Chapter 6
CRITICAL ANALYSIS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Introduction

The Catholic Church in Kerala has often been called as ‘the state with the soul of the Church’, mainly because of its vibrancy, dynamism and active involvement in the society. In this sense, we can term the Church in Kerala Society as a primary agent and ‘Angel of God’ who communicates meaningfully. But in order to designate it in such a manner, it should encode and disseminate God’s message of love, kindness, generosity, values of the Beatitude and hospitality through its communication techniques in a glorious mode.

One can definitely observe that though the members of the Church in Kerala consist of small percentage of less than 10% of the total population, its active presence through the communication means act like a magic bullet, so that one can’t ignore or undermine it so easily. This is evident from the Church’s performance of prestigious institutions such as hospitals, arts and science colleges, schools, technical educational institutions and myriad forms of ministries which were detailed in the previous chapters.

But from the survey and analysis, we have seen that there exists certain noise factors in different communication techniques with variations in intensity. This noise would naturally affect all components of the communication process such as sender, message, channel and receiver. Consequently, it generates severe criticism from the part of other religions, sects and parties as it is detailed in the survey results. A close analysis of the survey results helps us to rectify this by pinpointing the communication techniques.

Thus, this chapter mainly deals with testing and proving the hypothesis one by one. The first part deals with the hypothesis statement and its logical verification through describing the assessment of the survey result. The second part deals with certain suggestions and recommendation as an outcome of the survey.
2. Hypothesis proved

2.1. Paradigm shift in the Church Leadership

There should be a paradigm shift in the leadership techniques of the Catholic Church in Kerala Society giving more emphasis to a democratic and participatory communication technique.

2.1.1. The response towards the first question-the organizational caliber of the Church leaders (refer no. 5.5.1) - was somewhat a mixed one, which proves that there should be a timely change and an improvement in the training programme.

2.1.2. Again, the approach of the Church towards the youth leaders also needs to be improved. Here only 27 % (Refer no.5.1.2) agreed to the above mentioned question.

2.1.3. Concerned with the controversial issue of self financing colleges in Kerala too, the approach of the leaders is to be changed as per the survey (only 19% agreed). The respondents disagree (40%) with the statement that the leader’s approach towards this issue is in conformity with the Bible (Refer 5.1.3)

2.1.4. Church leaders often fail to utilize the resources and thus they fail to recognize the real caliber of the believers as per the survey result. Only 15 % completely agreed to the statement. (Refer 5.1.4)

2.1.5. The same is the case with the action plan in fostering and developing lay persons. As per the survey results value level, only 1/3 agrees (32%) to the statement (Refer 5.1.5.)

2.1.6. Furthermore, the Church has not successfully cultivated spokes-persons or lay leaders to interfere in the socio-political field, even though it has an infrastructure and resource persons. The response (Refer 5.1.9)
seems to be very negative, such as only 16% agreed that the statement is true.

2.2. Prophetic role and audacity to uphold values and principles

Catholic Church should be audacious enough to fight prophetically against the issues of violations of constitutional rights, wearing down of the traditional values and morals and must uphold its rights and duties of pastoral exhortations through pastoral letters and encyclicals.

2.2.1. With regard to certain ethical and moral issues, the respondents are in favor of the Catholic Church. For example, a huge majority of 76% agreed that mercy killing must not be legalized (Refer 5.1.12) and Church should fight against this.

2.2.2. Concerned with a debatable issue which emerged in 2010, during the Communist regime in Kerala namely, the formation and training of the female candidates soon after S.S.L.C, 44% agreed that the traditional stand of the Church is must be maintained (Refer no. 5.1.13).

2.2.3. Again, majority (54%) agreed that the Church must oppose the recommendations of the law reforms of Justice V. R. Krishnayer (Refer qu.no. 5.1.11).

2.2.4. The circulars and pastoral letters distributed by the Church during parliamentary elections, exhorting the faithful to carry out the right to vote, have influenced the faithful as per the study and there is nothing wrong in such steps (Refer nos.5.1.8, 5.1.6).

2.2.5. The concern of the Church to explain her socio-political viewpoint to the faithful is apt. According to the majority (47%) she must dare to move so (Refer 5.1.7).
2.2.6. Church’s role in teaching her faithful about the socio-political issues are also highly appreciated by the respondents. More than 50% agreed that Church must recommend to carry out the right to vote according to ones consciousness; as well she must interfere in fixing the candidates during different election seasons.(Refer no.5.1.10. and 5.1.6.)

2.2.7. The Bishops and Church in Kerala Society took daring steps against the communist regime throughout its tenure (2007-2011). Various self financing issues, publication of pastoral letters during election, adamant steps during the C.M.S. College strike and other related issues along with the consequent suspension of a degree student named Jaike, etc are some of the prominent examples of direct confrontation. All these had a background of constant tension between atheism and faith, stating that the communist regime is trying to demolish the Catholic Church by destroying the morale of the Church. Thus, Church was adamant in reacting to the communist - atheist movements throughout the communist regime. A good number of respondents (49%) evaluated that this step was very essential (Refer nos. 5.1.17., 5.1.18., 5.1.19, 5.6.20)

2.3. New communication techniques to become more relevant

Unless and until the Catholic Church in Kerala adopts new communication techniques and management style other than the routine mode decoding and encoding, it will be outdated and irrelevant.

2.3.1. The Sunday sermons and its pulpit, which are a great opportunity for communicating the messages, are to be used with atmost care and preparation. Around 53% feels that the Sunday sermons are not prepared well. It is suicidal, for such a great crowd assembles each Sunday and it is not being utilized effectively (Refer no. 5.2.6).
2.3.2. The competency of priests was highly appreciated during early days. But they seem to be outdated in the modern era. This is dangerous since they are supposed to be authorities and exhorters in many aspects. According to the survey findings, priests are not fully competent enough to understand the current problems and to interpret them Biblically (Refer no. 5.2.9.)

2.3.3. There is an eye opening revelation concerned with the professional management or problem-solving capacity of the leaders of the Church such as priests and nuns in a parish context. The study states that sisters and priests are not so perfectly capable of solving the day to day problems in the parish. Naturally, one can conclude that they may turn to some other means to solve their problems (Refer no. 5.2.13).

2.3.4. Biblical based exhortations on values, morals and ethics are to be improved to a great extent since the respondents feel that they are not perfectly done in the Church. Contextual and situational analysis and its interpretations constitute important aspects of prophetic and priestly duties. (Refer 5.2.7)

2.3.5. The Basic Christian Communities are the grass root communication agent of the Catholic Church. It is a model for others in many respects. It should be utilized at its maximum for getting the highest result and widening the horizon. But the study indicates that it is less effective in solving the socio-personal problems of the faithful. Only 17% think that they are very effective in that case. (Refer no. 5.4.10)

2.3.6. There is a disagreement with regard to the collection of money during admission and appointment in support of running and developing the Church run Educational Institutions (Refer 5.6.10)

2.3.7. What would be the relevance of parish festivals and other such feasts with huge spending of money and effort, if they don’t help to promote real communion and spirit? Only 18% agrees that they are very
beneficial in promoting unity in the parish context. Thus, a restructuring is a must in this regard. *(Refer no. 5.6.5)*

2.3.8. Catholic educational enterprises, while largely efficient in many respects such as infrastructures, has been woefully terrible in the matter of innovation and excellence to meet the challenge of changing needs. We cannot deny the fact that the present system produces far too many candidates for unproductive jobs. The strategy of the Catholic education must consist of an agency for planning the total Catholic educational effort in a diocese. Such an agency could help coordinating the work of the religious orders and congregations with other educational agencies in the diocese. Cluster systems, mutual exchange of faculty, smart classes etc are some new techniques *(Refer nos. 5.6.4, 5.4.4).*

2.4. **Beatitudes are influential and mirrored**

Even if the deep rooted role of Holy Bible and the Beatitude in the communication techniques of the Church is immeasurable with definite norms and standard, they are highly influential and are reflected in the activities and expressions of the faithful in different ways.

2.4.1. Charity, kindness, donation and generosity that exists among the faithful is a sign that the values of Bible gets reflected in their life. A good number of respondents are of the opinion that *(Refer 5.3.1)* they always try to help the poor (26%). The statement is somewhat true according to 39%. This too is a positive sign that the personal life of the individual is influenced by certain values which are inculcated by principles of the Beatitude.

2.4.2. Religious activities are highly beneficial for the believers to counteract bribery, malpractices, etc. Around 30% agreed that the statement is very true and 34% stated that it is somewhat true *(Refer no. 5.3.6)*
2.4.3. The Bible helps the faithful in their personal life to resolve the failures and sufferings to a good degree. The fact that around 80% responses are positive is a sign that the principles of the Bible are deep-rooted in their life, though immediate feedback is not evident (Refer no.5.3.8).

2.4.4. There was an explicit question concerning the applicability of the principles of the Beatitude in practical life. Only 12% hold that they feel it is difficult (Refer no.5.3.10).

2.5. Poor media management

Though there are communication styles and techniques in the Church through social media, its management is very poor and incapable of tackling the crucial issues which the Catholic Church faces today. Thus, modern tactics and plans for empowering the Church’s communication and media sector is a must.

2.5.1. Only 33% of the respondents are influenced by the Catholic newspapers and weeklies though there are various channels of communication both in the print, visual and new media for each and every local Church. (Refer no. 5.5.1)

2.5.2. Furthermore, the ardent desire of the respondents are towards the launching of new channels, radio stations etc. A vast majority (78%), opinioned that there should be some sort of effective media to communicate (Refer no.5.5.2.)

2.5.3. Public relation, termed as the fifth estate of the democracy, is not so efficient in the local Church. It is to be noted that though the question was in an affirmative tone the response was negative (Refer 5.5.3). Well trained public relations offices or spokesmen for the Catholic Church during periods of crisis and confrontation too are very absolute.
For that, there should be trained persons with good communication capacity and charisma. They should be people with integrity, capacity, education, oratory capacity and above all, devotedness.

2.5.4. Concerned with the performance of art and literature, the Christians are lagging behind (Refer 5.5.10). Folklore and other traditional means of mass communication are not so popular among the faithful today. Though there are certain indigenous art forms for the Catholics they are vanishing as generations pass.

2.5.5. The performance of the official spokespersons needs to be improved. Or more eminent media friendly people are to be trained by the Church. (Refer 5.1.9).

2.5.6. Books and publications form an important means of communication. There is an urgent need for increasing and improving the publication of good books and pamphlets as well as free literature for the apostolate especially in the regional languages. Special personnel and funds ought to be earmarked for their promotion. Translations of titles produced in a single language would be good. They should also undertake publication of good secular books and work in collaboration with secular authors.

Major Catholic publications in India such as Asian Trading Cooperation (ATS), Gujarati Sahitya Publication, Media House Publication, Clarition Publication, St. Paul’s Publication etc. are practicing this. But, at a minimal level (Refer 5.5.7 and 5.5.8.)

2.5.7. The Church must soon formulate the strategy with regard to the media sector. There are lots of constraints as per the information collected by the researcher. The primary one is, the huge initial financial burden for the installation of infrastructure. Secondly, the maintenance cost and running cost for the routine business is tremendous. Though there will be advertisement income it is opined that such a project is not viable in the
long run. But one cannot deny the fact that, it is not impossible for the Church in Kerala to mobilize a professional resource team and fund for this particular purpose. (Interview with Amala Communication Department Head, PRO members Bishops House, Kanjirapally, dated 20-06-2009).

It is to be noted that though there is a media commission and other structural systems, there is no hierarchical coordination for the Church yet. Conventions and brainstorming sessions of singers, film representatives, and professionals of this field are good in order to give more effective performances and fruitful dissemination. This will also help to avoid unnecessary resource wastages and repetition of the messages.

2.6. New areas of concern

There should be new communication techniques in the Church with immediate attention.

2.6.1. Labour movement:

Strategies for improvement and revamping in this sector should be a main concern of the Church. The Church should not alienate the workers by remaining uncommitted or indifferent in cases of industrial disputes. She should affirm and uphold human values and stand for justice. She may remind the workers not only of their duties and obligations, but also of their right to fight for better wages and working conditions. She should give due recognition and moral support to those of her members to engage themselves in trade unions. Workers should be made aware of the dignity of work, their duties and their role in the development of the nation. Catholic workers have a serious obligation to join trade unions as active members and to assume, if possible, leadership positions. They must help their unions to run along sound, democratic lines.
Church must consider its human resource as valuable assets and fair wages and healthy working atmosphere may be provided to them (Refer no. 5.4.3, 5.2.10, 5.4.8).

2.6.2. Respect towards other religions:

In the context of Kerala, there is an urgent need of change in the attitude of the Church, such as proper love and esteem towards other religions. This strategy of communication may be carried out simultaneously in the families through friendly relations with non-Christian neighbors, inviting them to the homes especially on festivals; through stressing the universal character of salvation as revealed in the Bible; through exchanging suitable books about other religions, their saints and great men; through common prayer services with non-Christian students etc. More centres of dialogue should be established as an important strategy.

2.6.3. Strategic measures to help prisoners:

Several action plans must include helping the prisoners in co-operation with the government. Church must assist them to reintegrate themselves into their family and society as useful and responsible people, and develop and acquire a balanced and mature personality. It may also include: helping the families of the prisoners, educating the growing children and youth to learn the values of life and to develop a good personality and to avoid learning counter behaviour and life style, visiting the prisoners regularly or on a weekly basis, financial support at the time of marriage of their girls etc.

3. Conclusion

As we have seen in the fourth chapter, there are myriad forms of marvelous and splendid communication techniques in the Church. Notwithstanding the fact that there are certain drawbacks and failures in
these techniques, which have been detailed in the fifth chapter as respondents assessment, they are the icons and flagship of the Church. In other words, from a corporate communication parlance, the Church is branded through these decoding communication techniques. But more than a worldly and materialistic entity, Church is a spiritual entity and must work with an attitude of service and charity rather that of business and profit. This must be a guiding principle throughout her activities in the society. The doctrines and philosophy of the Beatitudes which were elaborated in the third chapter serves as the best guidance and model for this. We have seen that it is the gist of the Biblical message.

Thus by practicing the doctrines of the Beatitudes, through employing the communication means and modes which were discussed in the second chapter, the Church can work wonderfully for a better future and build up a community where justice, peace, meekness and true brotherliness would prevail. One must try to follow the true spiritual life by putting into practice the virtues such as Mercy, purity of heart, peacemaking, suffering for the sake of righteousness etc.

In other words, the role of the Church is to comfort those who mourn, as we have seen in the First Beatitude, in distress and anxiety by inculcating inner confidence, reassurance and mental strength. Sorting out the reasons of distress and anxiety in the society is an integral part of this strategy. Other ways, the Church or religion will be irrelevant as Arun Shorie remarks in his famous work ‘does he know a mothers heart’. This is very relevant in today’s’ global economic meltdown, unemployment, farmers suicide and so on.

In addition to this, the communication technique of the Church must always express Christian meekness during times of provocation, anger, malice, communal violence, religious fanaticism, riots and vengeance. Meekness, tolerance and endurance must be highly reflected in our society where immediate provocation and irritation are mounted up
baselessly. Even if we can’t create a Sri Buddha, we can at least erect an Irom Sharmila. This sort of non-violent communication is the need of the time. As the famous Buddha tale enlighten, create certain ‘Daruma toys’ - toys with Sri Buddha’s meditative posture; wherever or however we throw this toy it will be in the meditative posture with cool and calm mindedness - in our society.

Nevertheless, the Church must not forget her prophetic role also. Dharma, justice, honesty, impartiality etc are important qualities to be highlighted and upheld by her. A society led by greed, bribery, corruption, looting and plundering can’t exist for long. The demonstrations which took place worldwide such as the ‘occupy wall street protest’, the ‘jasmine revolution’, and democratic movement towards ‘lok pall bill’ and so on are a sign that citizens are thirsting for a change. The change one can of course believe in!

For this change, unconditional mercy and peaceful attitude may be a necessary and an underlining principle. There are incalculable areas and people who deserve mercy. The poor, prisoners, homeless, handicapped, sick… the list goes on. They may be victims of a particular social set up. In a society where by the number of haves and have-nots increase drastically, these merciful activities and peaceful negotiations are the greatest need of the time.

Last but not least, individuals must be rich with pure heart. As divine masters and religious books states, heart is the base of all good and evil things. If it is pure, goodness will burst out. That is why the mantra, ‘be a love bomb, not to explode, but to heal the world’, becomes meaningful in this society.

The living flame of the Gospel must not remain under the mountain. The main concern of the Church is not conversion or increasing the number of faithful. But to impart values and morals and help individuals to lead a life of love, peace, justice, mercy, generosity
and so on. Thus, the secular city and the ‘City of God’ may not constitute necessarily two opposing and warring camps; in fact, the ‘City of God’ is not built on the ruins of the secular city, but later itself can be transformed into the City of God.