CHAPTER 2

SECULARISATION AND COMMUNALISATION IN INDIA: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE
In India, the discussions about secularism till about two decades ago were mostly centred around the twin concepts of equal regard for all religions and the state's neutrality in religious matters. The contemporary debates, however, are not limited to these stereotype areas. It has now turned into a full-fledged debate in which the very meaning and content of secularism are being questioned and redefined. However, due to the fact that the Indian concept of secularism was mostly developed during the days of the framing of the Indian Constitution, a large number of academic as well as non-academic debates are even now revolving around the various provisions of the Constitution itself. The present project recognises the importance of the recent changes and acknowledges that what emerges in the end could still be an inconclusive understanding of the phenomenon. Secularism in itself appears to be an amorphous category and its interpretations have only made it still more ambiguous.
The previous chapter has dealt with some of these ambiguities. ‘Secularism’, a ‘consensus principle’ while it was introduced into the Constitution of India, has now become a much discredited and controversial concept; this is a very serious transformation. The process of this transformation from being a consensual to a contentious issue has been dealt with in the previous chapter.

Secularism or the secular state in India does not mean a rejection of religion. Secondly, a secular state is one which does not discriminate its citizens on the basis of their religious affiliations and thirdly, the concept of a secular state requires the separation of the spheres of authority of religion and the state. These elements of secularism are very clearly articulated in a number of earlier discussions on secularism by writers like D.E. Smith, C.J. Holyoake et al.

D.E. Smith in his work ‘India as a Secular State’, for example, says that a secular state is one which gives maximum possible freedom of religion to its citizens, in which citizenship is vested in the individual person so that his religious identity becomes irrelevant, and which refuses
either to promote or to interfere in the affairs of religion. In his words 'The Secular State is a state which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, does not deal with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion, is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with religion. Upon closer examination it will be seen that the conception of a Secular State involves three distinct but inter-related sets of relationships concerning the state, religion and the individual. These three sets of relationships are:

(1) Religion and the Individual.

(2) The state and the Individual.

(3) The State and the religion.¹

Most of these ideas have their origin in the Western social framework, and none of them exists in India with the same social relevance. In Smith's own words 'The European distinction between spiritual and the temporal world has no parallel in any of the Asiatic religions and that makes this

secularist notion of Church-state separation practically irrelevant here. ²

This doctrine had its origin in the 19th century in the West. C.J. Holyoake was one of the earlier propounders of this notion. In his work, 'The Origin and Nature of Secularism' he describes secularism as 'a code of duty pertaining to this life, founded on considerations, purely human, and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite or inadequate, unreliable and unbelievable'. ³ But he distinguishes between the doctrine of secularism and the concept of the secular instruction which is far more limited in its range than secularisation.

A close investigation, therefore reveals that there is a very serious epistemological difference between the Western and the Indian models of secularism. Instead of being a source of clarity and empirical relevance, these differences have almost transformed the concept’s original meaning beyond recognition. As a result, there is as much reluctance to deal with these epistemological problems as there is an opposition to these formulations at the empirical, practical or political

² ibid., p.27.
level. Thus, secularism today means so many things which cannot be integrated into a single framework. As noted by writers like Amartya Sen, it has now become an unattractive subject.

A number of theoretical constructions on this line are available for analyses and the present chapter aims at making a review of those constructions.

SECULARISM AND ITS ‘CRITICS’ ; THE MODERNIST AND POLITICAL BASIS

Amartya Sen has described this situation in a recent article entitled, “Secularism and its Discontents”. He considers six standard arguments against secularism before putting up a very strong defence of this ideology. However, this has in no way prevented him from sharing a fundamental acknowledgement that there are certain intrinsic incompleteness for this concept in India. Still as an ‘unreformed secularist’ he defends this concept in the end,

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5 Amartya Sen, op. cit., p.10-43.
garnering support from a range of lucidly constructed philosophical and historical arguments. A detailed consideration of all these would naturally provide better clarity to the concept and we shall therefore make an attempt for the same below.

According to Amartya Sen scepticism about Indian secularism fundamentally revolves around six major criticisms of it. They are:

1. The non-existence critique - On the basis of the prevalence of a large number of cultural complexities in India, there are so many critics who argue that secularism does not exist here. Western journalists and social scientists very often consider it as non-existent in India.

2. The second line of attack argues that, what is followed under the guise of secularism is nothing but 'favouritism' for certain groups—basically minority appeasement.

3. Prior identity critique - It places the priority on the religious identity over the national identity and considering the fact that in India the Hindus constitute the most dominant
and fundamental identity, these group of critics argue for considering Hinduism as a source of cultural cohesion and secular thinking.

4. In a similar line, there exists yet another criticism of secularism claiming that the presumed cultural unity of India is not a fact as the Muslims are always sectarian in nature and they have nowhere identified themselves with others as Indians.

5. Fifthly, a strong challenge of secularism comes from what is known as anti-modernist movement. They treat secularism as part of a modernist folly and hence reject it as basically going against the interest of traditional societies like that of India.

6. The sixth and the last major critique maintains that culturally Hinduism is the 'essence' of the Indian society and to treat it as just another religion means only pretentious.

Basing himself on a wide variety of historical and philosophical data, Sen has countered all these criticisms. He proposes a symmetry of treatment as the basis for secularism in
India. Sen's assertion that secularism still looms large upon Indian social structure, even after identifying such large scale oppositions, is indeed non-logical. The problem here is not of finding solutions just for the above criticisms. In fact as Amartya Sen himself puts it, these are not the only challenges to be listed. Hence analyses of secularism by writers like T.N. Madan, Ashish Nandy, Imtiaz Ahmed and Dipankar Gupta are also worth mentioning here.

T.N. Madan in his article entitled, 'Secularism in its place', has posed a very serious criticism of this principle. According to him, the conception of a secular state is sterile, as it provides only a negative strategy. He maintains that secularism in India is only an ideological position of the state introduced for good libertarian and political reasons. It could never articulate the public mood or develop any cultural background. Madan even goes on to argue that the state in India has, however, never remained secular, for some form of 'identity politics' was part of all electoral political formations. Thus, there is now a peculiar double bind in Indian politics, as the ills of religion have found

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6 Ibid., p. 42.
political expression but the strength of it has not been made available for checking corruption and violence in public life. As a result politics takes precedence over the ethics in our times and secularisation, the Western ideology, could only contribute to the rise of religious fanaticism since marginalisation of religion has only led to the pervasion of religion.

Madan's conclusion was that "Nehru's ideology of secularism, which only approves of a strict neutrality on the part of the state in its dealings with the citizens, irrespective of their religious faith is not... a 'positive philosophy' of life."

In a similar frame of reference Ashish Nandy in his book, 'The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of self under colonialism', also raises some fundamental questions about the reliability of this concept in India as he traces out the European or Western basis of the concept of secularism. He believes that the Western ideology rests on a peculiar view of society and politics, involving a variety of polarities in human thinking like the modern and the primitive, the secular and the non-secular, the

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9 Ibid.,
10 T.N. Madan, op.cit., p- 258.
scientific and the unscientific, the normal and the abnormal.\textsuperscript{11} According to Nandy, “this ideology is nothing but part and parcel of a hegemonic language, popularised by the Western knowledge. Also, this language, in spite of its certain positive contributions, has increasingly become a cover for the complicity of the modern intellectuals and the modernising middle classes of South Asia in the new forms of religious violence”.\textsuperscript{12} Calling himself an anti-secularist, Nandy further argues that the politics of secularism has more or less exhausted their possibilities and that, we may now have to work with a different conceptual frame, which is already vaguely visible at the borders of Indian political culture.\textsuperscript{13} The secular governments in India have always been compromising in nature and accommodative in meaning. Therefore, as Nandy puts it, “new forms of religious violence are becoming paradoxically quite secular”.\textsuperscript{14} Hence Nandy emphasises that this is an impossible frame of reference in India due to the peculiarities of its own cultural embodiments. Nandy

\textsuperscript{11} Ashish Nandy, \textit{The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of self under colonialism}. Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1983.


\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid.}, p-73.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, p-85.
has also criticised the projections of secular principles into the ‘past’ of India. He believed that the secular leaders in Indian history, be it Asoka, Akbar, or Mahatma Gandhi, all have derived their spirit of tolerance not from secularism, but from their own respective religions i.e., from Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism respectively. Hence rejecting the claims of any kind of isolation of religion from politics, Nandy concludes with an observation that in India religion has entered public life but through the back door”.

Commenting on this contradictory status Imtiaz Ahmed, another prominent writer, also argues that ‘the acceptance of the concept of secularism imposed a radical break with India’s past traditions and the so-called glory of India’s past in terms of a secular tolerant tradition is only a myth’. "The social system of justice in ancient India,’ says Imtiaz, ‘was founded rather on the principle of inequality sanctioned and conditioned in the religious tradition”.

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15 Ibid., p-79.
17 Ibid.
What comes out from all this is a fact that, the principle of secularism does not form part of the age-old heritage of Indian society. It was introduced at a specific stage of political formation in India, that is, the late 19th or early 20th century. Obviously it was political motivation rather than any cultural concern which had acted behind the adoption of this principle. The British rule had by that time started categorising Indian society as communalist. Their own policy of establishing communal electorates in India is an example of this policy. They had adopted, it seems, a strategy of divide and rule. Hence, the nationalist leaders had to fight the imperialists along with the divisive forces of communalism which the latter were mustering. It was in this context that the nationalists too began to look towards the principle of secularism favourably and found in it an ideology that could serve both these purposes. However, this difficult task was further complicated by the fact that a few of other ideologies like the conception of secularism as a strategy to protect the interests of the minority communities and the idea of secularism as having emanated from the bases of tolerant Hindu religion etc., also got into this framework. The problem of socio-
political and economic disparities that existed among the various communities in India imparted new meanings to this concept. Thus secularism became an amorphous category without a clear-cut meaning and identity. It also became an embattled ideology as most of its avowed objectives have remained unfulfilled. Ironically, it even came to represent a number of situations which are not truly secular in spirit. Hence, as Dipanker Gupta puts it, 'within the ambit of secularisation, communalism also became as much a possibility as secularism'. This is a very serious transformation which indicates the ambiguities involved in the understanding of this concept. All analysis of secularism, therefore end with a note on communalism as communalism too finds its referential categories from the same political vocabulary. The irony therefore, is that both secularism and communalism use the same terminology of 'minority', 'majority', or 'community' etc.

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COMMUNALISM - THE MODERNIST AND THE POLITICAL LEGACIES

As a result of all this, Indian socio-political thinking seems to have become a prisoner of the communal way of thinking. Not only the communalists but the secularist writers also express themselves in this communal language, comprising the so-called communal identities of majority, minority and even the community itself. In this tradition the idea of democracy is being replaced by majoritarianism. The concept of secularism is interpreted in religious terms as based on Hindu tolerance. The rule of law is subverted by public coercion. Indian nationalism is equated with Hindutva, and Indian culture is described as Hindu culture. Understandably, just as secularism made its way through the political formations, communalism is too visibly manifesting a political basis here. As a result, the dangers of communalism are also very often traced out in political structures. The views of a number of prominent political scientists like Randhir Singh, Zoya Hassan, and CP Bhambri very well highlight these dimensions.

Randhir Singh, in an article, entitled “Communalism and the struggle against communalism” argues that “even though the
state in independent India is not allied with any particular religion yet in practice the Indian state does not dissociate itself from religion but only embellishes itself with an aura of neutrality by publicly recognising all religions and their social practices"19. The irony is that, in this process even the obscurantist customs and practices are held sacrosanct and observed. Consequently, Indian state is open to the influence of not one religion but all religions particularly of their more conservative and vocal sections, i.e. communalism has become an integral part of ruling class politics in India. Commenting on the problem of escalation of communalism in India C.P.Bhambri has also held the vacillatory accommodating and compromising stance of the (secular) state as the most responsible factor20. According to him even though the Indian state is involved in a basic struggle to win over societal legitimacy through its ideology of secularism, federalism and democratic representational mechanisms, it has failed to deal with this challenge because it had adopted a strategy of manipulating and compromising with communalism by surrendering its secular

ideology. Similarly Zoya Hassan also looks at communalism as emanating from the state’s readiness to compromise with the fundamentalist sections of all communities. In her article entitled, ‘Changing Orientation of the State and the Emergence of Majoritarianism in the 1980’s’, she argues that, the re-assertion of communalism is not only promoted by communal forces but also by the institutional regime and the state itself and by its indifference and neglect of communalism.

All this, necessarily, invoke the colonial and political roots of the problem of communalism in India. However, again as in the tradition of the concept of secularism there are also a number of other contrasting view’s on this issue of communalism. Strangely enough, one such contention maintains that communalism has more to do with modernism than with colonialism.

Sudipta Kaviraj has articulated this argument effectively in a recent study, entitled ‘Religion Politics and Modernity’. According to him, considering the fact that communalism has been intensified in the most recent times, it is not logical to argue that it

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has got any connection with colonialism. On the other hand 'modernity' with all its techniques like enumeration, census and mapping have fundamentally altered the logic of community identities making it suitable enough to meet the demands of modern politics of numbers\textsuperscript{23}.

Kaviraj’s argument is that if communalism was the product of colonialism alone, this should have disappeared from India after Independence. On the contrary it has only been aggravated in recent times and that therefore requires a totally new analysis of the problem. Hence, Kaviraj maintains that, contemporary communalism in India, is an ironically grotesque part of the process of depletion of religious belief in the wake of modernisation. Ironically, it is this depletion of religiosity which is normally conceived as the process of secularism and it should, therefore, mean that communalism has its base in the process of secularisation itself. Kaviraj also gives here a very relevant example of the controversial ‘Shilanyas ceremony’, in the wake of Ayodhya temple issue, completely overlooking the sacred Hindu calendar, by the proponents of the sanctity of Hinduism and Hindu

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
tradition. In the end he observed that, "obviously the politically inclined Hindu saints must have considered this a relatively minor matter and regarded the timing of the event to suit the political calendar an evidently appropriate move\textsuperscript{24}.

In another article written jointly by Dipankar Gupta and Asghar Ali Engineer, it has been argued that communalism in India is not so much a part of popular grass-root passions\textsuperscript{25}. Achin Vanaik another writer on communalism however maintains that, "Communalism is only a painful transitional stage in the emergence of secular nationhood in India"\textsuperscript{26}. He also argued that the secularisation in the West has also paid for with religious and communal conflicts. Understandably, communalism, like secularism, is also becoming an amorphous category. Despite the enormity of analyses, referred to earlier, no single consensus idea is emerging out of all these. Once again only the discursive bases of these concepts are coming out of this.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p-308.
\textsuperscript{26} Achin Vanaik, \textit{The Painful Transition}, London, Verso editions, 1990, p-140.
Obviously some of these formulations are only defying the comprehensive understanding of these problems. For example, the argument that communalisation is only a transitional phenomena in India is no doubt an oversimplification of this problem. While communalism has got aggravated in India it is secularism which has become an embattled ideology.

Studies on the processes of secularisation and communalisation in the state of Kerala very well represent these dimensions. A review of those analyses is attempted here as the present study is conducted in the backdrop of Kerala society.

COMMUNALISM VS COMMUNISM AND THE PROSPECTS OF SECULARISM IN KERALA

P.M. Mammen, in a work entitled ‘Communalism Vs Communism’, begins his analysis with a classification of the process of political transformation in Kerala into five different stages. At stage one, the Europeanised and modernised elites began to organise their respective communities at the state level, for socio-economic reforms. The period from 1892 to

27 PM Mammen, Communalism Vs Communism, Delhi, Minerva Associates Publications, 1981.
1932 largely represents this development when the different socio-religious or caste groups like the Christians and Exhales began to organise themselves against the neglect of their privileges. They were also joined by the Muslims and all of them together submitted a memorandum to the Maharaja of Travancore in 1892 demanding that Government jobs should be given only to the ‘sons of the soil’\textsuperscript{28}, marking the initiation of a new socio-political turn in Kerala history. This movement is widely known as the ‘Malleable Memorial’. Most of the signatories of this memorandum were Exhales, Christians and Muslims with a very small section of the Nair Community supporting it. Even then none of these developments did really amount to any political articulation till about 1932 when the above movements flowered themselves into the form of a political party (Joint Political Congress) through what is known as \textit{Nivarthana Prasthanam}. This is the next stage of transformation, according to Mammen.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p-52
In fact, according to Mammen, what is even more significant here is the fact that it is in this second stage that a clear-cut political articulation did take place in Kerala. Hereafter, till about 1948 the state of Kerala witnessed the most significant process of socio-political transformation and development. A number of political parties themselves came into existence during this period.

The year 1948 marked the beginning of the third stage of political development in Kerala, mostly in Travancore and Cochin regions. The most remarkable transformation during this period according to P.M. Mammen was that a large number of people who had been hitherto passive spectators of the political scene began to seek entry into active political participation. Thus the politicisation process was actively extended into all levels of Kerala society only during this stage.

The period between 1960 to 1965 witnessed still further changes. It is by this stage that all the so-called community solidarities fell prostrated and helpless resulting in a process


of electoral fission and fragmentation. All the major political parties experienced splits and the process of fragmentation of the parties began. The Kerala Congress (KC) originated from the Indian National Congress (I.N.C), and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (C.P.I.(M)) from the Communist Party of India (C.P.I), Praga Socialist Party (P.S.P). was split between PSP and Samyuktha Socialist Party (SSP).

The final or the fifth stage was altogether an after-effect of these evolving traditions. First of all, according to Mammen, it is this erosion of older frameworks that made us accept a number of diverse values and ideologies and affiliations of the people. This was followed by a long drawn process of regrouping of political fronts characterised by unstable party affiliations giving a new political culture of coalitions in Kerala.

Interestingly Mammen’s analysis ends with a provoking note on the prospects of Kerala Politics. He argues that the political behaviour of Kerala’s electorate is now shaped and reshaped by its past and its ascriptive values as well as the

\[31 \text{Ibid.}\]
hopes of a new emerging society and its glimpse of rational secularism.\textsuperscript{32}

Some other well known studies on the political process in Kerala like that of E.J. Thomas\textsuperscript{33}, George Mathew\textsuperscript{34} and P.K. Michael Tharakan\textsuperscript{35} are also worth mentioning here.

COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY TO DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT - THE KERALA MODEL

E.J. Thomas in his work, 'Coalition Game Politics in Kerala', argues that the political history of Kerala after independence is the story of the game, communities and parties played under the guise of democracy.\textsuperscript{36} Analysing the political history from 1948 to 1970-80 period he maintains that over these three decades, Kerala politics has only got more and more community oriented or communalised. The difference was that, whereas in the fifties, it was characterised by the struggle for a uni-

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item \textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p-189.
  \item \textsuperscript{34} George Mathew, \textit{Communal Road to a Secular Kerala}, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1989.
  \item \textsuperscript{36} EJ Thomas \textit{op.cit.}, p-68.
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community domination, the 60's ushered in a phase of bi-community rule and the 70's only changed to a pattern of multi-community governance\(^\text{37}\).

Interestingly the author has even compared this political system of 1970's to the caste panchayat system of traditional India. Nonetheless he considers that this kind of a multi-community democracy which came into being in Kerala in the 70's can be the base for an ideal democratic structure. The only problem that the writer identifies here is that in Kerala this multi-community politics is in need of an effective leadership now. According to him, in the absence of effective leadership, this model is also facing the prospect of failure.

E.J. Thomas's explanation, of course, throws light into a number of paradoxical features of Kerala politics. The imposition of a clear cut communitarian framework upon a period of politics in Kerala, which is also the most ideologically, diverse and turbulent period, is no doubt the product of an in-depth analysis. In fact, it was with reference to this period only that PM

Mammen argued that Kerala has experienced the most widespread expansion of politicisation.

Interestingly, when Mammen concluded his analysis with a prospective note on the glimpse of rational secular values with the communal solidarities lying prostrated, EJ Thomas proposes an altogether different conclusion that the emerging multi-community leadership may become the ideal base for democratic development in Kerala.

COMMUNAL ROAD TO A SECULAR KERALA-THE RESOLUTION OF A PARADOX

In another attempt which is quite similar to the works of PM Mammen and EJ Thomas, George Matthew also looks at this process of political development in Kerala in his work entitled, 'Communal Road To A Secular Kerala'. Looking at the nature of socio-political movements in the Travancore region of Kerala from 1890 to 1980, George Mathew argues that the basic group identity or the primordial loyalties like that of religion have played a very crucial role in the process of secular-modern transformations in Kerala. He also maintains that with these transformations, the
traditional loyalties are never really displaced, or else, they only exist alongside this process.38

According to George Mathew, when the processes of secularisation and modernisation were introduced in Kerala, the traditional socio-religious identities of Kerala were used as instruments to enhance the economic, social and political achievements by the existing groups in politics. To clarify this point the author draws out the picture of a long drawn struggle between three dominant communities in Kerala - the Nairs, Ezhavas and the Christians.

Almost similar to the analysis of PM Mammen and EJ Thomas, George Mathew also begin his analysis by looking at the nature of social reform movements in Kerala from 1890-1930 period. Unavoidably he also considers this movement as a process of communal mobilisation for social status. In fact the author's argument is that, "... if communities are discriminated on the basis of community characteristics for instance religion, the tendency will be to unite to fight on the community (religious) level itself."39

38 George Mathew op.cit., p-68.
Now that when these movements turned out successful at the socio-economic level, the author identifies new changes in the nature of this movement i.e., it became a struggle for power. He identified the period between 1932 to 1947, marking this specific process of politicisation of communities. In his own words, "as the level of popular consciousness was rising with the help of the activities of various communal organisations it was increasingly realised by these community groups that all that they are in need now is a certain amount of political power to enhance and preserve their presently achieved status and prestige." In other words, political consciousness began to germinate even when people were organised on a primordial plane itself. Political participation and thereby the social leadership has been seen as a manifested experience to enhance status not only of the individual who represented an interest but also of the primordial collectivity to which he belonged.

George Mathew looks at the different political formations during the period and quite convincingly maintains that these

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40 Ibid., p-86.
41 Ibid., p-8.
developments have always been complimentarily related to the communal cleavages of Kerala society.

In short, George Mathew’s argument is that the development of a modern Kerala has got its strong roots in the communal structure of traditional Kerala itself. In other words it is the prevalent communal identities and its socio-political and economic articulation during different stages of political evolutions which has actually resulted in a process of secularisation in Kerala. Also it is argued that, these secular formations are shaped within the mould of primordial loyalties. The post 1956 politics in Kerala is also conceived only within this framework. Citing the nature of elections and its results he emphatically substantiates what Victor M Fic said. “the politics in Kerala was merely a projection of the aspirations and strength of the communal organisations into the political arena.” Therefore, according to George Mathew, even though secularisation has been taking place in Kerala society with a greater force than in other parts of the country, the primordial loyalties have not simply ceased to exist there.

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42 Ibid., p-139.
In contrast to the above analyses, P.K. Michael Tharakan, presents a still different picture of Kerala's socio-political transformation over the past century or so. Dealing with the issue of Kerala's surprising human development indices, Tharakan argues that these developments are the results of a two stage process of democratisation, first under the influence of the socio-religious reformation movements and later under the banner of certain modern political movements, particularly with the rise of socialist and communist parties. In fact, in the words of Tharakan “if democratisation means effective empowerment of as wide a section of the population as possible, through the extension of popular consciousness of basic rights, then this purpose has been served in Kerala by three distinct movements”.

In Southern Kerala, it was mainly through socio-religious reform movements, that people are mobilised and made aware of their basic rights. In other words, the fundamental issues of society were articulated largely with caste or community overtones. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that these movements served the basic purpose of initial democratisation.

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44 P.K.Mic heel Tharakan *op.cit.*, p-133.
In a slightly different context, in northern Kerala the focus of popular mobilisation was tenurial reform particularly in relation to the lower peasantry. This also served the purpose of democratisation by extending consciousness of basic economic and political rights. Later both these movements merged into one with the rise of modern political movements, particularly with the socialist and communist movements. Since they took up the issues of the underprivileged castes and classes, their respective demands got integrated to each other in both its social and political dimensions.

However, this pattern of development, Tharakan says, has created its own problems. Since mobilisation and organisation (and struggles) were the means through which the governments were persuaded to act favourably to different sections, the degree of mobilised and organised power that was brought about for various demands became crucial. Those sections or groups which failed to harness enough organised power lost out in the race.

His main argument is that there is a basic continuity of the pattern set by socio-religious reform and early tenancy movements and it was not broken even with the rise of modern political
movements. They also derived inspiration from nascent nationalist, peasant or socio-religious reform movements. The political movements, parties and their trade unions got organised on the grass root basis similar to earlier socio-religious reform movements.

This analysis of the processes of socio-political and economic developments in Kerala merits special attention. Paradoxically, none of the earlier analyses of Kerala politics do make any acknowledgement of this reality. On the other hand, most of those analyses present the structure of politics as and how it is maintained by the dominant politically interested groups.

G. Gopakumar’s classification of the political parties in Kerala manifests this dimension quite clearly. According to Gopakumar the existing major political groups in Kerala can be categorised into three:

1. National, secular, socialist groups comprising the Indian National Congress (INC)(I).
2. Leftist, socialist comprising the CPI(M) and the CPI.

3. Regional communal, consisting of the IUML and the Kerala Congress factions.

In fact, Gopakumar has also included a number of other minor political groups in this list. However, what is of concern here is, how far such categorisations represent the actual political conditions in Kerala. The emerging situation of intense communalism poses certain very serious doubts about the nature of functioning of the socialist and nationalist parties. Since these parties are the dominant political actors, we need to analyse their actual role in the political structure of Kerala. As Jose Chander puts it, the emergence of the so-called casteist or communal pressure groups in Kerala is very often made possible by the nature of coalition politics under the leadership of the two major parties\footnote{N. Jose Chander, \textit{op.cit.}, p-25.}.

SECULAR VS COMMUNAL: A CRITICAL UNDERSTANDING

Interestingly, from the above review of literature, it appears that, as F.G. Bailey stated in a recent article, 'what is
good to think may not be so good to live by"^48. As he puts it, ideologies lent themselves to use, and are then realised in ways that are very often far from admirable. However, to complain that these uses are only perversions of the true ideology is a misuse of idealism that disguises a retreat from the world of experience, a rhetorical device that diverts attention from what is disagreeable because it is intellectually intractable"^49.

Hence, in this tradition, socialism became a perverted ideology in the Eastern Europe. Capitalism coexist with certain inherent contradictions, and, above all that, democracy survives in the midst of weaknesses and secularism too remains as an embattled ideology, causing only disconcert. Ironically, the identified problem in this context are only the perversions of ideologies and not anything else. Ideologies as such still remain a sacred romantic concept.

Obviously what is manifest here is the abstractness of these ideas and what is lacking is also a concrete reference or definition of its "use", rather than "misuse". In the West, secularism was paid

^49 Ibid.
for, so says Achin Vanaik, however, in the East it is still paying. It is this contradictory existence that forms the basis for this analysis. Some of the analyses referred to earlier, have highlighted one aspect or the other. Still most of them have certain weaknesses too.

T.N. Madan’s argument on the impracticality of secularism in India, has, however, contradictorily maintained the same process to be responsible for the problem of growing irreligiosity in India. Also the solution that Madan advances, the rediscovery of a humanistic religion, was already part of the secularisation agenda in India. In fact, this may also appear as yet another idea, too good to think but need not be so good to live by, as Madan presumes. Nur Yalman has strongly criticised it by proposing an analytical division of the secular ideology into the political and existential.

According to Yalman the religiosity of the public is not directly related to the political definition given by the state. Hence there may be strict separation between the state and the

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50 Secularisation in India was always looked at as having this humanistic religious qualities like tolerance or it was never perceived as irreligious.

administration of the religious activities and yet the population may have great interest in religion (as in the case of large sections of people in USA or in India). Alternatively, the state and its religious body may be closely associated but the society may be felt to move in an increasingly secular direction (as in the UK and perhaps other parts of Western Europe)\textsuperscript{52}. Obviously, as the argument of Yalman suggests, Madan’s solution need not bring in any desired result or solve the problem of fanaticism which has become a burning issue in many societies like India. However, to this reader, Yalman is also caught up with a hallucinative notion of secularism as a heroic thought. In fact, Sudipta Kaviraj’s and Dipankar Gupta’s analysis are still more promising as they could at least identify some of the political background of these conceptual formulations.

Dipankar Gupta for instance, even went on to assume that communalism is as much a possible situation which may emerge within the ambit of secularisation. Obviously, this argument bridges the discursive gap between secularism and communalism, which is hypothetically maintained in this thesis, as a fundamental

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
solution for understanding the problem of communalisation in India. However, Gupta's argument also has got some self-imposed restrictions as he has made a basic differentiation of 'secularism' as an ideology and 'secularisation' as a process, once again upholding the ideological sanctity of secularism, even while rejecting secularisation as a process.

It is here that Kaviraj's observations take a leap forward. Kaviraj effectively brings out the modernist basis of the problem of communalism in India. He could also identify the various elements of modernism, which were instrumental in the creation of so many communal identities. However, what remains is the fact that these elements are nothing but the feature of the so-called secularist political structures, and as such one needs to go beyond Kaviraj's 'modernist frame', to the realm of this ideology of secularism itself, to resolve the ambiguities with regard to the process of communalisation of India.
SECULAR COMMUNAL HISTORY - THE NEED FOR REWRITING

In this analysis, an attempt is made to demystify all those romantic meanings which are discursively constructed into the contexts of secularism and communalism in India. Hence it is argued that both secularism and communalism exist here in India only as discursive ideologies of opposing polarities, viz. Secular Vs Communal. And to make sense of these ideologies as they are followed or practised by the people concerned, what is needed is a de-mystification of these rhetorical formulations.

The concept of Communalism is not analysed here in its stereotyped versions of intensive religiosity or traditionalism. It is not analysed at the level of community or social structure as it is strongly believed that it has more to do with emerging political practices under the image of secular development. Hence, attacking traditional values in order to underline this form of politics is not considered useful as it is not the root cause. It lies in the contradictions and vacillations, preferences and adjustments made in the name of national integrity, unity and preservation of national culture etc. In short the term ‘communalism’ will be
analysed only as a political problem and the related themes of communitarianism, conservatism or fundamentalism etc., are not taken up for any detailed explanation even though some nominal references may be made of these processes also.