 the Episcopal Synod held at Parumala, empowered Metropolitan Mar Ivanios to enter into negotiations with Rome to effect a reunion with the Catholic Church under expressed condition that the ancient and venerable traditions of the Malankara Church should be retained and kept intact. The Holy Father Pope Pius XI graciously accepted the conditions and welcomed the reunion.

In 1932, His Grace Mar Ivanios made his visit to Rome and His Holiness Pope Pius XI invested him with sacred Pallium. By the Apostolic Constitution, “Christo Pastorum Principi” (June 11, 1932) the Holy Father Pope Pius XI established the Syro-Malankara Catholic Hierarchy comprising the Metropolitan Eparchy of Trivandrum and the Eparchy of Tiruvalla. The Metropolitan Eparchy of Trivandrum was inaugurated on 11\textsuperscript{th} May 1933 and His Grace Mar Ivanios was enthroned as its first bishop. The Eparchy of Tiruvalla was inaugurated on 6\textsuperscript{th} November 1933 and Most. Rev. Jacob Mar Theophilos took charge as its first bishop. At present the Malankara Catholic Church has six eparchies-Trivandrum (metropolitan archdiocese), Bathery, Tiruvalla, Marthandom,
Moovattupuzha and Mavelikara and Mar. Beselios Climis Cathalicos was appointed as metropolitan archbishop of Trivandrum following the demise of archbishop Cyril Mar Beselios. The reunion of Malankara Church to Catholic Hierarchy has been a historical event in the whole church which was followed by the reunion of a faction of Malankara Orthodox Church (1937) and Knanaya Jacobite Church (1939) with the Catholic Church\textsuperscript{16}.

Traditionally the Syrian Christians are called St. Thomas Christians as they are considered to be the descendants of those who were converted by St. Thomas (one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ). The Syrian Christians of Kerala are also called Nazrani Mappillas; as Nazrani was a name by which the Jews had originally designated the early Christians. The term mappilla is a compound Malayalam word maha (great) and pilla (son), signifying prince or royal son, which were honorary titles granted to Thomas of Cana and his followers by the old and renowned emperor of Kerala, Cheraman Perumal.

The Catholic Church believes that the Bishop of Rome is the successor of st. Peter, has inherited from him pre-eminence
among the bishops of the Church which was Peter’s among the apostles\textsuperscript{17}. Other Christian communities do not share this view. Some are ready to give a special place of honour for the Pope among the bishops in the structure of the church- a coordinating role, or as first among equals, but not ascribing to him a supreme authority over the whole Church\textsuperscript{18}.

The non-Catholics who constitute around 40\% of the total Christian population in Kerala consist of the Jacobites, the Chaldeans, the Marthomites, the Church of South India and other protestant sects like the Pentecostal Church, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Yahovah’s Witnesses, the Assembly of God, etc. They are so numerous and numerically so small that, we can call them “in-sects” rather than sects\textsuperscript{19}. Recently the Jacobites have split into the Bava Katschi (Patriarch’s party) and the Methran Katschi (Bishop’s party). Of all the non-catholic sects the largest group is the Jacobite forming a little more than 20\% of the total Christian population of Kerala. There are K’nanites among Jacobites also. But they form a very small minority, just like the K’nanites among the Catholics.
Besides, the Christians are further divided into communities and castes to which they belong, like Nadar Christians, Ezhava Christians, Vellala Christians, Pulaya Christians, Bharathar Christians, Sidhanar Christians, Ayyanavar Christians, Sambava Christians, etc. Except the first three categories, all others are generally known as ‘Dalit Christians’- people who were converted to Christianity from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

The Syrian Christians, due to their hard work and adeptness in business and plantation, coupled with Brahmin lineage, enjoy a status and position in society equal to that of high caste Hindus. Consequently they were free from the adversities that were meted out to the lower castes in Hindu society due to their low social status. Because of their higher social status and economic and educational advancement, they became one of the three prominent communities fighting for more shares in government service and democratic rights. That is the reason why many struggles for democratic rights in pre-independent India were spearheaded by the Church along with Nair Service Society (NSS) and Sree Narayana Dharma
Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam of Nairs and Ezhavas respectively. In the post Independent period also the role of the Christians and the Church in the making and unmaking of governments is easily traceable\textsuperscript{21}.

Throughout history, the territory of Kerala remained quite peaceful and the violent turbulence that affected the North was evidently absent in this southern strip of land. This would definitely, have helped Kerala to develop a culture of co-existence and tolerance and mutual help rather than mutual enmity between different communities. This has helped her to develop a system of her own social and political institutions and also to spend time and energy on vital areas like that of education, unimpeded by excessive external interference. This educational progress was one of the causes for the higher advancement of political consciousness and greater participation of the people in the political affairs of the state. The pioneering efforts of Christian missionaries followed by systematic efforts of Church hierarchies and the special interest shown by the native rulers of Travancore-all have contributed to this phenomenal educational growth.
Christian Missions and Education in Kerala

The introduction of modern education in Kerala is generally attributed to the protestant Christian Missions. Their significant contribution to education owed partly to the patronage extended by the princely rulers and partly due to the favourable attitude of the British Residents towards the missionaries. Initial support and sympathy which the early missionaries enjoyed with the liberal rulers of the princely states helped them, to a great extent, advance in establishing educational institutions throughout the 19th century and by the established church, till the first half of the twentieth century. The support of British Residents, particularly Colonel Munroe, to the missions also contributed to their earlier educational achievements. The British support to the missions had two main purposes-(a) religious, interested in the conversion of Indians to Christianity; and (b) political, a loyal Christian community would be a bulwark of support to the British authorities over Travancore, not yet well established at that time.22

The first Protestant mission to begin religious and educational work in Travancore was the London Missionary
Society (LMS). The pioneering efforts were made by Rev. Ringletaube who travelled tirelessly from place to place, instructing, exhorting, and preaching to the Hindus whenever opportunity offered. Besides, he established a number of schools where non-Christian students were given instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic and in addition to these the Christian children were given classes in catechism and reading the New Testament or religious books.

Meanwhile Reverends Mead and Mault arrived in Trivandrum to continue the work started by Ringeltaube. Reverends Mead and Mault envisaged four kinds of schools—a seminary or college, a girl’s school, a school for industry and a general school popularly known as ‘parochial school’. The establishment of a seminary was for meeting the demand for post-primary educational facilities. The first seminary established at Nagercoil in 1819 was meant for training native preachers and school masters. In addition to theology and languages, subjects like chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, geography and history were also included in the curriculum taught in the seminary. The LMS Nagercoil Seminary which
was later upgraded into a first grade college appears to have been instrumental in the spread of English education in South Travancore.

More daring and challenging was the establishment of separate schools for girls. The task was undertaken by LMS missionaries at a time when even the monarchical governments, out of fear of wrath of upper caste Hindus, hesitated to make any move for the poor girls’ education. The intensity of this opposition from upper castes increased when Mrs. Mead and Mrs. Mault established schools particularly for girls from lower castes and untouchables. The purpose of this mission endeavour was to improve the social condition of the girls and provide them with marketable skills and to Christianize them.

By the first quarter of the 19th century, educational activities of the LMS missionaries expanded considerably. By 1819, the number of LMS schools rose to 15, by 1827, it numbered 59 with nearly 2000 pupils and 95 school masters. As for the educational outcomes, gradual introduction of new methods of teaching which broke down rote learning was among the most important. Modern methods of training of
teachers were an inevitable outcome and this was applicable to the girls’ schools as well.

While the LMS concentrated their educational efforts on the southern parts of Travancore, the Church Missionary Society (CMS), though arrived later, concentrated on the central and northern parts of Travancore. The CMS missionaries arrived on the request of Col. Munro, the British Resident of Travancore, who appealed to the Church of England for clergy so that the Syrians could be freed from ignorance and oppression. Accordingly, the Reverends T. Norton, B. Bailey, J. Fenn and H. Baker began their work among Syrians in Travancore between 1816 and 1819. They planned a four-fold educational system more or less on the same line of LMS. This included a college-seminary for higher and theological education, a parochial school attached to every church, a grammar school as a place of intermediate instruction and linking the parochial school with the seminary, and a few schools for girls²⁶.

The motives behind the support of Col. Munro and Rani’s Government to CMS missionaries in Trivandrum were
obviously different. The aim of Col. Munro in extending support to CMS mission to start educational institutions was to correct errors in the protestant Church and to prevent them from leaning towards Roman and pagan superstitions. Towards this end he advised them to undertake the teaching of English as a way of promoting protestant faith. Whereas, the Rani’s government welcomed the proposed college at Kottayam as a place of general education wherefrom the demands of the State for officers to fill in all departments of public service would be met27.

While Rev. Norton embarked on educational activities in Alleppey Rev. Baker settled at Kottayam and started his mission in and around it. Besides a seminary for the training of teachers, he started a school for girls at Kottayam, which, later came to be known as Baker Memorial School, was one of the best English Schools in Travancore. The grammar school started by him after the British pattern in 1821 at Kottayam and this, together with the general education section of the seminary, later developed into the present CMS College at Kottayam.
Evidently LMS and CMS missions in Travancore were the pioneers of modern education. The presence of non-Christian teachers in LMS schools and the appointment of Nairs as school inspectors by Baker in schools established by him deserve special mention. This not only erased the suspicion of caste Hindus on the LMS and CMS missionaries but also got good support from non-Christians which helped the missionaries to continue their efforts in full swing unobstructed. This also helped to a considerable extent, to reduce the difference between secular elementary schools and mission schools. The significance of this development lies in the fact that when government entered the field of education they merely extended this system of missionary and secular schools\(^{28}\). The starting of trade schools by LMS helped students particularly the girl students to acquire regular income along with a certain level of general education. Besides, in seminaries, the bright poor students were given free boarding and lodging. As a result, by 1904, 389 schools with 15,641 pupils and 290 schools with 13,148 pupils belonged to the management of LMS and CMS respectively\(^{29}\).
Thus, the missionaries were the pioneers of modern education and women education in Kerala and that their effort, for the educational emancipation of the functionally illiterate, particularly the lower castes, is unparalleled in the entire history of humankind. It is true that the beginning of education of women was a major breakthrough in the transformation of society in India. Service of the missionaries to the education of Indian women has long been acknowledged by prominent social workers and Hindu leaders. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi of Madras, a staunch freedom fighter and former deputy chairman of the Madras Legislative Council observed:

“I honestly believe that the missionaries have done more for women’s education in this country than the government itself. The women of this country have been placed under a deep debt of gratitude to the several missionary agencies for their valuable contributions to the educational uplift of Indian women. Of course at present, India can boast of several other religious bodies such as the Brahma Samaj, the Ramakrisna Mission and the Arya Samaj, doing work in the field of women’s education, but in the past the Christian missionaries
were the only agencies in that field. Even at this day, in every province, we find missionary women teachers working hard in a spirit of love and faith, in out-of-the-way villages, where the Hindu and Muslim women dare not penetrate[^30].

Of course, the British policy of encouraging private educational enterprise was an added support to the missions in Kerala. The pioneering educational efforts of LMS and CMS missions and their impact on Kerala society enticed other missions especially the Roman Catholics to enter the field. Other factors which prompted the Catholic Church to start its mission in education are: first, the encouragement given by the Travancore Government to private agencies through liberal grants-in-aid, secondly, the policy of social modernization pursued by the Travancore rulers, as evidenced from the abolition of slavery etc., thirdly, expansion of bureaucracy demanded more educated hands and the linking of educational qualifications with government employment; and lastly, the demand for education as a result of the commercialization of agriculture, introduction of plantations, growth of banking and companies.
Catholic Church and Education in Travancore

The Catholic missions were not interested in modern education till the third quarter of 19th century and their educational activities were confined either to theological education in their seminaries or to a very elementary level of education to the fishermen community among whom they worked. Even after the advent of the Protestant missions and their introduction of English education, the Catholic missionaries in Kerala continued to be indifferent to the question of modern education to their Catholic folk. There are two reasons for this. First, since most of the clergy were men of other nationalities than English and that they found it extremely difficult to take part in English education. Second, and more important, to the Roman Catholic missionaries- Portuguese Jesuits and Italian Carmelites- English language itself was associated with the Anglican rebellion against Roman Catholic supremacy in Europe. In the total of 60 students in CMS Grammar School at Kottayam in 1834, there was only one “Romo-Syrian” as compared to 41 non-Catholic Syrian Christians, 17 Nairs and one Brahmin.
However, some of the prominent priests in the Catholic hierarchy did not follow this opinion. Syrian Catholic priests like Fr. Immanuel Nidhiry and Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, pontifical vicar generals, did not share their European predecessor’s antipathy to English schools and exhorted their fellow priests to start parish schools to impart modern education. Fr. Immanuel Nidhiry is said to have exhorted his Catholic Syrians that any day an ‘English’ school will be a more prized asset than the “gold crosses” which could be stolen. As a result of the efforts made by Fr. Nidhiry and others, the Catholic Church began moving towards English education. Meanwhile the efforts to convince the Catholic European hierarchy the need and importance of providing modern education for their Catholic following in Kerala had succeeded. Though started lately, the growth in the number of Catholic schools as compared to the Protestant and non-Catholic Syrian schools was rather incredible. At the turn of the 19th century the Kerala Catholics had no college, while the protestants had two and the Jacobites one. The table below shows the number of schools getting grants-in-aid by the turn of the century.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1879</th>
<th>1885</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1895</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar Thomas</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athanasius</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar Dionysius</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Roman Catholic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Kerala Syrian Catholics under their own bishops registered rapid progress in the number of educational institutions. In 1911, in Thrissur, the Catholics had 200 primary schools, 4 secondary schools for girls and a college; in Ernakulam 250 elementary schools, 5 secondary schools and 2 seminaries; in Kottayam 14 primary schools as well as 3 secondary schools for boys and 2 for girls; and finally at Changanacherry 16 schools for boys and 13 for girls. These were all founded by the clergy, who exercised the main leadership in the group and enjoyed a monopoly of such initiatives.

By the end of the 19th century, 25% of the schools in Travancore were aided private schools with 27.8% of the students studying in these schools. In 1893, the missions managed 879 out of 2219 institutions classified as private, and in 1903-04, while the government had 439 institutions, the aided schools numbered 1040 and majority of the 2248 unaided schools are also likely to have been private schools. Given the fact that schools run by the Travancore government, by the end of the 19th century, represented only 11.6% of all schools,
with 24.8% of students, the rest of the schools were owned particularly by protestant missions, the Catholic Church and indigenous Christians. The dominance of the Church in education becomes more transparent in 1940’s. The table below shows the dominance of Christian community in education.
Table. 2
Role of Christian Community in Education in 1943-44

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Education</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Management and Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Govt. Dept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English High Schools</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English High Schools for Girls</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Middle Schools</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Middle Schools for girls</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malayalam &amp; Tamil schools including Primary</td>
<td>3283</td>
<td>978</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Travancore Education Reforms
The phenomenal growth of educational institutions of Christians also resulted in their higher literacy rate. The table below shows the literacy rate of major communities in Kerala in 1941.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class /Community</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu: Scheduled Caste</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribals</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Travancore Census Report, 1941. p. 164
Struggle for opportunities

The spread of education, especially English education, had created rigorous competition for better social and economic opportunities among different communities within the middle class. Actually it was a struggle for power and position in the society. Since power and position were distributed on an ascriptive (religion or caste) basis, there was a tendency on the part of the people to get organized on the same basis. In this process each community not only organized itself but also made alliances with other communities having the same or more or less the same grievances.

The first expression of the ‘unrest’ of English educated youth was directed against the non-Malayali Brahmins who held most of the important offices in the government service including that of Dewan. The Malayali Memorial of 1891 was sponsored by all sections of the educated men of Travancore\textsuperscript{39}. Undoubtedly, this was the first sign of political awakening in Travancore. Though Nairs were the real victims of Tamil Brahmins’ domination in state service, other communities also joined them. Namboodiris, Christians and even Ezhavas signed
the memorial. The members of the Ezhava community also submitted a memorial of their own, the Ezhava Memorial, to the government for the employment of Ezhavas in the state service.

Christians had organized a platform to express their grievances, the Nazrani Jathyaikya Sangham (1866), much before the submission of Malayali Memorial. Its origin is recorded in the following words:

“Christians, as a result of the division, have not only become weak like a disjointed body, but also they lack in education, civil consciousness and sirkar jobs resulting in inadequate social development. In all these they could have progressed if only they were united. Therefore, to eradicate this serious drawback many great men who love their community resolved to form an organization called Nazrani Jathyaika Sangham. All MarThoma Nazranis may be included in it”.40

The main purpose of the Sangham was social uplift of Syrian Christians with special emphasis on their education, civil duties and share in government. In 1887 the newspaper
Nazrani Deepika came out as its official organ. The paper had a communal title, Nazrani meaning thereby followers of Jesus of Nazareth. Concurrently, another newspaper, Malayala Manorama, took birth in 1888, to protect the interest of the Christians. While the former was an outright Catholic tongue, the latter gave an appearance of transcending a particular communal division, though both were considered as Christian newspapers. It is wrong to assume that Deepika and Manorama pleaded for only the interests and rights of the Christians. Both dailies fought for the cause of backward communities and untouchables as well as supported the demands of other communities for justice and rights. This is evident from the support of Deepika and Manorama extended to Malayali Memorial⁴¹.

The formation of Nazrani Jathyaikya Sangham helped in creating communal consciousness among Christians in no small measure that it inspired the formation of further organizations like Keraliya Catholic Mahajana Sabha (KCMS) in 1918 at Changanacherry. Later it was renamed as All Kerala Catholic Congress (AKCC) in 1930 at Shertalai. It began to pioneer in
politics the rights of Roman Catholic Christians in Travancore. Though it was primarily a Catholic organization designed to protect the interests of Roman Catholics, it was not a rare thing that it virulently argued, a number of times, for the entire Christian Community in Travancore and later in Kerala.

It is to be noted here that AKCC, though a communal organization, was different from other communal organizations like NSS and SNDP. AKCC, an organization of Catholic laity, was designed mainly to protect the political interests of Catholic Community when there is an open threat to it. It does not need to run schools, colleges or hospitals, or conduct marriages or established economic institutions like banks as NSS and SNDP do. All these were undertaken through the powerful organizational set up linked to the churches. The real leadership of the community lies not with the laity but with the prelates and clergy who exercise direct control over the entire community. The lay leadership constitutes only a second line, but in times of actual confrontations they function as agencies for implementation. Therefore, AKCC was considered a support and a shade for the strong catholic community.
As a result of intensive measures undertaken at parish and diocesan level to start schools and colleges, the number of Church-run institutions increased tremendously. With the spread of education there arose a group of middle class in all communities which began to assert their rights for government jobs. At the same time the Christians did not like to go for an open confrontation with the government as they were not willing to displease those in power. It is worth mentioning, in this context, that there was no common leader among the Christians to unite them to accomplish their demands for proportional shares in government employments as well as representative bodies. Moreover, the Metropolitan of each church considered his church as his personal and unquestionable domain.

The most aggrieved section within the Christian community was the Roman Catholic. Other Syrian Christians, because of their proximity with the ruling British, had received concessions and preferential treatment in education and employment. In the existing feudal set up the power and positions were dispersed according to caste/religious status;
the government jobs, as a whole, went in favour of Nairs and Brahmins. So the Roman Catholics turned their heads towards other fields. The vast resources of land were beckoning them. They cleared forests for cultivation under extremely adverse conditions. They fought wild animals and resisted the hostile climate in the uninhabited regions of Travancore often falling victims to fatal diseases like malaria. But their cash crops fetched money and they became increasingly self-reliant. The material advancement of Christian community became enviable to the members of other communities and they began to imitate them. Whoever had an average education among the Christians were mobile, forward-looking and profit-seeking. Worldly accomplishment was considered a blessing of God. Thrift, savings and abstention from unnecessary, unproductive waste of resources, made the Christians especially the Roman Catholics the richest group among communities.

Meanwhile due to the spread of education, there was equivalent growth of civic and political consciousness. The un-represented and under-represented communities formed a united organization called the Civic Rights League,
spearheaded by the Roman Catholics. It was an organization of Christians, Muslims and Ezhavas, the *avarnas*, who found themselves natural allies in the face of upper caste domination. Naturally the Nairs were the main target of attack just like Non-Malayali Brahmins in Malayali Memorial.

The main plank of the Civil Rights Movement was recognition of equal social and political rights to all communities and equal access to government jobs. The second demand, rather controversial, was the separation of Devaswoms from the revenue department. A deputation of the Civil Rights League leaders met the Dewan and presented him a memorial drawing attention to the exclusion of the law-abiding Ezhavas, Christians and Muslims from the revenue department\textsuperscript{44}. Supporting the demands of the Civic Rights League, Malayala Manorama wrote: “Governments in Europe much stronger than the Travancore Darbar have not been able to withstand or oppose the insistent demand of the people for freedom or equality of civic rights. Nothing contrary to that can happen in Travancore”\textsuperscript{45}. 
K.C. Mammen Mappillai, a leader of the Syrian Jacobites, and a member of the Assembly, presented a memorial to the Dewan stating that: “(The) Land Revenue Department is the backbone of administration and as long as the members of the communities whom we represent in this Assembly do not secure admission to the higher ranks of the department, we feel we are labouring under a real disability”\textsuperscript{46}. As the result of prolonged agitation the Maharaja of Travancore finally divided Devaswom and Revenue Departments by a proclamation on April 12, 1922\textsuperscript{47}. In the aftermath of this proclamation, the Roman Catholic community submitted two more memorials – first to the Maharaja (March 14, 1924) and second to the Regent Rani (October 24, 1924). In both memorials it demanded acceptance of the legitimate rights of the Catholic community in the civil and political affairs of the state.

In its fight for legitimate civil and political rights, apart from collective endeavours, which have been analysed just before, certain individual efforts were also made which call for special reference. The role played by M.M. Varkey and his paper, \textit{Kerala Desam}, in awakening the Catholic community
in their fight for civil and political rights, is worth mentioning in this respect. Not only the Christians but Ezhavas and Muslims also were inspired by the writings of M.M. Varkey. But the overall purpose of his efforts was the uplift of the Catholics. The following excerpt from an editorial shows how vehemently he advocated the cause of Catholics.

“Many people have apprehension as to whether it is justifiable on the part of Catholics to fight for their own rights as a community, separately. It is our conviction that it is not only just but also our duty. We are sure that whoever studies the political situation in the State cannot but support us. The administration is in a bad shape with the nepotism of the rulers that each one has to defend his rights. Accordingly several communities have prepared their line of action. Even after all these, if some people wish that Catholics must keep quiet, we sympathize with them” 48.

**Struggle for Democratic rights**

In consequence of the pressure from the un-represented and under-represented communities, the government agreed to give preference to them in the matter of recruitment to public
service. The Travancore government issued a circular stating, “Other things being equal preference will be given to un-represented and poorly represented communities”. For the purpose of recruitment, government classified the communities into seven groups: Brahmins, Nairs, Ezhavas, the other caste Hindus, Christians, Muslims and others. However, the plea for proportional representation in legislature on the basis of numerical strength of the communities was ruled out.

The awakening of political consciousness of the people was another feature of this period and communities, individually as well as collectively, demanded more share in political power, to enhance and consolidate their status. The communities which had meagre or no access to political power, like Christians, Muslims and Ezhavas, demanded representation proportionate to their numbers in Sree Mulam Legislative Council and Sree Mulam Popular Assembly (the former was created in 1888 and the latter in 1904 by Sree Mulam Maharaja). The following table shows the under representation of non-caste Hindu communities in the Sree Mulam Popular Assembly.
Table 4
Composition of the Sree Mulam Popular Assembly 1905-1914

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communities</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1906</th>
<th>1907</th>
<th>1908</th>
<th>1909</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1912</th>
<th>1913</th>
<th>1914</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezhavas</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairs</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malayala Brahmins</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulayas</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parayas</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1930’s the struggle for adequate representation in representative bodies intensified and for that communal consolidation, in an unprecedented scale, took place among under-represented communities as well as within each community. On November 21, 1932, representatives of different Christian denominations met at Trivandrum and two sub-committees were appointed to study the representative aspect of the new legislation. The efforts to create unity among various Christian denominations culminated in the formation of All Travancore Christian Political Conference. A deputation of the Christian Political Conference met the Dewan on December 19, 1932 and presented a memorial. Subsequently the three aggrieved communities, Christians, Muslims and Ezhavas, joined together and formed All Travancore Joint Political Conference. The leaders of All Travancore Political Conference met at Trivandrum on January 25, 1933, and decided to abstain from the forthcoming election. Of course, the driving force behind this united political movement was that of the Christians.

The abstention movement known in Malayalam as
"Nivarthana Prastanam", was the first popular uprising in Travancore of a trans-communal nature, was the precursor of many future agitations in the state. The mass support that the abstentionists got, in fact, alarmed the Travancore government. The abstentionists demanded dissolution of the newly elected Assembly and Council on the ground that they were not exact representative institutions of the people. The popular dimension of the Abstention Movement even caught the attention of the central government. The Governor General of India, who visited Travancore in December 1933, observed:

"Travancore, like many administrations not only in India but throughout of the world is feeling the reaction caused by the impact of modern democratic ideas upon an old culture and the old order of things, Communities which have hitherto taken small part in public affairs, however contentedly they may have lived, are now aspiring to a greater share in the administrative and social activities."

The Dewan saw a Christian conspiracy (to dislodge him) behind the advocacy of responsible government and adult franchise by State Congress. He knew very well that education
was a matter of great concern for the Christians in general and the Church in particular as it was the owners of most of the educational institutions in the state at that time. So the government decided to take over the entire control and management of primary education in Travancore in 1945. By 1945, in the primary section, about two-thirds of the students were in private schools. Out of the 2169 private schools over 80 percent were run by Christian educational agencies and among Christians the Catholics owned most of these schools. So the Dewan knew it very well that any attempt to bring control over private schools would infuriate the Church. In fact, the Dewan was taking retaliation over the Christian community which spearheaded most of the agitations against the government and was mainly instrumental in the formation of Travancore State Congress. Not only that the constitutional reforms initiated by him were torpedoed by the collective opposition of the avarnas and the initiative for which was taken by none other than the Christians.

The next instalment of constitutional reforms envisaging an independent Travancore with separation of powers between
the executive and legislature did not evoke any positive response from political parties. The Travancore State Congress rejected the new constitution dubbing it as ‘American Model’ and started agitation against it. The last and final of the series of constitutional reforms in Travancore was brought out by the Maharaja in 1947. It envisaged a constitutional monarchy on the West Minister model and the office of the Dewan was abolished. Meanwhile the country got independence and as part of integration of Indian states the princely states of Tranvancore and Cochin were merged together to form the new state of Tranvancore-Cochin.

Realizing that Travancore would join the Indian Union and power would be transferred to the leadership of Travancore State Congress, Mannam and Sankar, two prominent leaders of NSS and SNDP, joined Tranvancore State Congress. Mannam promptly became a stringent opponent of the Dewan and he was even arrested for his speech against the Dewan at Muthukulam\textsuperscript{54}. With the joining of Mannam and Sankar, the communal consolidation in Tranvancore became complete and it was this communal cluster which ruled Tranvancore-Cochin.
State for the next nine years (1947-56). When power came into their hands, each community began to think only of its own interests and the unity that was acquired with the formation of State Congress began to shrink. When each community vied with the other for a larger share in the resources of the state, the political arena became vitiated with communal passions and intrigues.

The Christian element in the Congress that was wielding considerable influence could not be tolerated by Sankar and Mannam. As a new strategy they decided to fight the supremacy of Christians from within the Congress. So, both joined the Congress again. Subsequently to assuage the communal bitterness of Nairs and Ezhavas, both Mannam and Sankar were accommodated in the Devaswom Board. In fact the purpose of both the leaders was to free the State Congress from the increasing dominance of Christians. Sankar once said that this Christian Congress should be buried in a six-feet-deep grave. They started a crusade against the ‘Christian dominated’ Congress party and finally broke away from it.
After the fall of the ministry of T.K. Narayana Pillai, it was the turn of C. Kesavan to be the chief minister much to the joy of the Ezhavas. After Kesavan, came A.J. John in 1952 and thus the Roman Catholics also got their chief minister. John was a devout Christian and a Catholic to the core, and was keen on getting a due share for this community. He opposed whatever was against the interests of the Christians, especially Catholics. John believed that Catholics must have a monopoly in education, and he was confident of the support of the Catholic bishops. John’s ministry which came into power on March 14, 1952, died an early death, owing to the rivalry between the two Congresses.

With the formation of All Travancore Political Conference in 1930’s, the Christians were in the central stage of state politics. It is an undeniable fact that Christians were mainly instrumental in bringing about unity among the avarnas. They were in the forefront fighting for democratic rights of those who were denied them on grounds of caste and religion. After Independence the Christians were behind the making and unmaking of many ministries. There is adequate truth in the
saying that Travancore State Congress was a Christian congress.

With the formation of Kerala State the demographic combination of the state underwent changes. The Christian population of Kerala dropped to 22 percent from 31 percent in Travancore-Cochin. The Ezhava population increased from 22 percent to 27 percent, while Muslims rose to 18 percent. Thus in 1957 the percentages of major communities in Kerala were:

- Nairs : 12.5 percent
- Ezhavas : 26.4 percent
- Christians : 21.3 percent
- Muslims : 17.7 percent

After 1956 the Church was gradually withdrawing from direct political action and concentrating its attention mainly around the realms of education and healthcare. This does not mean that the Church altogether abandoned politics and it cannot do so as long as its huge investments lie in education and other service sectors. The two areas where the Church
had special interest are education and land, always the former
getting prime significance. While other communities, after
1956, shifted either partly or fully in favour of other political
parties, the Christians, by and large, continued their support of
the Congress.

From 1957 onwards, unless provoked, the Church
preferred to be behind the curtain, but, being the owners of
most of the educational institutions, it has been vigilant and
alert in safeguarding its institutional interests. The victory of
Communists in 1957 elections was a great shock to the
Christians, particularly the Church. The educational reforms
of the first Communist ministry which were mainly designed
to curb the unhindered freedom enjoyed by the private
managements invoked strong opposition from the Church. The
Church, in its struggle, had secured the support of NSS, SNDP
and Muslim League. The Church discreetly made Mannath
Padmanabhan leader of the Liberation Struggle and gathered
all its forces in support of him. In fact, it was a struggle
sponsored and planned by the Church. The Liberation struggle
or Vimochana Samaram ended in the dismissal of the first
popularly elected government in Kerala\textsuperscript{59}. Meanwhile the demand for a separate political party for Christians cropped up and the Church showed no inclination towards this. Opposing the demands, AKCC said “the Christians have sufficient hold on the congress and hence no need for a separate political party”\textsuperscript{60}. The Church knew it well that a separate political party for the community would only reduce its suzerainty as the unquestionable leaders of the community. The Church did not like to tarnish its image by directly meddling with the day-to-day political affairs of the state. The hierarchy did not want to elicit the displeasure of those in power by either sponsoring or supporting some political parties. It is natural that as an interest group the Church would like to maintain good relations with the people in power and for that it considers it better to keep out of politics.

The Church would like to project itself as not only a non-political but also a politically free organization, though it maintains obvious political preferences. The non-political image was indispensable for the Church to maintain its unquestionable ascendancy over its congregation. It was also
essential for obtaining maximum benefit from those in power. It is true that it was with the blessings of the Church that the Congress leader P.T Chacko turned against Sanker’s ministry. When the group led by P.T Chacko later split the Congress in 1964 under the leadership of K.M George, the Church for sometime supported it. But soon it realized that its support to Kerala Congress would only weaken the Congress and switched over to the side of the latter.

For the Church, protection of institutional interests was its paramount concern. Unless followed a totally unattached policy in political affairs, at least apparently, it may not be able to take an independent decision vis-à-vis government policies concerning its interest. Not only that, an exclusive political organization may eventually force the hierarchy to make compromises with secular (political) forces when they try to make changes on secular lines in the existing system, particularly in education. History shows that the Church opposed all unfavourable decisions of the government not taking into account the party which leads it. Fighting and bargaining with the state power was possible only when it stood
independent without any direct party affiliation. In fact all political parties whether the right or the left, which venture for some changes in the status quo, particularly in education, are its adversaries. Blind support to a political party may be equivalent to accepting all its decisions which, sometimes, endanger the interests of the community and the hierarchy.

The policy of the Church, since 1965, was to make maximum advantage being in propinquity with those political parties and groups which do not hurt its interest, and, at the same time, be free from such troubles that might accrue when it directly interferes in political actions through a political party. Even when the Kerala Congress was divided into Kerala Congress (M) and Kerala Congress (J) the Church did not make any amends in its political stance. Of course, the Church leadership made some efforts to unite both but, when it became a reality, the Church accepted KC (J) as a partner of the LDF. It became a blessing in disguise that the Church began using KC (J) as an intermediary to convey its wishes to the LDF leadership. During the tussle between the Church and the LDF government (2006) it was the KC (J) which took initiative to
sort the differences out between the two. But its efforts could not be fulfilled because of the tough stand taken by a section of the Church prelates and the unyielding attitude of a faction of the CPI (M) which was determined to control the private managements.

Meanwhile some prelates, with the blessings of the top hierarchy, made some efforts to merge both Congress and Kerala Congress but could not succeed due to the stringent stance taken by the former. In their anxiety to save Kerala from another spell of Communist rule the bishops extended full support to the Congress and openly canvassed votes in favour of it\(^{61}\). But some Syrian Catholic bishops of central Travancore openly supported Kerala Congress\(^{62}\). The congregative of the faithful also remained divided between the Congress and the Kerala Congress. The total and collective backing hitherto enjoyed by the Congress from the Christian community, thus, practically came to an end for ever.\(^{63}\) From 1965 onwards the Kerala Congress remained a force to be reckoned within the politics of the state, making the Church leaders’ role in elections more complex, complicated and
After the fall of the Marxist–led United Front in 1969, for ten years, Kerala saw a CPI-led ministry except for a short period when A.K. Antony (Congress) became the chief minister. The Christians and the Church adjusted themselves with the new situation and extended support to the CPI-led coalition government in the state. In fact, the Church had no option but to support this new experiment in which the Congress, Kerala Congress and Muslims League became partners. Also there was a shift in the attitude of the Church and Christians towards CPI. For the Church CPI was more amenable compared to CPI (M)\(^6^5\). Achutha Menon’s image as a clean political personality and the inimitable conciliation and political maturity evinced by him as chief minister made him one of the most acceptable leaders amongst the Communists for the Christian community and the Church leadership\(^6^6\).

The Marxist-Kerala Congress understanding had its own positive impact in Church-Marxist relations. The support extended by certain church dignitaries to the LDF candidates in the elections is indicative of this fact. The visit of the chief
minister, E.K. Nayanar (CPI (M)), to the headquarters of Church dignitaries in 1990s improved the strained relations between the Church and the Party. But the poll-eve exhortations of the Church hierarchies during the Assembly and Lok Sabha polls of 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2001 showed that the Church, particularly the prominent Syrian Catholics, have not made any amends to its traditional aversion towards the hammer-sickle insignia. Since 1980s the poll-eve exhortations were limited only to general guidelines like ‘vote for parties which uphold democratic values’, ‘protect religious freedom and minority rights’, etc. But a perusal of the wordings of these pastoral letters would reveal that the Church’s unflinching support in the Lok Sabha elections was for the Congress and in the Assembly polls, for the UDF. The upward trend, in the Lok Sabha polls, in terms of seats won by the Congress since 1957 except in 1967 shows this fact. In Assembly elections the Congress could not maintain this lead because Christian votes were divided between national and local parties and some Church hierarchies adopted ‘candidate-specific’ approach taking into account other relevant factors.
The 2001 Assembly election was the last one in which the Church extended its full support to the Congress and the UDF. The unprecedented victory of the UDF in Kerala Assembly polls (100 out of 140 seats) surprised even its leaders who never dreamt of a two-thirds majority. There was a near consolidation of communal forces in the state in favour of the UDF during the run up to the elections. Consolidation of Christian votes in favour of the UDF was complete and almost all the Christian candidates fielded by the UDF came out victorious. Within a couple of years things turned upside down. The group fights which had already started in the Congress between the Antony and Karunakaran factions crossed all limits. The infighting in the congress had disillusioned all the well wishers of the party; the Church was not the least prominent. It was openly expressed by the Syro-Malabar Major Archbishop, Mar Varkey Vithayathil in one of his poll-eve exhortations. The communal violence at Marad (near Calicut) in 2003 and the subsequent statement of Chief Minister, A. K. Antony that minorities were taking gratuitous advantage due to their organized strength exasperated the minorities,
particularly the Church and the Muslim League. The election debacle of 2004, against the government and the UDF, almost decided the fate of A K Antony. Oommen Chandy, who succeeded A K Antony as the Chief Minister of Kerala, in 2005, could not ameliorate the situation. The result was the inevitable and disastrous crash of the UDF in 2006 Assembly elections in which the LDF captured 99 seats out of 140.

The remarkable victory of the LDF in 2006 Assembly elections and the appointment of V.S Achuthanandan (CPI (M)) as the chief minister of Kerala opened a new chapter of confrontation between the Church and the government on educational issues. The Church, which mitigated its opposition towards the CPI (M) - led LDF since 1980’s, became their staunch opponent when the present LDF government embarked on a series of reforms in education. The present tussle, between the Church and the government, started with the introduction of Self-Financing Colleges Act, 2006 and continued unalleviated through the revision of Kerala Educational Acts and Rules (KEAR) and school text books reached up in the introduction of the ‘Single Window System’ for higher secondary admissions.
The recent confrontation between the Church and LDF government crossed all limits and was an embarrassment for both. The Church, in fact, is remorseful of its great omission in keeping guard against the anti-Church forces (Communism) after the tussle of 1959. It was openly expressed by Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil when he said, “After 1957 it is only now (in 2006) that the anti-Church forces unveiled their real character and it is a grave mistake on our part that we (the Church) did not keep alertness against those atheist forces throughout this period”70. Indirectly criticising all political parties for their anti-church mind-set, Father Mathew Chandrankunnel, Vicar, educationalist, activist and a famous orator under the Pala Syro Malabar diocese, said, “whether the cat is white or black, in reality, it is a cat and it cannot be a different animal, it is a fact that is to be accepted”71. However, he did not conceal the preference of the Church to the Indian National Congress as a secular national party and reminded the believers of the urgent need for strengthening the hands of the Congress to protect the interest of minorities and to thwart the growing influence of the Communists.
Christians form a peace-loving, hard working and progressive-minded community in Kerala. They are the pioneers of modern education as well as women’s education. They were social reformers and breakers of age-old caste system. They were instrumental in the emancipation of vast majority of lower castes. The incredible achievement of modern Kerala in education and literacy has greatly been attributed to the pioneering efforts of Christian missionaries followed by the enthusiastic effort undertaken by the Church, in this field. The Christians enjoy higher social status and are honoured by the upper caste Hindus. The organizational set up of the Church shows the all pervading control of hierarchy over the lives of its believers. Christians are generally categorized as Catholics and non-Catholics. The Catholics constitute majority of Christians and are more influential and commanding in Kerala politics compared to their non-Catholic brethren. Among Catholics, the Syrian Catholics constitute the majority and wield tremendous influence in the social, economic and political life of Kerala.

Since Church manages most of the educational institutions in the private sector, it views with greatest anxiety any move
on the part of the government to introduce any change in the education sector. Church is the most influential educational pressure group in Kerala. Unless provoked by the government through educational reforms or otherwise, the Church would like to remain in the background. But she has her own explicit political preference which would be communicated to the flock either through pastoral letters or Church communiqué on the eve of the elections. Till 2004, the Church preferred right wing political parties like the Congress and the Kerala Congress and advised the believers accordingly. But in 2004 Lok Sabha elections and the subsequent Assembly elections in 2006, the Christians were confused in their electoral choices as the Church did not follow a homogeneous political policy. Recent developments show that still the Church cherishes its traditional aversion towards Communism and Communist ideology. In short, the Church’s sympathy and support has always been for such political parties which it thought would defend its institutional interests.
THE MUSLIMS IN KERALA

The Muslims, which constitute around one-fourth of the total population concentrated mainly in the Malabar region, is one of the two prominent minority communities in Kerala, the other being the Christians. They, together with other two major fractions of the Hindu community - the Nairs and the Ezhavas, shape and guide the society of Kerala in general and politics in particular. While the former wields tremendous political influence in the northern part of Kerala particularly in the Malabar region, the latter exercise overwhelming political influence in the central and southern parts of the State.

Origin of Islam in Kerala

Historians present a number of versions regarding the early Muslim settlements in Kerala. However, it seems that majority of historians support Cheraman Perumal’s tradition for the origin of Islam in Kerala. It says that a few Muslim pilgrims to Adam’s Peak in Ceylon visited the Perumal at Kodungallur. Hearing the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (570-632 A.D) from the pilgrims, the Perumal wanted to meet him and accept the new religion. He accompanied the pilgrims,
on their return to Mecca, where he met the prophet and accepted
Islam at his hands. After sometime, he planned to return to
Kerala, but fell ill and died at Zufar on the Arabian Coast.
Before his death, he wrote a letter to his principal officers and
governors, calling upon them to provide all facilities for his
companions, who carried the letter, to spread the new religion.
Malik Ibn Dinar and his associates, who accompanied the
Perumal on his return trip, landed at Kodungallur and travelled
to different parts of the country spreading the new religion.
They established ten mosques, where Muslims congregated.72

The Hindu tradition, contained in the Keralolpathi, also
conforms to the Cheraman Perumal tradition for the origin of
Islam in Kerala. The only difference is that, before his
emigration, the Perumal partitioned his territory among his
relatives and dependants73. This fact is more or less,
corroborated by Duarte Barbosa, the Portuguese writer of the
early 16th century, when he wrote:

“...They say that in ancient days there was a heathen king
named Cirimay Pirencal, a very mighty Lord. And after the
Moors of Mecca had discovered India, they began to voyage

"
towards it for the sake of pepper, of which they began to take cargoes at Coulam, a city with a harbour, where the king often times abides. This will not be less than six hundred years ago, for the Indians of that period adopted the era by which these Moors are ruled. And continuing to sail to India for many years they began to spread out there in, and they had such discussions with the king himself and he with them that in the end they converted him to the sect of the abominable Mafamade (Muhammad) wherefore he went in their company to the house of Mecca and there he died, or as it seems probable on the way thither, for the Malabares never more heard any tidings of him. Before he started, this king divided his kingdom among his kinsfolk into several portions, as yet it is, for before that time all Malabar was one Kingdom”74.

Though mainstream historians support Perumal’s tradition for the origin of Islam in Kerala, there are serious differences of opinion regarding the date of the event. If it is accepted that the Perumal visited the Prophet and received the new religion at his hands, it would have happened between 622 and 632 A.D., when the Prophet is said to have written to the crowned
heads of several countries, with which the Arabs had close trade relations. It is possible that such a letter was sent to the Kerala king also, whose country produced such spices as pepper, cloves, ginger and cardamom, which were in great demand in the West Asian countries and Europe. Supporting Cheraman Perumal’s tradition for the origin of Islam in Kerala, M.G.S Narayanan said, “there is no reason to reject the tradition that the last Chera king embraced Islam (His name was Rama), and went to Mecca, since it finds a place not only in Muslim chronicles, but also in Hindu Brahminical chronicles like the Keralolpatti, which need not be expected to concoct such a tale, which in no way enhances the prestige or further the interest of the Brahmin or Hindu population”.

Thus it can be well inferred that Muslims had arrived in Kerala much earlier than their arrival in North India. The coming of Muslims in North India is recorded only with the conquest of Sind by Muhammad Ibn Qasim in the beginning of the 8th century A.D. Since Muhammad Ibn Qasim could not maintain his control over Sind for long, the spread of Islam in North India occurred only with the conquest of Muhammad
Ghori at the end of the 12th century. Thus it is clear that Islam originated in Kerala as soon as it spread in Arabia, the birthplace of Muhammad, its Prophet.

It is a historical fact that even before the rise of Islam in Arabia in the 7th century A.D., Arabs had close commercial relations with western Indian ports, especially with Kerala ports, as the spices and other products of Kerala were in great demand in the markets of western Asia and Europe. Therefore even before the spreading of Islam in Kerala, there were Arabs in Kerala, particularly in Malabar, as traders. It is believed that it were the Arabs who gave the name Malabar, for they (Arabs) called it Ma’ abar which in Arabic means a passage, a place through which one passes. Subsequently Ma’ abar became Malabar. This early trade relation with the the Arabs greatly benefited the local people especially those who were dwelling on coastal areas.

There is a fundamental difference in the nature of the establishment of Islam in Kerala and in the northern parts of India. In the North the Muslims were seen as aggressors and conquerors who ruled and ‘humiliated’ the Hindus. Many
Muslim conquerors not only captured power from the Hindu rulers but also looted, pillaged and plundered their territories. This naturally hurt the psyche of the later generations of Hindus, especially when power struggle between the Hindus and Muslims in 19th and first half of the 20th century India soured the relationship. The hostility, subsequently, became so intense that it ultimately led to the partition of the country. In Kerala, in contrast, the Muslims had never been seen as aggressors. While it was through conquest that Islam was introduced in North India, it was through peaceful means, viz. trade and missionary activity that Islam spread in South India. Regarding the difference of introduction of Islam in the North and South, M.G.S Narayanan Writes: “While the Muslims entered North India as hostile invaders and fanatical iconoclasts they came to the west coast as friendly merchants and ambassadors of Arab culture.”

The origin of the term Mappila also explains the trade connections of the Muslims of Malabar. But some people maintain that Mappila owes its origin to Maha (great) and pillai (child). So it is understood as ‘great child’ a term of respect.
Whereas Stephen F. Dale and M. Gangadharan Menon tell us that its origin is Ma (maha) and Pilla (accountant) i.e., the ‘great accountant’\textsuperscript{80}. Still some other writers consider that intermarriages, which was a major cause for the spread of Islam, led to the formation of a group called Mappilas, or Moplahs or more exactly Jonaha Poplahs, since the Syrian Christians of mixed descent were known as Nazrani Moplahs\textsuperscript{81}. In fact, the members of all religious communities that came to the Malabar Coast were called Mappilas. It was the ‘appellation’ used with Mappilas that distinguished one group from another. Thus, Christians, Jews and Muslims came to be called Nasrani Mappilas, Juta Mappilas, and Jonaha Mappilas respectively. But in the northern part of Malabar where the Christians and Jews form only a thin minority, the Muslims were called just ‘Mappilas’\textsuperscript{82}.

**The Spread of Islam in Kerala**

Many factors have contributed to the spread of Islam in Kerala. Though the Arabs came as traders in thin groups, the spread of Islam in Kerala was so rapid that it has very few parallels in history. The significant factors behind it that include
are the effort of the missionaries, support of native rulers and conversion.

**a) Role of Sufis and Missionaries:**

We have only scanty information relating to the activities of Sufi saints in the south contrary to the detailed accounts of such activity in North India. This is mainly because the Shafi – i – Madhhab that had spread in Kerala discountenanced all forms of religious activity other than their own. Besides, as all the religious works in Kerala until recent times were written in Arabic, they failed to mention any such activity as Tariqahs, missionary activity, etc. This has made scholars like I.H. Qureshi to state that “the extensive Sufi missionary activity found elsewhere in Indian Islam is not evident in South India. But as will be evident, this has not been the case as far as Kerala was concerned. Traditional account of the activities of several Sufis and missionaries who propagated the teachings of Islam among the people are preserved in Malas (tadakiras) extolling their miraculous powers. These malas are written mainly in the Arabi – Malayalam dialect and therefore not widely known. Since Arabic works, mostly devoted to
theological topics, have completely ignored the ideologies and activities of the Sufis and missionaries, we have no option but to depend on local tradition contained in the *malas* to learnt about their activities.

The tradition of Malik Ibn Dinar and his associates who spread the religion of Islam in Kerala itself indicates the first missionary activity. Malik Ibn Dinar is reputed to have been the disciple of the famous sufi, Hasan al-Basri and died in 130 A. H. (748 A. D)\(^3\) The tradition current in Kerala is that Cherman Perumal during his visit to Arabic was accompanied by Malik Ibn Dinar and his relativess and on the death of the Perumal on the Arabian coast, they arrived in Kerala, on the special request of the Perumal, to spread the new religion. They travelled all along Kerala and established ten mosques in different parts of Kerala viz., Kulam (Quilon), Muziris (Kodungallur), Shaliyar (Chaliyam), Fandurina (Pantalayini, Kollam), Darmfattan (Dharmadam), Jurfattan (Srikanthapuram), Hayli Marawi (Madayi), Kanjarkut (Kasarkode), Manjalur (Mangalore) and Fakkanur (Barkur). At all these places, he placed his associates as qadis to guide
the local Muslims and to spread the religion of Islam. It is possible that as a result of their missionary activity, the new religion spread far and wide. The trading activities of these neo-Muslims in the interior parts of Kerala naturally helped the spread of the new religion and the establishment of new interior trading centres speeded up this process.

Of several Sufi saints and missionaries of later years, who made great efforts in spreading Islam in Kerala, mention may be made of Ahmad Jalaluddin of Kukhura, Sayyid Muhammad Moula of Kavaratti Island, Purattel Sheykh, Seyyid Jifri Tangal, Sayyid Fadl, Kandotti Tangals, Sayyidah Nizamah Bivi and her son, Sayyid Mahin Adubakar, Shaykh Farid of Kanjiramittam, Sayyid Muhammad Auliya of Allatur, etc.

b) Support of Native Rulers:

The support of native rulers for the spread of Islam is equally worth mentioning. The native rulers favourably reciprocated the support given by the Muslim traders settled in the port towns of Kerala in promoting the economic prosperity and political stability of the Kingdoms. Among the rulers of Kerala, it was the Zamorin of Calicut who showed
special regard for Muslims in his kingdom\textsuperscript{84}. On account of this special treatment, large number of Muslim merchants settled in his country and the trade of the country increased enormously. As the historians of the Zamorin observed, the Moors “not only made Calicut the greatest port on the west coast of India, they even helped to spread the name and fame of the Zamorin\textsuperscript{85}.”

It is true that the Zamorins supported Muslims against the Portuguese attempt to monopolize foreign trade of the country. It is also true that the Zamorin was willing to accept the Portuguese as any other trading group in Calicut, but they were not willing to accept the proposal. The long drawn out war started between the Zamorins and the Portuguese when the latter insisted on the expulsion of the entire Arab merchants from Calicut and other parts of his dominions. But the atrocities of the Portuguese in land and sea compelled the Arab merchants to leave the coast. Further the long war exhausted the resources of the Zamorin and compelled him to ally with the Portuguese, which antagonized Muslims against the rulers.
c) Conversion

As in Christianity, there took place a large number of conversions from lower classes to Islam. In order to escape the cruelties of rigid caste system, many people from lower classes migrated to Islam which presented a more or less egalitarian social structure. As there was no restriction on conversion, large number of lower class people, who were treated as untouchables must have been attracted to Islam. Local rulers either encouraged or took an indifferent attitude towards conversion. For instance the Zamorin, in order to man his newly organized navy is said to have ordered one member from every fisherman family, to be converted to Islam.\textsuperscript{86} Further, persons excommunicated from Hindu society had no option but accept Islam or Christianity. Converts to Islam not only improved their social status but also could improve their economic condition by taking up jobs of their liking\textsuperscript{87}. Referring to early conversion through marriage, A. P Ibrahim Kunju writes: “For purpose of trade, Arab merchants used to live in colonies in the port towns of Kerala. The Arab traders used to remain from October to May in the ports for collecting various products of
Kerala. As these traders did not bring their women in these commercial ventures, they used to marry local women, when they were here and it is easy to presume that these women and their children adopted the new religion. It is therefore only reasonable to conclude that as soon as Islam spread all over Arabia in the lifetime of the Prophet, the Arab traders to Kerala must have spread the religion here. The new coverts to Islam, in their first flush of enthusiasm, must have done everything in their power to spread their new religion, wherever they lived. Thus it is possible that Islam spread in Kerala as soon as it spread in Arabia.”

**Muslim Community before Independence**

As a result of flourishing trade and large scale conversion along coastal areas of West Kerala comprising territories of Malabar region, there arose a trading community, *Mappilas (Moplahs)* – a mixture of both foreign and native elements. Regarding this hybrid trait of *Mappila* heritage N.P. Muhammad writes: “the Kerala Muslims are the inheritors of two different traditions though their faith remains Islamic. On the maternal side (the Arabs who came to Kerala mostly married
local women) they imbibed Hindu customs and manners making certain variations to accommodate the newly accepted religious faith and on the paternal side the Muslim faith, predominantly a local variation of it. Even now majority of the local Muslims do not know the Arabic language”. He further points out, “Naturally there were conflicts between these two ways of life, Hindu and Muslim traditions, but in course of time the system integrated itself, a system which one cannot call fully Islamic as practised in the Arabian countries. Nor has it any dominant Hindu traits. This integration set a pattern of culture, at least a cultural synthesis in the level of collective consciousness, embracing both Muslim and Hindu customs and manners.”

The assimilation of the alien faith into predominant local cultures produced people who followed the same religion, with remarkably different cultures within the same faith. Thus in Kerala the Muslims who live in North Kerala are different in culture from their Muslim brethren in the South, formerly known as Travancore – Cochin area. Even in Malabar differences are traceable between those who dwell in the coastal
areas and those who live in the interior regions. Since the
traditions, customs and avocations are markedly different in
different regions, it is needless to say, that the Muslims in the
South are different from their brethren in the northern parts of
India. Thus, there is hardly any homogeneity in culture even
among the Muslims in Kerala. In fact, the pre–Islamic regional
cultures have left their deep impression on Muslims in different
parts of India. There is nothing like a ‘pure Islamic culture’
anywhere in India.\textsuperscript{90}

The flourishing trade on the Malabar Coast fetched
prosperity to both Arabs and the local ruler, Zamorin. The
relation between the Arabs (Mappilas) and the Zamorins went
on cordial till the arrival of the Portuguese in the last years of
the 15\textsuperscript{th} century. The Zamorin patronized the Muslims to such
an extent that he was known as a ‘Moorish chieftain’ in the
West.\textsuperscript{91} Concurrently the rise of Portuguese power signalled
collapse of the commercial prosperity of Muslims in Kerala.
The attempt of the Portuguese to monopolise foreign trade (of
the country) in spices started a long struggle with the Zamorin,
who had the support of the Muslim merchants. In fact the bond
of loyalty between the Zamorin and the Muslims became strengthened as the help of each was inevitable for the other to fight against the Portuguese menace.

But the clever Portuguese eventually sowed the seeds of mistrust between the two communities—the Hindus and the Muslims—in Malabar region. The permission acquired by the Portuguese to construct a fort at Ponnani infuriated the Muslims. They felt that the Zamorin had sacrificed their interests to an enemy, who had been fighting against the country and its people for so long. The discord between the two culminated when Zamorin turned away from his traditional ally, the Muslims, and joined the Portuguese against his own admiral Kunjhal Marakkar. Regarding the far-reaching impact of the Marakkar episode in the history of communal relations in Kerala, M. G. S. Narayanan writes: “This (Marakkar episode) was a turning point in the history of communal relations in North Kerala. Old ties of loyalty were loosened; seeds of communal conflict were sown. The drift which started then continued for about a century and it was quickened by the Mysore invasions and the policy of the British government
culminating in the Malabar Rebellion and continuing in different forms up to the time of independence."

The long drawn-out war with the Portuguese impoverished the Arab merchants and they were reduced to a position of insignificance in the social, economic and political life of Kerala. Big merchants had “departed to their own lands abandoning India and its trade.”

By the end of the 16th century the native Muslims (Mappilas) of the coast had ceased to exist as they collectively undertook trek to the interiors of Malabar comprising the territories in and around the present Malappuram District. While those who remained along the coasts continued as fishermen or traders, others who migrated to the interiors became farmers. This farming group, which in course of time got multiplied through matrimonial system and conversion, had to be satisfied with tenentship while the Jenmis (landlords) were mainly the upper caste Hindus.

The exploitation of the Muslims (as cultivating tenants and labourers) by upper caste Hindus (as landlords or Jenmis) created tension between the two communities. The situation was further vitiated by the conquests of Mysorean rulers like
Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan. The support extended by the Muslims to the invaders estranged the Hindu chieftains and landlords. They were unable to resist the Mysurean forces and left to the south abandoning their *Jagirs* (lands). The Muslims (farmers and tenants) either purchased the estates at nominal prices or occupied the vacant estates. But the defeat of Tippu Sultan and the consequent Treaty of Srirangapatanam in 1798 brought back the *Jenmis* after a lapse of 25 years.

The *Jenmis* who returned to their estates began taking some retaliatory steps against the tenants especially those who were converted to Islam during the rule of the Sultan, by refusing among other things –to grant them land to build mosques on or establish cemeteries. The peasants, unable to bear hardship, raised in revolt a number of times and it is recorded that during the 19th and early 20th centuries, there had been 32 outbreaks. The last of this series was the one which took place during the Khilafat Movement in 1921. Unlike other uprisings, it was a massive protest against the British who were the natural supporters of landlords in Malabar.

The Malabar Rebellion of 1921-22 was the most
widespread and destructive rebellion of all in its consequences. The rebels organized over what amounted to a miniature kingdom covering the taluks of Ernad and Valluvanad, with Variyamkunnath Kunhahamad Haji at its head, proclaiming himself “Raja of the Hindus, Emir of the Muslims and Colonel of the Khilafat army.” But the revolt was put down by the British, using Gurkha troops recruited from among the tribal people of the North. The movement was dissipated and it got reduced into group feuds between the Muslims and the Hindus in some places. It is estimated that more than 10,000 people were killed and properties worth lakhs were destroyed. Of course, religion played a prominent role in the rebellion but the class factor (the relation between the jenmis and the peasants or agricultural workers), which played the basic element in the rebellion, cannot be overlooked. Significantly, it was an uprising of oppressed and poverty-stricken peasants against the cruel, hardhearted landlords who were unscrupulously supported by the British.

The Rebellion, apart from other consequences, had two positive results. First, the Muslims were made aware of their
own inherent weakness—lack of education. Secondly, they became conscious of their political unity. Lack of political consciousness had a direct bearing on their educational backwardness. Due to the absence of education they had fallen into the abyss of ignorance and superstition. The condition of Muslims further deteriorated in the aftermath of 1921 – 22 Rebellion. Their strong opposition to the British administration coupled with their aversion to Western education made the Muslims one of the most backward communities in Malabar. The British, on their part, kept the Muslims scrupulously away from their administration for various reasons.

While all other communities, due to their recourse to education particularly English education, began climbing the social ladder by availing themselves of the access to government jobs, commerce, trade, etc., the Muslims were denied all these because of their educational backwardness. The following table shows community-wise literacy rate in 1911 and 1941 in Travancore and Cochin.
Table 5
Percentage of Literacy of some selected communities in Travancore and Cochin in 1911 and 1941

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communities</th>
<th>Literacy in 1911</th>
<th></th>
<th>Literacy in 1941</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travancore</td>
<td>Cochin</td>
<td>Travancore</td>
<td>Cochin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malayali Brahmins</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairs</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>26.61</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezhavas</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>55.96</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulayas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Compiled from the Census Reports of Travancore and Cochin in 1911 and 1941.
Social disability (*avarnas*) together with educational backwardness of the Muslim community made them one of the under-represented or non-represented communities in government service as well as representative institutions in Travancore. The following table shows the representation of each religious group in the state service of Travancore excluding appointments in the *devaswom*, military, palace departments in 1931.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>No. of Posts held</th>
<th>% of total Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>19982</td>
<td>80.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>4042</td>
<td>16.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7: Results of Election to the Legislative Council 1922-1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>1922</th>
<th>1925</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1931</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezhavas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Caste</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressed Castes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Muslims hardly had any share in the representative bodies in Travancore at the beginning of the 20th century. The table below vindicates this fact.
Educationally the condition of Muslims in Malabar was not different from their Muslim brethren in Travancore and Cochin. The only access available for education was Madrasas or Ottupallis (religious schools) associated with mosques. The content of education imparted was reading and learning the Quran by rote and some elementary religious knowledge. The state of Muslim education by the end of the 19th century was well depicted in Malabar Manual by its author and then collector of Malabar District.

“They (Muslims of Malabar) are moreover, as a class, nearly almost, if not altogether, illiterate. The only education received is a parrot-like recitation of the Koran, which, being in Arabic, none of them understood. The scruple of the parents prevents them from permitting their children to attend the vernacular school of the Hindus. A fairly successful attempt has, however, been made to teach them by giving grants to their own teachers on condition that they show results. The teachers, being as illiterate as their pupils, except in knowledge of Koran recitation, usually employ Hindu youths to teach the pupils and so earn the results – grants. And some of the pupils
are now being taught teaching as a profession in special normal schools. The number of *Mappilas* who have advanced so far as to learn to read and write English in the schools, could very probably be counted on the fingers of two hands”100.

Meanwhile a number of prominent personalities of the community volunteered to rescue the community from this wretched state. The important social reformers of this period were Veliyankot Umar Qazi (1757-1852), Sayyid Sanaulla Makti Taangal (1847-1912), Maulana Chalilakath Kunhahamed Haji (1856-1919), Shaykh Hamadani Tengal (1922) and Wakkom Muhammad Abdul Khader Maulavi (1868-1932). The greatest among them was Wakkom Abdul Khader Maulavi. A great scholar in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Malayalam, he dedicated his entire life and resources for the social, educational and cultural upliftment of the Muslims of Kerala. A number of organizations, social and political, also sprang up during this period. The first of its kind was formed in 1922 at Kodungallur-The Muslim Aikya Sanghom. While at a time when there were only sporadic individual efforts at social, educational and religious reform, it was the Muslim
Aikya Sanghom that started combined, concerted efforts towards that end. Though Aikya Sanghom was mainly meant for social, educational and religious reforms, its impact on other fields was also significant. As E. K. Moulavi, one of the earliest workers of the Sanghom puts it: “All social, economic and religious reforms of the Muslims of today in Kerala are the reflections of the reformist zeal generated by the Aikya Sanghom”  

The political developments in the three constituent parts of present day Kerala – Malabar, Cochin and Travancore, before the formation of Kerala on linguistic basis on November 1, 1956, were different in many respects. Malabar being a part of Madras province, underwent all the political turmoil that affected other parts of British India. So, all political agitations for freedom, right from the beginning, had their effect in Malabar region. But the history of the princely states of Travancore and Cochin does not record any such struggles for freedom and they had a comparatively peaceful political life.

The first Muslim political organization in Malabar was Muslim Majlis and its first session was held at Tellicherry on
11th August, 1931. Though the Aikya Sanghom and Majlis had more or less the same activists, the purposes of both were different. While Aikya Sanghom was primarily a social organization, the Majlis was a political organization for awakening political consciousness among the Muslims. E. Moidu Moulavi, who was closely associated with political movements of Muslims of those days made the following observation, “the Majlis was formed by some moderates and pro-Britishers, who could not agree with the policies of the Congress”. The All India Muslim League (AIML) was formed on 30th December, 1906 at Dacca in East Bengal (now Bangladesh). A separate organization for Indian Muslims was born out of the strong conviction on the part of certain Muslim (Congress) leaders that Indian National Congress cannot best serve the interests of Muslims in India. The Madras Presidency Muslim league, a provincial unit of the All-India Muslim League, was formed in 1916. Still it took 20 years more to establish a branch of All-India Muslim League in Malabar. It was only on 21st May, 1936 that a unit of the AIML was formally
established in Malabar, under the initiative of Ahamadkunhi Haji and 20 others\textsuperscript{104}.

Right from the starting of Majlis in 1931, it showed a clear tilting towards AIML. In the annual conference held on 25\textsuperscript{th} May, 1936, the Majlis resolved to accept the leadership of the AIML. Thus Majlis was the precursor of the Muslim League in Malabar and it ceased to exist when a unit of the AIML was established in Malabar. It is an undeniable fact that it was the Majlis that created a favourable political atmosphere for the League to start and flourish with their political activities in Kerala.

Since its establishment in Malabar in 1936, the League went on expanding its support base in North Kerala. Growing popularity of the League was testified in the election to the Madras Legislative Assembly in March, 1946 in which that all the Muslim League candidates from Malabar (eight in number) were elected, fighting against the candidates of Congress – Majlis alliance\textsuperscript{105}. Strictly moving on the line of central leadership, the League unit of Malabar region pleaded for the creation of Pakistan and even demanded for the
establishment of a Moplastan\textsuperscript{106}. But it is to be noted that League’s demand for Pakistan or Moplastan did not create any communal disharmony or tension between communities in Kerala as it happened in North India.

To counter the growing popularity of Muslim League and to check the inflow of Muslims from Congress to League, another all India organization of Muslims—All India Muslim Majlis—was created. It was a pro-Congress organization, which stood for an undivided India. A unit of the Muslim Majlis was constituted in Malabar in 1945. Immediately after the formation of Muslim Majlis in Malabar, an opportunity came for both the League and the Majlis to test their relative popular support in Malabar. Elections to the Madras Legislative Assembly and Central Assembly were held in 1945 and in all the constituencies the Muslim League candidates opposed the pro-Congress Majlis candidates. But when the results were declared the Majlis candidates lost in all constituencies and to the surprise of all, they even forfeited their deposits\textsuperscript{107}.

As has been noted earlier the Travancore-Cochin princely states have been comparatively free from political agitations
that went on in the Malabar region. As in Malabar, in Travancore-Cochin States also the educational backwardness of Muslims prevented them from availing themselves of the emerging economic and political opportunities. Being a minority, they joined other communities in their fight for reasonable job opportunities in government sector and for community-wise proportionate representation in political institutions. All Travancore Muslim Service League (1930), All Travancore Muslim Congress (1934) and North Travancore Muslim Association (1935) were some of the organizations that sprang up during this period in Travancore. But none of them had a strong communal appeal as the Muslim League had in Malabar.

**After independence**

Through partition of the country, the Muslim League created an anti-Indian image and doubts were raised about its future role in India in the aftermath of independence. Since, the creation of Pakistan was one of its political planks before independence; the League became the main target of attack of those who strongly pleaded for an undivided India. Though
the communal holocaust that followed the partition mainly affected North India, communal relations became strained in the South also. There existed a general antipathy and aversion towards the Muslim community as if they were the people solely responsible for the partition. When almost all the leaders, big and small, left India to take up new responsibilities in Pakistan, virtually the League and the Muslim community were left leaderless. Those who stayed behind left back decided either to wind up the League or to keep out of politics. A large number of leaders also joined the Congress\textsuperscript{108}.

Amidst political uncertainties a meeting of the League council was held in Madras on 10\textsuperscript{th} March, 1948. Out of the 147 councillors only 30 attended the meeting and most of them were from South India. As expected, the question of the continuance of the league was the main item in the agenda of the meeting. The argument of Muhammad Ismail, the convener of the Conference, that, since the Muslims had no other organization to ventilate their grievances, the continuance of the League was needed was generally agreed and accepted. So it was decided to continue the League, with a new name,
Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), with Muhammad Ismail and Mahbud Ali Baig as president and general secretary respectively\textsuperscript{109}. It is said that the decision of continuance of Muslim League was taken with the concurrence of Muhammad Ali Jinnah\textsuperscript{110}. When president of the Malabar Muslim League, Abdus Sattar Sait, migrated to Pakistan to take up a new responsibility, Abdur Rahman Bafaky Tangal was elected as president and he continued in that position until his death on 19\textsuperscript{th} January, 1973.

Leaders of the League quickly realized that unless organized politically the community would not be able to climb in the social ladder and could not play any positive role in the future formation of the country. They also realized the fact that if the Muslim community was split up among many political parties, they would not be able to voice the problems of the community effectively. This realization coupled with the swift efforts of its new leaders to regain its lost glory began to generate results. This quick recovery was visible in the subsequent elections in the Malabar region. For instance, in the District Board elections held towards the close of 1947,
the Muslim League in co-operation with the Socialist Party put up candidates to all the 42 seats but could not win any of them. After three years in the bye-election to the Madras Legislative Assembly from the Malappuram Constituency the League candidate got through without much hardships and the two Congress candidates lost even their deposits\textsuperscript{111}. This was the first Assembly election, which the Muslims League faced after the partition of the country. In the 1952 Assembly elections, the League got five of its candidates through, whereas the Congress could secure only four seats out of 32 it contested. Thus, within a period of five years since its total disintegration, the League grew into a political force to be reckoned with in Malabar.

Meanwhile the Untied Kerala Movement was getting momentum and the Muslim League unanimously demanded the formation of Kerala State by joining the Travancore-Cochin princely states with Malabar. As early as April, 1954, the Malabar District Muslim League had passed a resolution demanding the formation of the state of Kerala. It is to be noted that The Praja Socialist Party (PSP) and a large section of the
Congressmen in Malabar were against the formation of the Kerala State merging Malabar with the Travancore-Cochin princely states\textsuperscript{112}. As noted earlier the Travancore-Cochin States were comparatively free from the political turbulence that affected the British Indian Provinces. The Travancore-Cochin Muslim League could hardly do anything to ventilate the grievances of Muslims as it was known more for its non-political activities than political. In the meantime the Kerala State was formed on linguistic basis comprising the areas of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore, on 1\textsuperscript{st} November, 1956.

With the formation of the Kerala State, all political parties intensified state-wise consolidation of their political forces as a preparatory step for the forthcoming Assembly elections. The Muslim League, which had no influence in the central and southern parts of Kerala, convened a conference at Ernakulam, inviting delegates from various political and non-political organizations all over Kerala, on 18\textsuperscript{th} November 1956. The conference was presided over by Muhammad Ismail, president of the Indian Union Muslim League and was addressed by several prominent League leaders. It was in this conference
that the Kerala State Muslim League was formed with Bafaky Tangal as president and K. M. Seethi Sahib as secretary.

The first general elections to the Kerala Legislative Assembly, after the formation of the Kerala State, were held in March 1957. The state was divided into 114 assembly constituencies, of which 12 were double-member constituencies. The total number of seats in the assembly, thus, stood at 126. The League not having the recognition of a state political party contested in 16 constituencies and got elected in eight. In the Lok Sabha elections held in the same year, the League fielded two candidates (Manjeri and Calicut) and got elected in one. The percentage of votes polled in favour of League candidates was 4.72 and 5.81 in the assembly and Lok Sabha elections respectively. The tables below show party position in the Assembly and Lok Sabha Polls in 1957 elections.
Table 8
Party Position in the Kerala Assembly 1957

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats Contested</th>
<th>Seats Won</th>
<th>% Votes Secured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>35.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSP</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSP</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim League</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independants</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unopposed (Karnataka Samithy / Anglo Indian (Nominated)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9
Party Position in the Lok Sabha Election in Kerala, 1957

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats Contested</th>
<th>Seats Secured</th>
<th>Percentage of Votes polled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>34.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSP</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim League</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independants</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The efforts of the Muslim League to forge an alliance with Congress and like-minded parties to keep the Communists out of power did not materialize. But Praja Socialist Party turned positively to the offer of the Muslim League and the subsequent alliances of both helped, to a great extent, to stall the possibility of the communists sweeping the polls of 1957. The League-Congress discord has been attributed as a pertinent factor for the Congress defeat in the 1957 elections. The twenty years that followed independence, the Muslim League adopted an anti-Congress policy, except during the period 1960-62. It was mainly because of the untouchability policy followed by the Congress towards Muslim League after independence. But Congress soon realized the political reality in the state which led to the formation League–PSP-Congress alliance in the second assembly elections held in 1960.

After the 1957 elections, the Election Commission granted the League the status of a ‘state party’ and allotted ‘ladder’ as its election symbol. Meanwhile the anti-communist forces geared up for a struggle against the government popularly known in history as the ‘Liberation Struggle’ (Vimochana
Samaram). The struggle mainly targeted the education and land reform policies of the Communist government. The League also participated in the struggle. Criticizing the ‘Education Bill’ C H Muhammad Koya, leader of the Muslim League in the assembly, described it as a “Nazi-model” bill119

The ‘Liberation Struggle’ spearheaded by the Catholic Church and supported by other communities led to the dismissal of the first Communist government in Kerala on July 31, 1959. Mid-term elections were held in Kerala on 1 February 1960. The Congress–PSP-Muslim League alliance captured 94 out of 126 seats in the assembly. An eleven member ministry headed by Pattom A. Thanupillai was sworn in on 22nd February, 1960. The Muslim League was not included in the ministry due to the obstinacy of the Congress High Command and it had to be satisfied with the speakership of Seethi Shahib. After the death of Seethi Shahib, the then speaker of the assembly, the Muslim League withdrew its support to the government. The alliance soon cracked and the Muslim League entered into an electoral understanding with the CPI in the 1962 Lokh Sabha polls. From 1962 to 1969, the League was
part of the alliance formed by the left parties.

The political alignment of Muslim League with secular parties like CPI and later CPI(M) reflected a change on the entire communal question. The capturing of 14 seats (out of 15 seats contested) out of the total of 133 seats in the assembly further increased the prominence of Muslim League in Kerala politics. In the Lok Sabha polls held in the same year (1967), the League contested in two seats and got elected in both with 6.60 percent of total votes polled in the state. Ever since, in all the elections, both to the Assembly and Lok Sabha, the League could maintain its support base with more or less the same number of seats.

Meanwhile the split in the Congress in 1969 forced Mrs. Gandhi to adopt a pragmatic electoral alliance throughout the country, which had its reflection in Kerala politics also. In Kerala, the law and order situation under the CPI (M)-led government deteriorated to an irreparable condition and the big-brotherly attitude of the CPI (M) in its dealings with minor parties alienated the League from the CPI (M) – led alliance. They patiently waited till their demands for Malappuram
district and a new varsity at Calicut were met. Once their prime objectives were fulfilled, the League happily crossed over to the CPI –led alliance in 1969 and it became a partner in the Mini- Front Ministry headed by C Achutha Menon on 1st November, 1969. Since then the League never deserted the Congress and the UDF, after the latter’s formation in 1980’s.

The Mini-Front Ministry, as the very label indicates, was a small one and the ministers had to handle several portfolios together. C. H. Muhammed Koya was allotted Home, judicial administration, elections, vigilance, waqf, tourism (Hajj), printing and stationery, besides education which he was handling in the previous ministry. Avukkadar Kutty Naha, the other minister of the League was allotted public works and local bodies, in addition to community development and fisheries he was holding. It was for the first time after independence that a Muslim was handling the Home portfolio. Of course, it was a time for the League to be proud of itself that half a dozen important portfolios were in its hands including the most covetous Home portfolio.

The next election was held on 17th September 1970. The
League could win only 11 seats in the place of 14, which it could secure in the last assembly. Such was the honour and prestige of C H Muhammad Koya that the opposition did not even field a candidate against him but only supported an independent candidate. The success of the Mini-Front in the elections led to the second-time appointment of C. Achutha Menon as the chief minister of Kerala. The Muslim League ministers handled more or less the same portfolios. Later on Congress also joined the ministry, thus, making it a real United Front ministry\textsuperscript{121}.

The 1970’s was a turning point in the history of Congress-League relations. The anti-League attitude which the Congress was following, since Independence, changed considerably. The Congress came to accept the League as a political party and not a mere communal group. The League reciprocated by extending its full support to the Congress leadership not only at the state level but also in the national level. In the presidential election in September 1969, the League, even without being asked by the Congress leadership, extended full support to the Congress and its candidate, V.V. Giri. In fact, Giri was the
choice of the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. League’s support was a great consolation for her especially at a time when she had only a thin majority in the parliament. It is to be noted that when Mrs. Gandhi nationalized banks and abolished Privy Purses of the erstwhile rulers of princely states and when she adopted similar progressive measures, the League accorded an unconditional support to the central Congress leadership.

Meanwhile a section of the League, which had strong disagreement over its relationship with the Congress, raised a banner of revolt against the official leadership. Their opposition was getting sharpened and led to a split in the League on 2nd April, 1975, and the new organization came to be called All-India Muslim League with M.K. Haji as president. In the next elections to the assembly, held under the shadow of emergency, the United Front secured more than three-fourths majority\textsuperscript{122}. In fact, it was a testing ground for both the leagues. While the IUML captured 13 seats, the dissident League could secure only 3 seats including one Harijan reserved seat. The 1977 elections once again testified the popularity that the IUML enjoyed among the rank and file of the Muslim Community.
Within a period of two and a half years of United-Front rule, three leaders- K. Karunakaran, A.K. Antony and P.K. Vasudevan Nair- came to the chief ministership and all of them resigned because of one or other reasons. Next was the turn of the Muslim League and its stalwart, Muhammad Koya who was an acceptable personality to all the Front partners and he assumed office on October 12, 1979. But the Front, in fact, was a divided house and no one could unite them. Then a series of split occurred among coalition partners followed by political maneuverings in an unprecedented way. Unable to cope with new developments in state politics, Muhammad Koya tendered his resignation on 1st December, 1979. Thus, the Muslims by using their political 'ladder' climbed to the most powerful office of the state, that is, the chief minister. This was the climax of their political ascendancy and the Muslim League could never regain such a state of grandeur in its life. The IUML improved its electoral prospects in 1980 Assembly and Lok Sabha elections by winning two (out of two contested) seats to Lok Sabha and 14 seats (out of twenty one contested) to the State Legislative Assembly. Regarding percentage of votes, the party secured 5.55 percent and 7.18 percent to the Lok Sabha and
Assembly respectively. In all the elections after 1980 to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly till 2006 the Muslims stood solidly with the UDF. In all the Lok Sabha elections, since 1980, the League secured two seats each except in 2004 Lok Sabha polls, when the League could win only in one seat\(^{124}\). But in the Assembly elections the number of seats the League could secure varied from 13 to 17 except in 2006. In 2006 elections the League could secure only nine seats including one independent.

In 1965 the pro-Marxist attitude of certain League members split the party and they formed a new one – Samastha Kerala Muslim League (SKML). But it could not survive more than two years of life since its birth\(^{125}\). The next split occurred in 1975 and a new organization came into being - All India Muslim league (AIML). It was also a pro-Marxist lobby without any strong grass-roots\(^{126}\). Another party for Muslims took birth in 1983. It was exclusively for Sunni Muslims. It was named Muslim Democratic Party of India. Its main aim was to protect shariat laws and the uplift of the Muslims in social, economic, cultural and educational fields. It could
neither make any impact in Kerala politics nor pose any threat to IUML in its electoral prospects. The third split of the League was in 1996, when a section of the League, claiming custodians of true secular ideals, broke away from it and formed Indian National League (INL), alleging the IUML a pseudo-secular organization. The People’s Democratic Party (PDP), which took birth in the aftermath of demolition of Babri Masjid, under the initiative of Abdul Nassar Madhani, portrayed itself as the protectors of backward class Muslims. But the election results showed that these factions could not make any notable impact in the politics of the state in general and electoral politics in particular. Neither of the splinter groups was in a position to put up a challenge to the parent League or reduce its base support. The following table highlights this fact.
### Table 10
Kerala Assembly Election Results, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties/Front</th>
<th>Seats Won</th>
<th>Votes Polled (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>31.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUML</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KC (Jacob)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KC (Mani)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KC (B)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSP (B)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDF Rebel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDF</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI (M)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KC (Joseph)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDF (Ind)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INL</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Post poll survey, Kerala Assembly Election Study, 2001- CSDS.
The following table brings to light the fact that the Muslims, by and large, extended their full support to UDF, in 2001 elections, in spite of the claims forwarded by various left parties and splinter groups that majority of Muslims were with them. The election results show that they voted en bloc in favour of UDF.

Table. 11
Kerala Assembly Election 2001 (Percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cast/Religion</th>
<th>LDF</th>
<th>UDF</th>
<th>BJP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nair</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Upper Caste</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddy Tappers</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim OBC</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Muslims</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian/Roman Christians</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christians</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Post Poll Survey, Kerala Assembly Election Study, 2001, CSDS
The election results, subsequent to the formation of these splinter groups, reveal the fact that except making some marginal influence in certain constituencies in favour of either LDF or UDF (depends on poll-eve election stance), they could not make any great inroads into the traditional pockets of the Muslim League. For instance, the PDP, which was expected to be a threat to the IUML in 1996 Assembly and Lok Sabha polls, which were the first elections after its birth in 1992, polled only about 1.75 lakhs votes. The PDP-led coalition candidates, who contested in 90 constituencies, lost their deposits just like most of the independents. In 2004 Lok Sabha polls when all the nineteen UDF candidates tasted defeat, the only candidate who got elected was E. Ahamad. He was a Muslim League candidate contested from Ponnani in Malappuram, a stronghold of Muslims.

Even when the UDF had a humiliating defeat and one of the two League candidates was defeated in Manjeri, the support of the majority of Muslims was in favour of League and UDF. The following table vindicates this fact.
Table 12
2004 Lok Sabha Election, Caste, Religion wise voting (in Percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste/Religion</th>
<th>UDF</th>
<th>LDF</th>
<th>BJP</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu Upper caste</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairs</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezhava</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBCs</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalits</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The IUML is the biggest regional party in Kerala. It is also the third biggest political party, next only to CPI (M) and Congress (I). A profile of Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies in Kerala reveals the fact that League draws its support mainly from the Malabar region. Numerically, the IUML has the largest number of pocket seats in Kerala; the CPI (M) comes only next in that order. For instance, in the 1996 Assembly elections, the strength of IUML in the assembly was reduced from eighteen to twelve; out of the six seats it lost four were outside Malappuram district. In terms of gains in office, the Muslim League is unparalleled in state politics since 1967. The bargaining capacity of the League was so strong that even the erstwhile Congress chief minister of UDF, A K Antony, was very much exasperated. He commented: “the minorities are using their organized power to get undeserving concessions from the state governments”. As everyone knew, it targeted mainly the Muslim League and the League turned against Antony. Consequently he was replaced by Oommen Chandy.

The basic ideology of the Muslim League is to stand for
the cause of the Muslim community in the country. The Muslim League in reality is a religious party and its appeal solely lies with the Muslims. A non-believer has no place in the party. However, League welcomes all those who can adhere to the basic principles of the party. Though a communal party, it always stood for communal harmony and national unity. Secularism is one of its declared goals. The achievements of the party in various fields form the subject matter of another thesis and it is beyond the scope of the present study.

**Jainism and Buddhism in Kerala**

**The Jains**

Jainism, according to the tradition of the Jainas, had travelled to Andhra Pradesh as early as 6th century A.D. With the spread of Brahminical concepts, the orders of Jainism and Buddhism would also have found their way to the South. It is assumed that during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya, there was a movement of Jaina population to Sravanabelgola of Hassan district of Karnataka, under the leadership of Bhadrabahu.
The Jains who penetrated to this southern region of peninsular India through the territories of Mysore and Tamil Nadu selected different places of forest areas of northern Kerala and later they moved to the south and settled in areas comprising the present district of Kanyakumari. However, their earliest achievements in this region are shrouded in obscurity as we lack literary, epigraphical and archaeological evidence\textsuperscript{131}. The Jaina \textit{Puranas} also do not say anything about Kerala\textsuperscript{132}. But it can well be assumed that when the Jain missionaries reached Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, some of them would have made their way to Kerala also. There is sufficient evidence of Vishakhamuni of Sravanabelgola sending missionaries to Kerala. They might have visited Kerala through Kodagu, along a trade route available in those days. An inscription in Sravanabelgola mentions the names of some athletes from Kerala who participated in an athletic meet conducted at that place\textsuperscript{133}.

The nomadic features of Jain monks, in early days, had kept them moving from place to place. After one wave another comes and thus the mission of the religion is carried on. Thus,
there might have been many groups of Jain missionaries, who visited Kerala during the early centuries. The missionaries from Dharmapuri-Salem area might have visited places around Palakkad. Meanwhile another infiltration took place through the South, the present Kanyakumari District of Tamil Nadu. After the 7th century A. D., Jainism found its way to the southern parts of Kerala also.

The Jaina population of Kerala, though numerically very small, was chiefly located in the districts of Wayanad, Palakkad, Kasargod and Kozhicode. Among these districts, Wayanad has more Jains and Jaina vestiges in Kerala. It is seen that, in the district of Wayanad, Jaina temples of some antiquity exist along with those constricted during this century. In Mayilatippara, near Kalpetta, there is a small temple for Candranatha Tirthamkara, which is supposed to be one of the oldest of Jaina temples in this area. A new beautiful Jaina temple was constructed in Puliyarmalai in 1933, where the old vestiges are housed. Another district in Kerala, where Jaina remnants have been found is Palakkad. The Jaina community of Palakkad mainly consists of immigrants from Mysore who came to settle
there recently\textsuperscript{135}. The other two districts where Jaina relics are found are Kasaragod and Kozhikode. Some minor vestiges have also been discovered recently from Thrissur, Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram.

Most of these temples, in course of time, were either converted into Hindu temples or underwent a natural dilapidation. The present Jaina population of Kerala, around 2000 people, is concentrated mainly in Wyanad district.\textsuperscript{136}

**The Buddhists**

History records that Emperor Ashoka sent prince Mahendra, his son or brother to Sri Lanka for spreading Buddhism around 200 B.C. Simultaneously there was a migration of Buddhists to the other southern states as well. It is assumed that the expedition of Mahindra would not have spared Kerala en route to Sri Lanka. The earliest Buddhist record available regarding the propagation of Buddhism is Mahavamsa, a Ceylonian chronicle\textsuperscript{137}. Buddhism was popular in Tamil Nadu at the beginning of the Christian era, as explained in the *Sangam Kritis*. The very word *Sangham* is same as the *Sangha* of Buddhism\textsuperscript{138}. It is understood that Buddhists might
have branched out to Kerala also, during the same period.

There are evidences to show that Buddhism was popular in Kerala till about the middle of the 8th century when Brahmin domination started and Sri Sankaracharya (788-820) re-established Hinduism not only in Kerala but all over India. In spite of Hinduism being dominant, Buddhism also continued to linger on in Kerala, till the arrival of the Portuguese around 1500 AD. A good number of Buddha images have been recovered from coastal areas in the Kollam and Alappuzha districts of Kerala. It is believed that the Buddhist faith was firmly established in this area in a place called Srimulavasam, which is now under the sea.

The close resemblance of Jainism and Buddhism in ideals and organization had left over in Kerala a common cultural legacy. There are historians who evidently argue that the present Ezhavas of Kerala are descendants of early Buddhists and they had close association with the Buddhist of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka was called Eezham in Tamil and naturally the Buddhists of Travancore, in close contact with Sri Lanka (Eezham) came to be known as Ezhavas. The Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana
Sangham (SNDP Sangham) had in the very outset objectives common with a Buddhist Sangha: eradication of illiteracy, fighting against casteism, etc. Even the uniform they use during a pilgrimage is yellow, just as the Buddhist monks used to wear\textsuperscript{141}.

There are sufficient reasons to believe that a stratum of early Christians of Kerala were Buddhists. The tradition is that they were Brahmins baptized by St. Thomas himself. During the first century the whole of South India had no Brahmin population. The tradition is based on the poem Marthomman Pattu, probably written in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century A.D., by that time Brahmins were found in great numbers. Some terms used by present-day Christians bear ample testimony to their connections with early Buddhists and Jainists. The term ‘Palli’, which the Christians use to denote a church, is a Buddhist or Jaina term. \textit{Palli} denotes not only the building of the church, but also the gathering connected with it. It was a Buddhist concept. Similarly \textit{Pallikkutam} means a school, which is a gathering near the \textit{Palli}. Turning the early Buddhist settlements to educational institutions was a Buddhist or Jaina practice in
early times. The Christians call their priests *accan*, which is a *prakrit* term. A good number of Syrian Christians in Kerala practise Ayurveda, either exclusively for the families, or for the general society. This also shows a Buddhist affiliation.

Having common cultural legacy, both Jainism and Buddhism had same reforming effect on certain outdated primitive rituals. For instance, many of the primitive rituals in Kerala which required the blood of animals were later given up by those practitioners due to the propagation of non-violence by Jain as well as Buddhist monks. In many of the cults like *Bhagavati* and *Teyyattam* the rite of ‘*Gurusi*’ made out of *Chunam* (lime) and turmeric was substituted for blood–rite\textsuperscript{142}.

To sum up, Jains and Buddhists have largely contributed to the cultural heritage of Kerala. Though Jainism and Buddhism constitute religious minorities in Kerala, the former exists in few pockets of Wyanad and Palakkad districts numbering around 2000, the latter had almost been wiped off from Kerala. Being numerically very small, Jains are not in a position to make any effect on the society and politics of Kerala.
The Jews of Kerala

There are five distinct groups of Jews in India. The European, the Baghdadi or Iraqui, the Manipuri, the Marathi and the Malayali. The European Jews came mostly from Germany and Austria, escaping from the Nazis. The Baghdadi came in the wake of the British conquest of India and are found in big cities. The Manipui Jews have far eastern features and claim to be the descendants of one of the lost Tribes of Israel who wandered into China and came to Manipur and Mizoram via Burma. The Marathi Jews who call themselves Benei Israel or the children of Israel are the largest Jewish community in India. The Malayali Jews, considered the most ancient Jewish community in India, could be found until recently living in small groups in the erstwhile Kochi state. Most of the Marathis and the Malayalis have immigrated to the modern state of Israel, leaving behind just a few souls.

It is difficult to determine the ancestry of the Kerala Jews as there are no reliable records in this regard. It is believed that the earliest Jews to have come to Kerala were the sailors in the ships of King Solomon (10th century B.C.), which
according to the Bible, used to bring home from afar “once in three years, silver, elephants’ teeth, peacocks and apes”\textsuperscript{144}. Thus it is clear that the earliest groups of Jews came as traders and settled down in harbor towns like Kozhikode, Kodungalloor and Kollam.

Being primarily a trading group, the Jews had to be a party in the trade rivalries between other groups like Muslims and various European nationalities particularly the Portuguese. Unable to withstand the trade competition of powerful Arabs and Portuguese, the Jews abandoned their coastal settlements and escaped into the interiors. Many Jews fled in fear and escaped to Cochin and Ernakulam. The darkest period in the history of the Jews of Kerala was the time of Portuguese supremacy. Under them, the Jews were subjected to contemptuous treatment, to oppression and restrictions of all kinds in addition to arbitrary taxes levied upon them\textsuperscript{145}.

At the beginning of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, there were twelve synagogues in Kerala – four in Kochi (Kochangadi, Thekkumbhagam, Paradesi and Kadavumbhagam), four in Ernakulam (Thekkumbagam and Kaduvumbhagam), and one
each at Parur, Palur, Chennamangalam, and Thuruthur. With the establishment of the modern state of Israel, the Jews in batches, big and small, from every land including Kerala left for the new Promised Land, leaving behind a few sad souls too old and weak to launch forth. Like Jains and Buddhists, the Jews are also on the verge of extinction. Being numerically a minuscule community, the Jews are unable to play any role in the society and politics of Kerala.
Reference

3. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
13. While the Syrian Catholics, out of disillusionment due to infighting in the Congress and the poor governance of the UDF Government, turned towards NDA and BJP in 2004 Lok Sabha elections, the Latin Catholics preferred CPI (M) and other left parties to NDA and BJP.
15. Ibid. p. 15
16. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
20. Ibid.

22. A. Mathew, A History of Educational Development in Kerala, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, 1987. p. 87


28. Ibid.


31. Ibid. p. 98


33. Ibid.


37. Ibid.


41. Ibid. p. 60

42. Dr. Cyriac Thomas, Church and Elections. Dynamics of State Politics. N. Jose Chander. Ed., Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1986. p. 103


46. Freedom Movement in Kerala, P. 283

47. Ibid, p. 288


50. Ibid. P. 67

51. Freedom Movement in Kerala, P. 338


54. George Mathew, Communal Road to a Secular Kerala, Op. cit. p. 103

55. C. Narayana Pillai, Pattom Muthal Panampally Vare (Mal.), DC Books, Kottayam, 1976, p. 162

56. Ibid.

57. Since Congress could not muster the required majority by itself, it entered into an alliance with Tamil Nadu Travancore Congress (TNTC) and got the
support of two independents and two dissidents from the Socialist Party. But later TNTC withdrew its support and John resigned.


60. AKCC Bulletin, September 15, 1947


64. Ibid.


68. In Kaduthuruthy Constituency, Kottayam District, the Church extended full support to Sri. Mons Joseph (KC(J)), the present PWD Minister, and he was elected twice, in 1996 and 2001, though he contested as a rival candidate of KC (M), in the LDF panel, in both times.

69. The Church vehemently opposed The Self-Financing Colleges Act, 2006 on the ground that it violated minority rights. KEAR revisions which envisaged the entrusting of aided school appointments to PSC and school administration to local bodies, brought forth opposition from all communal organizations including the Church. The text books revision elicited opposition from the Church on the ground that it would promote atheism and materialism among children. The Church opposed the Single Window System to higher secondary admissions on the plea that it apparently violated minority rights to administer educational institutions of their choice, guaranteed by the constitution.
70. The Malayala Manorama, February 11, 2008

71. Fr. Chandrankunnel was highlighting the point that all political parties were equally enthusiastic in controlling private managements. He was particularly mentioning the passing of Self-financing Colleges Act, 2006, by the Kerala Legislative Assembly, unanimously with the support of all the political parties, right and left. He was speaking in a seminar was organized by the Pala Corporate Educational Agency for the teachers from upper primary to higher secondary, mainly to educate them on recent educational and political issues in the state.


73. Ibid. p. 18

74. M. L. Dames (Ed.) The Book of Duarte Barbosa, vol.II. pp. 2-4


85. K. V. Krishna Aiyar, The Zamorins of Calicut, (Calicut, 1938), P. 52
89. Quoted from ‘Reflections of Mappila Heritage’ by N. P. Muhammad.
90. Asghar Ali Engineer, Kerala Muslims a Historical Perspective Op. cit. p. 15
92. Ibid. p.7
95. It was a protest movement led by Mahatma Gandhi against British attack on Turkey whose Sultan was also the Caliph, one of the powerful leaders of Islam.
97. The Muslims kept strong grudge against British rule for two reasons – First, they firmly believed that the British were mainly responsible for destruction of the Muslim rule in India. Secondly, the Muslims were inimical to English language as they considered it as the language of hell.
98. Based on the schedule appended to Mr. Govindan’s note in Service Committee Report. p. 180


104. Dr. Abdul Azeez, Op. cit. p. 25

105. The elected members of the League were B. Pokker Sahib, P. P Hassan Koya, A.K. Kadher kutty, P. K. Moideen Kutty, Koyappathodi Ahmad Haji, K. M. Seethi Sahib, Abdarahiman Ali Raja and M.V. Hydros. This vindicates the great support the League had among the Muslims of Malabar.


107. Dr. Abdul Azeez, Op. cit. p. 27

108. Ibid. p. 35


111. The Congress party had two official candidates, Palat Kunhikoya and K. M. Ibrahim, due to the serious disagreements within the party. The election was necessitated by the death of the sitting M. L. A., K. A. Kutti Haji.

112. They were against the merger of Malabar with Travancore – Cochin states because they thought that the merger would be disadvantageous to Malabar. Some Congress men in Travancore – Cochin also held similar views, considering Malabar a deficit area.
113. The constituencies in which the League candidates won were: Tanur, Tirur, Kuttippuram, Kondotty, Tirurangadi, Mankada, Malappuram and Manjeri (Reservation).

114. K. Ismail Sahib was elected from Manjeri and K. M. Seethi Sahib was defeated in Calicut.


116. DPR, Backgrounder to 1987 Assembly Elections, part 1, p. 13


119. Ibid. p. 56


121. Ibid. p. 99

122. The United-Front secured 111 out of 140 seats.

123. K. Karunakaran assumed chief ministership after the election but had to resign due to an adverse verdict by the High Court in Rajan’s Case. Antony became the next chief minister but resigned due to the split in the Congress party in October 1978. P. K. Vasudevan Nair, who assumed office in October 1978, resigned being unable to make consensus on ‘gift deeds’ bill among the Front partners, on 7th October, 1979.

124. In 2004 Lok Sabha polls League candidate E. Ahamed won from Manjeri constituency and it was the only seat that the UDF could secure in that election.


126. Ibid.

127. The Hindu, May 11, 1996

The statement of A. K. Antony infuriated the Muslim League and they demanded leadership change on other pretexts which resulted in the replacement of A. K. Antony by Oommen Chandy, another leader of the Congress, as the chief minister.


Ibid. p. 207