CHAPTER - I

COMMUNITY IN POLITICS - AN INTRODUCTION
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The philosophy of community envisages as its major task the restoration of man to his primordial oneness and solidarity with mankind through a fresh vision of the social reality – the open, triadic system of the human person, values and community in their dynamic reciprocity and togetherness.\(^1\) Human person, values and community are all unities and transcendence. His wholeness and transcendence are mediated by his community. Man is most fully transformed into personality by the true community – the community of communities.\(^2\) Man’s role and experience in the cosmos has in his contemplative vision varied from epoch to epoch and with this the meaning of human community in evolution. The Atomic Age which Homo sapiens have now entered is fateful for his unprecedented advance or his total extinction. Human goals, values and behaviour are largely socially conditioned and canalized. A “political Community” is defined as a “group that seeks to settle differences or to promote decisions through peaceful action in common”.\(^3\)

As Hocking remarks human experience is nothing but community experience. Human psychology is community

\(^{2}\) Ibid., p.19-20.
psychology. The philosophy of community envisions it as the pattern of one cosmos, one community. This widens the prospects of human evolution for both individual and species within an overall unity of world science, communication and civilization. The philosophy of community is grounded in the dual perception, first, that the human personality, values, and community are tied to one another in endless interchange and unity; and, that each of the triple co-ordinates, person, values, and community through dynamic, mutual interpenetration manifests unforeseeable, self-transcending potentialities. Their open trend and direction of creativity cannot be anticipating in an abstract genial formula, nor reduced to rigid schemata like that of Comte, Spencer, Sorokin, and Cassirer.

The functions and values of the human personality in communion and the historically evolved modes and categories of human culture and knowledge of man and universe, mythology, art, morality, and religion and the ordering of the social community-correspond and converge: the integration, wholeness, and communization of personality; the unity of the symbolic and normative world of values and culture; and the unity of mankind and cosmos are interwoven with, and reinforce one another in the march

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4 R.K. Mukerjee, op.cit. p.60.
of the human mind. The Early men observed and knew of fellowmen both as kinsmen and strangers and formed groups and communities understanding in some measures both resemblance and difference with other groups and communities. According to Soran Kierkegaard the German philosopher, man in all epoch and countries transforms the cosmos into an intimate, reciprocating community. Men create and maintain several modes and the community through which he seeks to achieve and maintain communion with the other. His wholeness and transcendence are mediated by his community. Man is shaped through his community. Man becomes a community when he communes with cosmos. Community helps him to form his best self. He achieves his true society in the community of mankind-and-cosmos.

The immediate cause for politicization of a community might be to reinforce traditional values and authority in the long run. According to Vieky Randall and Robin Theobald in its transformed state, caste and community has helped India's agrarian society to make a success of representative democracy and fostered the growth

5 R.K. Mukarjee, op.cit, p. 84.
6 Ibid., p.106.
7 Ibid., p.123.
of political equality.\(^9\) Political equality means all the Indians irrespective of caste, creed, and religion and various socio-ethical differences are equal before law. Therefore we can say that a community is bound together, is a state of interaction on the part of its members, a sense of interdependence and loyalty.

**Etymology:** (1) A community is a collection of living things that share an environment, so forming a recognizable group. These living things can be plants or animals, any species, any size. Communities are characterized by interaction in many ways. The definitive aspect of community is that each subject in the mix has something in common that allows identification.

(2) The word community comes from the Latin word *communis*, meaning “common, public, and shared by all or many”.\(^10\) The Latin term “communitatus” from which the English word “community” comes, consists of three elements, “COM” – a Latin prefix meaning with or together, “Munis”-ultimately proto-Indo-European in origin, it has been suggested that it means “the changes or exchanges that link”, both municipal and monetary take their

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\(^10\) D. Harper, Online Etymology Dictionary, 2001
meaning here, and "tatus" a Latin suffix suggesting diminutive, small, intimate or local.

(3) Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

The German terms Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft are sociological categories introduced by the German sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies for two normal types of human association. A normal type as coined by Tonnies is a purely conceptual tool to be built up logically, whereas an ideal type, as coined by Max Weber, is a concept formed by accentuating main elements of a historic/social change. Tonnies concepts of both Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, strictly separated from each other conceptually, are fully discussed in his work Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (1887), seven more German editions. Only the second edition of 1912 turned out to be a success, and the juxtaposition of these two terms belonged to the general stock of concepts German pre-1933 intellectuals' were quite familiar with and quite often misunderstood.

(a) Gemeinschaft: The term Gemeinschaft (often translated as community) is an association in which individuals are oriented to the large association as much if not more than to their own self-interest. Further, individuals in Gemeinschaft are regulated by common mores, or beliefs about the appropriate behaviour and
responsibility of members of the association, to each other and to the
association at large; associations marked by "unity of will". Tonnies saw the family as the most perfect expression of
Gemeinschaft; however, he expected that Gemeinschaft could be
based on shared place and shared belief as well as kinship, and he
included globally dispersed religious communities as possible
eamples of Gemeinschaft.

Gemeinschafts are broadly characterized by a moderate
division of labour, strong personal relationships, strong families, and
relatively simple social institution. In such societies there is seldom a
need to enforce social control externally, due to a collective sense of
loyalty individuals feel for society. Historically, gemeinschaft
societies were racially and ethically homogeneous.

(b) Gesellschaft: The term Gesellschaft (often translated as
society or civil society or "association") in contrast, describes
associations in which, for the individual, the larger association never
takes on more importance than individual self interest, and lack the
same level of shared mores. Gesellschaft is maintained through
individuals acting in their own self interest. A modern business is

11 Ferdinand, Tonnies, "Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft," Community and Association,
12 Ferdinand, Tonnies, ed; Jose Harris, Community and Civil Society, Cambridge:
good example of Gesellschaft, the workers, managers, and owners may have very little in terms of shared orientations or beliefs. They may not care deeply for the product they are making, but it is in all their self interest to come to work to make money, and thus the business continues.

Unlike Gemeinschaft, Gesellschaft emphasizes secondary relationships rather than familial or community ties, and there is generally less individual loyalty to society. Social cohesion in Gesellschafts typically derives from a more elaborate division of labour and such societies are considered more susceptible to class conflict as well as racial and ethnic conflicts.

Since, for Tonnies, Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft are normal types, he considered them a matter of pure Sociology. Whereas in Applied Sociology, on doing empirical research, he expected to find nothing else than a mix of them. Nevertheless, following Tonnies, without normal types one might not be able to analyze their mix. In business usage, Gesellschaft is the German term for “company”.

As society or ‘associations’ according to Ferdinand Tonnies, communities are groups in which relationships between members are derived from strong ‘codes’ ‘conventions’ based on emotions,
sentiments and belief in a pre-ordained order. In man's social living there is the opposition between the principles of Gemeinschaft which is a natural impulse derived from the essentially social nature of man and his organic attachments to the family, the tribe, the clan, or the neighborhood, and Gesellschaft, which springs from a deliberate socializing process in which men's needs and interests are integrated contractually for fulfillment. Every group formation, social relationship, and behavior pattern embodies a tension underlying the integration of the opposite assumptions and values of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, status and mobility, socialization and individualism. A true doctrine of values and value-scale rests on inter-subjectivity of the open self in relation, man-in-and-with community and on the universal dialectic of the opposites of individuation and order, egoism and altruism and organization in human experience.

Brooding over the terminology of the community, there is a common understanding of where each member stands in relation to others handed down from generations to generations and enunciated from time to time by members of the community whose authority is recognized as falling within that sphere. In contrast, a society

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13 B.C. Smith, op.cit, p.70-71.
14 R.K. Mukerjee, op.cit, p.54-55.
characterized by the relationship of associations is one which people stand in impersonal, contractual and calculative in relations to each other. People are not associated with, because they are recognized as members of a particular exclusive community, but because cooperation will enable a common goal to be achieved.

For Ferdinand Tonnies, ‘Gemeinschaft’ was represented by all intimate, private and exclusive living together the family, marriage, and religious communities, communities of language, feelings, morals and beliefs and by certain sorts of property. He claimed that there exists a community of ownership in fields, forests and pastures.

In contrast, ‘Gesellschaft’ stood for public life, political institutions, the realm of business travel or science and commercial companies. ‘Gesellschaft’ is conceived as mere co-existence of people independent of each other. Accordingly, ‘Gemeinschaft’ should be understood as living organism. ‘Gesellschaft’ as mechanical aggregate and artifact. This is an etymological meaning of community as envisaged by German social scientist Ferdinand Tonnies. The most significant aspect of primordiality is its

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15 B.C. Smith, op.cit, p.191-192.
community orientation. From the analysis it is quite evident that a general and most accepted meaning of community is a group with distinctive social or cultural characteristics and thereby implies a religious bond in terms of belief systems, values and ritual practices. The most common usage of the word “community” indicates large groups living in close proximity. A community is considered a galaxy or net work of patterns. Example of local community includes:

1. A **Municipality** is an administrative local area generally composed of a clearly defined territory and commonly referring to a **town or village**. Although large cities are also municipalities, they are often thought of as a collection of communities, due to their diversity.

2. A **neighbourhood** is a geographically localized community, often within a large **city or suburb**.

3. A **planned community** is one that was designed from scratch and grew up more or less following the plan. Several of the world’s capital cities are planned cities, notably Washington, D.C., in the United States, **Canberra** in Australia, and **Brasilia** in Brazil. It was also common during the **European Colonization of**
America to build according to a plan either on fresh ground or on the ruins of earlier American cities.

**Meaning of community as explained in various Dictionaries**

1. According to Concise Oxford Dictionary- Community is a group of people living together in one 'placing' especially one practicing common ownership. A group of people having a religion, race or profession in common.\(^{16}\)

2. According to Chambers Dictionary Community is a body of people in the same locality; the public in general, people having common rights etc. A body of people who have common interests, characteristics or culture.\(^{17}\)

3. According to Cambridge International Dictionary Community means the people living in one particular area or people who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, background or nationality.\(^{18}\)

4. In Murray’s Oxford English Dictionary, the original Latin word, ‘Communitatum’, was merely a noun quality from communism


"fellowship, community of relationships or feelings"; but in (Medieval Latin) it was like universities used concretely in the sense of a "body of fellows or fellow townsmen." and this was its earlier use in English.

**Definitions:** Communities are defined in terms of the solidarity shared by their members, which form the basis of their mutual orientation to social action.

1. According Mac Iver a community is in its nature no mortal, that it is subjected to no law of morality. Any area of common life, village or town or district, or country or even wider area.\(^{19}\)

2. According to Robert Hardgrave Jr; In India community is usually referred to a racial, caste, linguistic or religious group rather to a locality as in the United States.\(^{20}\) The emphasis here is that community has little reference in usage to an ecological setting.

3. According to Allen Grimshaw "The term community has the meaning in India is given to the ethnic group."\(^{21}\) According to William Peterson in a study of sub-nations of Western Europe

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says that community is etymologically excellent compared to ethnic group.

4. Ethnic group is used to designate a variety of entities: religious denomination, race, smaller subdivision of races and so on. The advantage of the notion of community is invariably used to denote religious denomination rather than geographic location.\(^\text{22}\)

5. Communities are defined in terms of solidarity shared by their members which forms the basis of their mutual orientation to social action.\(^\text{23}\)

6. A community is both empirically descriptive of a social structure and normatively toned. It refers both to the unit of a society as it is and to the aspects of the unit that are valued if they exist desired in their absence. Community is indivisible from human actions, purposes and values.\(^\text{24}\)

7. Any area of common life, village town district country or even wider area is a community.\(^\text{25}\)

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\(^{25}\) R.M. Mac Iver, op.cit, p.22.
8. Community is an "organism inhabiting a common environment and interacting with one another." While scientifically accurate, do not convey the richness, diversity and complexity of human communities. Their classification likewise is almost never precise. Untidy as it may be, community is vital for human beings. M. Scott Peck expresses this in the following way: "There can be no vulnerability without community." This conveys some of the distinctiveness of human community.

The Concept of Community

From the etymological explanations and definitions the concept of community has three interpretations. They are the following:

1. Community is used as a quality, generally referring to people having something in common, whether goods, rights or characters.

2. Community is a body of people or in modern sociological parlance, a social system.

3. Community pertains to people with a common land or territory.

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Besides, the Sociologists have added a plethora of meanings because they see many complexities in the object itself. They are mentioned below:-:

1. A group of people living in a locality or territory.

2. As a practical social system that systemizes a sub system of a nation, the former not being in a position to reproduce itself in all its aspects.

3. Any group potential and in actuality capable of developing a "we" feeling eg. Caste, religion, feminine, student collectivities. According to Mac Iver all social relations are the product of man’s likeness and unlikeness. The concept of the community is that it involves an area. The concept of community is complex, usually an unanalyzed abstraction. By customary usage community often means ‘place’. Frequently we use “community” to refer to a physical place. In other words community is the physical place where people live. This is the ecological meaning and accordingly a community is simply whatever happens to exist in a given territory.

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29 R.M Mac Iver, op.cit. p..22.
different concept of community is that it refers to the social organization among a concentration of individuals. Therefore, we can say that the community to the ordinary inhabitants is where he lives, and probably works. It is defined with a place and a name in his mind. It is an aggregation or collection of houses for living and buildings for working. It may have factories, shops of various kinds, no doubt a main street along which are arrayed the chief business establishments.

Characteristics of a Community

Communities are characterized by people's engagement in activities that demand inter-relationship of efforts they give rise to shared culture and they are often sited in a specified geographical locality. To deserve the name community, the area must be somehow distinguished from other areas may have some characteristics of its own such as that the frontiers of the area have some meaning.\(^{31}\) Based on this assumption it is assumed that when men live together they develop certain characteristics, manners, traditions etc. It will be seen that a community may be part of a wider common unity, and that all community is a question of degree. It goes to the extent that the intimate series of social relationships which thus arise, we

\(^{31}\) R.M. Mac Iver., op.cit., p.23.
distinguish the nuclei of intense 'common life' criteria and nations and tribes and think of them as par excellence communities.

Most people regard community as a stable unchanging and rigid social forum of little value in changing or redirecting powerful systems. The unique characteristic of a community is that members can express common concern over values, beliefs and goals thereby becoming a political force to stimulate change. According to David Minar and Scott Greer..... "Community is both empirically descriptive of a social structure and normative toned. It refers both to the unit of society as it is and to the aspects of the unit that are valued if they exist desired in their absence. It expresses our vague yearnings for a commonality of desire, a communion with those around us, an extension of bonds of kin and friend to all those who share a common fate with "us". The community is obviously and inherently meaningful and purposive unity of persons refuting both Hobbesian, Rousseauvian conceptions of human nature. Selfhood is as much moulded, stimulated and fulfilled by the human community. As the humanity is rooted in the individual's positive self-identification, empathy, appreciation which unite them as a group.

In India taking into account of such aspects as society, religion etc forms communities. A community may have their own concerns when their socio-cultural and religious practices are challenged by government or any other organization. A community is based on these aspects. When the institutions such as government challenge, it affects the very entity of the community. Again we see that when a community’s traditions and values are challenged by socio-political institutions, the community defends them. For example, whenever the Syrian Christian communities’ socio-political and educational interests were challenged by the government, they fought for them. All these aspects said above are deeply embedded among the Syrian Christians. Again, we can see that a community as such may not have any values. But their customs, manners and religious practices and beliefs make an indelible mark for a community. And that mark is the identity of a community. As far as Syrian Christians are concerned with their age old practices such as their religious beliefs, religious values etc embedded in their community through their religious practices, customs and manners. A community represents a particular set of social relationships; public in character, yet embracing many private social worlds.
Basic principles of a community

We can formulate three basic principles of a human community. In the first place human community is found in its unity and wholeness both in the inexhaustible creativity of the individual personality and the divergent evolution of societies, values and cultures within the unity of world civilization.

Secondly the human community extending itself to mankind as a whole is merely one set of interconnections and values within the universal community of cosmos. Here community is viewed at the aesthetical and philosophical dimension. Thirdly man is in the universal community as the universal community is in him. The finite and the infinite, universal and the individual, being and becoming enter into each other. The community therefore is always ontological and mystical. At its highest dimension, the community that loves creates and sustains becomes identical with the mankind-and-cosmos whole. According to Kierkgaard, man in all epoch countries transforms the cosmos into an intimate, relationship with human community. This is a philosophical concept of community. This notion of community based on philosophical concept is highly vague.

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33 R.K Mukerjee., op.cit, P.16.
Since this notion is vague, it cannot be applicable to the Syrian Christians of Kerala because it is evident that a community has its own entity in a society. A community is a blending of various different aspects of human endeavours in its right proportion. The Syrian Christian communities just like any other community in Kerala or in India is a flexible community. This is apparent in politics, in education or in matters relating to socio-economic problems. As mentioned above a community has its own entity. The most essential features of a community are the most often misconstrued. There is nothing about which men's minds are more confused than about the vast social questions, such as the relation of community to its association of the great associations to one another of the state to all the rest may such as the very meaning of community, its essential nature and laws, its life, growth, decay and immorality.

According to Garner, the well known political scientist, "When society politically organizes it becomes state". In primitive communities man lived together and organized himself to satisfy their bundle of needs. Moreover the gregarious nature of man was one of the basic principles for the birth of human community.
Reasons for the growth of community

Some of the above mentioned principles opened new avenues for the growth of community. Here let us see some of the basic reasons for the growth of community right from the dawn of humanity. In our study community remains an untidy, confusing and difficult term: Because:-

1. Communities have always existed and will continue to do so—because man is basically a social animal, unable to live independently. Whereas in modern communities it is not visible. The factors such as geographical isolation, ethnic differences, common dedication to a total life-scheme, tradition, continuous association and distinctive life style are no longer the sole dominating characteristics of modern association.

2. According to Robert Nisbet, the most fundamental and far-reaching of sociology’s unit idea is community. Social mobility and migration affect the growth and stability of community. Mobility also makes it possible for modern man to identify with more than one community. Margaret Mead a well-

known Anthropologist argues that community is not less than a
global concept of total place.\textsuperscript{35}

3. A modern community is not like a folk culture in which
congruence between the community and its population is
achieved by a wide spread consensus about behaviours and
values.

Here the first point mentions about some of the traditional
aspects for the growth of community. However, in the second, third
and the fourth points out some other aspects for the growth of
communities into a new horizon of modern communities.

**How community identity was developed by individuals**

During human growth and maturation, people encounter sets
of other individuals and experiences. Infants encounter first, their
immediate family, then extended family, and then local community
(such as school and work). They thus develop individual and group
identity through associations that connect them to life-long
community experiences.\textsuperscript{36} As people grow: They learn about and
form perceptions of social structures. During this progression, they

\textsuperscript{35} Jacqueline, Scherer, Contemporary Community Sociological Illustration or Reality?,

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p.267.
form personal and cultural values, a world view and attitudes toward
the larger society.

Gaining and understanding of group dynamics and how to "fit
in" are part of socialization. Individuals develop interpersonal
relationships and begin to make choices about whom to associate
with and under what circumstances. During adolescence and
adulthood, the individual tends to develop a more sophisticated
identity, often taking on a role as a leader or follower in groups. If
associated individuals develop the intent to give themselves, and
commit to the collective well-being of the group, they begin to
acquire a sense of community.

A sense of community for an individual is achieved through
the process of learning to adopt the behaviour patterns of
community. This is called socialization. The most fertile time of
socialization is usually the early stages of life, during which
individuals develop the skills and knowledge and learn the roles
necessary to function within their culture and social environment.

37 Ibid., p.141.
38 D.M. Chavis, J.H. Hogge, D.W. McMillan and A. Wandersman. 'Sense of
Community through Brunswick's lens: A first look', New York: Journal of
Individuals involvement in Community

An individual learns the primary lessons of the community primarily from the family through which children first learn community norms. Other important influences include school, peer groups, mass media, the workplace and government. The degree to which the norms of a particular society or community are adopted determines one’s willingness to engage with others. According to De Tocqueville the norms of tolerance, reciprocity and trust are important “habits of the heart”, for an individual’s involvement in community. Conversely, sustained involvement in tight communities may tend to increase tension in some people. However, in many cases, it is easy enough to distance oneself from the “hive” temporarily to ease this stress. Psychological maturity and effective communication skills are thought to be a function of this ability. In nearly every context, individual and collective behaviors are required to find a balance inclusion and exclusion; for the individual, a matter of choice; for the mechanism that maintains this balance is manifest as an observable and resilient sense of community.

40 D.W. McMillan, and D.M. Chavis, op.cit,p.6-23.
How did communities become powerful in Kerala?

The traditional social system in Kerala was organized around caste structure, caste and religious identities. Here the question is what form of politics is taking its shape in a community dominated political scenario in Kerala. The politics of various communities in Kerala, is to retain their community’s identity and status quo in Kerala. The political situation in Kerala is taking its shape in a community for society. In Kerala, politics is a competitive enterprise. And its main purpose is the acquisition of power for the realization of certain goals and its process is one of identifying and manipulating existing and emerging allegiances in order to mobilize and consolidate positions.\(^{41}\) In Kerala right from the dawn of independence major political party especially Congress party was trying to identify with various communities in view of strengthening their vote bank and thus to retain power. Therefore, communization of politics and politicization of community became a major event that is being taking shape in a politically conscious state like Kerala.

The community based on religion and its structure provides one of the principal organizational clusters where the bulk of the population is found to live. Politics must strive to organize through

such a structure. The 'alleged casteism in politics' is thus no more and no less than politicization of community. Regarding the Syrian Christians of Kerala, their community provides material through their communities cradle of organization i.e. through the Church. The Church as a religious institution provides spiritual as well as material resources for the functioning of the Syrian Christian community. The church as an institution provides impetus to assert their identity and to strive for position.

Politicians mobilize various communities in Kerala in order to consolidate their power. Politics is an instrument wielded by a particular stratum in society to consolidate or raise its position. It is a futile argument that community uses politics or politics uses community. When religion behave ‘segmental’ and according to a system of hierarchy and ‘closed stratification’, they belong to a particular community based on a particular religion. They belong to the political system and are not really part of a community. This leads to interaction between community and politics. Therefore the participation of community in politics with the advent of parliamentary democracy made the communities in Kerala based on religion become very active in the political scenario of Kerala. The communities in Kerala were organizing themselves in politics to strengthen their bargaining power in order to achieve favours from
the government. Thus they can retain the identity and status quo of their community.

The participation of community in Kerala state’s politics is to retain the identity of their community. The participation of the community is one of empirical understanding of a competitive and mobile system which could give us a reasonable model of social dynamics. Liberal democratic politics as much as a process of fusion and aggregation as if fission and segmentation. Differentiation has all along been an essential ingredient in the Indian approach to aggregation, and it has now become an important variable in the development of democratic politics. The community based on religion gives a place to every individual from the highest to the lowest and makes for a higher degree of identification and integration. The politics in Kerala highlights the hierarchical structure of Kerala society.

**Origin of Syrian Christians of Kerala**

The Syrian Christians or the St. Thomas Christians are those who claim their Christian origin from the Apostolate St. Thomas one of the disciples of Jesus Christ. The Syrian Christians are the most ancient Christians of Malabar (present Kerala), the South West coast

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42 Rajani, Kothari, op.cit. p.10.
43 Ibid, p.10.
of India. Some affirm, some doubt, some deny the origin of the Thomas Christians from the preaching of the Apostle St. Thomas. In Malabar the tradition is lived by the Thomas Christians who claim to be the descendants of the converts of the Apostle. —

Chera, Chola and pandya (Pandy, Pandi, and Pandion) were the important kingdoms of south India in the early centuries of the Christian era. Most of the Thomas Christians, known also as Nazarani Mapilas (noble Christians), were the subjects of the Chera kingdom whose capital was Muziris or Cranganore in Kerala. Until after the middle of the 17th century the Thomas Christians were all one in faith and rite. There after divisions arose among them, and consequently they are today Catholics and non-Catholics of different rites, the latter belonging to different denominations. All of them are often called Syrian or Syrian Christian, since they have been using Syriac (classical form of Arabic) for liturgical purposes with or without the admixture of Malayalam.

**Identity of Syrian Christian community in Kerala**

The Syrian Christians are thus known as Syrian Christians because they happen to use the Syriac liturgy for their worship. The origin of Christianity in Kerala goes back to the early centuries of

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The Syrian Christians are quiet like the higher Hindu castes in complexion and in build.

A few families trace their descent from Syrian immigrants but the bulk of the Syrian Christians belong to the same race or the Hindus among whom they live. The Syrian Christians are a "Hinduized" Christian community in Kerala, and they are quite different from their coreligionists of other countries of the world. They are proud of their independence from the European Christians that the Portuguese who tried to dominate them in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had to face stiff resistance as was witnessed in the memorable incident known as Koonan Kurisu Satyam (pledge taken at the cross of Koonan Hill). However, the incident divided the old community into two sections — namely the Romo Syrians and the Jacobite Syrians, who chose to maintain their loyalty to their traditional patriarch. Therefore, unless otherwise specified, Christians in Travancore means the "Syrian Christians" of the Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Jacobite, Marthoma and Anglican (CMS) denominations.

48 George, Mathew, op.cit, p.29.
The Syrian Christians occupied the hinterland of the coast from Calicut to Quilon and were traditionally the subjects of the ruling rajas (Kings) of Kerala. Their Metran (Bishop) responsible for the loyalty and civil disobedience of his flocks, and it was only in criminal matters that the Rajas governments intervened.\textsuperscript{49} But long residence amongst the Hindu people deprived their villages of any striking individuality. Their churches have the appearance of the Hindu temples.\textsuperscript{50} In their intercourse with each other, these Syrian Christians have developed many caste restrictions. They do not for instance; permit a Hindu “untouchable” (or Harijan) to enter their houses. The same social distance has been strictly maintained between the Syrian Christians and the Neo-Christians. (Harijan-Christians), too.\textsuperscript{51} One traditional source of group direction and seeking identity has been the church and associated religious institutions of the Syrian Christian community such as the parishes, monasteries and convents and religious houses.

Theology may be considered a sustained effort to answer the questions of man’s identity by reference to a Divine Being. In the same tradition, religious communities have been attempting to

\begin{thebibliography}
\bibitem{49} S.G. Pothen; op.cit, p.41.
\end{thebibliography}
implement religious doctrine through social reforms and churches have developed as social centers which man use as the tools of ritual ideology, fellowship and activity to build and maintain solidarity.\textsuperscript{52}

**The organizational set up of the Syrian Christian Community.**

The Christian social organization was centred on parishes. The Church (institution) functions at the centre of the village. Their priest was known as Kathanar or Achen. Achen is sociologically linked with Aschen, the term of honour with which Brahmins of Kerala (Namboodiris) were addressed in Kerala. He had a great say in village disputes. He was the most important person on all social occasions in the community or in the family like birth, marriage or death. Lay leaders were also important in handling financial matters. Their Bishops (Metrans) were above the priests and several parishes constituted a diocese with one metran at the top.\textsuperscript{53} According to M.G.S. Narayanan community organizations became the instruments for starting colleges, fighting elections and promoting industrial enterprises. The process of modernization through Christian communities by way of appreciation and imitation or fear and competition.\textsuperscript{54} The various churches and the number of schools and

\[\text{\textsuperscript{52} John, Steinbeck, Contemporary Community, New York: Penguin Publications, 1979, p.38.}\]


\[\text{\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, pp.158.}\]
colleges administered by their churches make the Christians the most organized community in Kerala. The Archbishops, the Bishops, and other church dignitaries have throughout history enjoyed high status and are recognized by the Christians as their natural leaders in religious as well as secular matters.\(^{55}\)

**The background of Kerala in shaping community politics**

The politics of the Kerala state after the independence of India have been shaped by several factors. First Kerala is a unit comprising the princely states of Travancore and Cochin and the districts of Malabar which was a part of presidency of Madras. Each of these three units had its own tradition, history and political attitudes. An understanding of modern Kerala would be difficult without analyzing the political development of these units since the middle of the nineteenth century. Secondly, Kerala is characterized by a greater degree of religious diversity than other states in India. Thirdly, Kerala is noted for a very stratified and hierarchically organized caste structure. Fourthly, Kerala is one of the most politically conscious states in India with the highest percentage of literacy. The circulation figures of newspapers are also one of the highest in India. Fifthly, Kerala is one of the most densely populated

areas of India as well as of the world with a population that the land is unable to wield.\textsuperscript{56}

It would be difficult to understand Kerala politics since independence without analyzing the political attitudes of the Syrian Christian community which play a dominant role in shaping Kerala politics. Their political background has been shaped by their churches, the newspapers controlled by the economic interests of the community. The various Christian churches and the number of schools and colleges run by this community made them a powerful community. Besides their ecclesiastical leaders especially the Bishops and the clergy also made them an organized community. Their organizational strength under their ecclesiastical leaders also helped their community to trace their identity and shape their community politically. Apart from the above mentioned arguments it is an accepted fact that the Syrian Christians were traditionally a commercial class as well as an agricultural class. They took initiative to start Congress party and through that party they actively involved in the freedom struggle before the independence of India.

The Christian community along with the Nair and the Ezhava community under the umbrella of Congress fought against the

Maharaja of Travancore to establish a responsible government in Kerala. All these factors one way or another contributed heavily to shape their political destiny in Kerala.

**How do the organizational structures prove the identity of a community?**

Effective communication practices in group and organizational settings are important to the formation and maintenance of communities. How ideas and values are communicated within communities are important to the induction of new members, the formulation of agendas, the selection of leaders and many other aspects. Organizational communication is the study of how people communicate within an organizational context and the influences and interactions within organizational structures. The people of a community depend on the flow of communication to establish their own identity within these structures and learn to function in the group setting.

When we ponder over the organizational structure of a community, the Syrian Christian community is not an exception regarding the identity of their community. The Syrian Christian community is an organized community. Therefore, we can say that it is a structured community because it is an organized community.
based on the rules and regulations of Christianity. Among the Syrian Christian community, the Syrian Catholic community is hierarchically an organized community. The Syrian Christian community was characterized by a strong centralization of decision making authority. But integralism was the extreme statement of this centralization.

It has located the power to decide about what is properly Christian in all realms of life, including the political realm, exclusively in the hierarchical structure. The Syrian Christian community traces its identity with St. Thomas one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ who came to India and converted many high caste Hindus to Christianity. The Syrian Christians are a “Hindu” Christian community in Kerala and are quite different from their co-religionists of the rest of the world.

How an individual retain his identity in the community

A community in which an individual lives is largely structured by the past memories, present needs and persistent anxieties exist in the individual. The term community does not define a precise, generally accepted body of people. True community living must involve direct and meaningful contact between the individual and the

group. For that, community must have some structure and some boundaries, some rather concrete definition.

The identity of the community is manifested when communities join other communities in a psychological manner and share with those others for some common purposes and participate in some common actions to achieve these purposes. Another characteristic of community is that it has to have boundaries. The more elusive the boundaries are, more the individual is likely to lose himself, to lose his identity in an attempt to relate to it, and the less likelihood there is of a meaningful response from the community. Perhaps the most dangerous form of false community is that which has enough substance to hold the individual but not enough solidarity to offer to him any significant response. Religion and its structures threatens one’s individuality, but undoubtedly the immediate community structures under which a person lives does in some instances destroy ones individuality.

As long as the individual can maintain his sense of identity and individuality, the community becomes one most productive and

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59 Ibid., p.38.
creative relationships. It is only in an exchange with others that the person can attain the development of his fullest potential.

The community within home or within the church, within the profession or place of work, within the neighbourhood or club, becomes both the stimulus for and the recipient of the individual's energy, imagination and creativity. It is in this sense that the individual needs the community, for he is indeed limited without it. Meaningful contact with the community provides the individual with a kind of mirroring experience. Community is a feedback, it makes individual to know about him. So community is a feedback for the individual to know about himself. As far as Syrian Christians are concerned, their individuality is closely associated with their religion Christianity. And their community is formed within the framework of Christian religion.

The advantage of community living is based on the teachings of Christianity that provides the individual with the opportunity to improve himself when he is imperfect to correct himself where he is wrong to strengthen, where he is weak, to give himself to something beyond himself, viz, the image of God which

641 Ibid., p.38.
he finds reflected in others that must remind him so much of himself.\textsuperscript{61}

**Solidarity of a Community**

The Syrian Christian communities’ solidarity is coming from their religion and its teachings. Solidarity in Sociology refers to the feeling or condition of unity based on common goals, interests, and sympathies among a group’s members. Solidarity refers to the ties in society-social relations-that bind people to one another in a community.

Some Sociologists have introduced more specialized concepts of Sociology. Most famously, Emile Durkheim introduced the terms mechanical and organic solidarity, to establish his conception of social evolution. Mechanical solidarity comes from homogeneity, when people feel connected through similar work, educational and religious training, and lifestyle. Organic solidarity comes from the interdependence that arises from specialization of work. This concept is also related to “moral cohesion” which involves the ability for a given society to feel connected due to moral beliefs.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{61} Robert J. Mcallister, op.cit, p.45.

The local political systems were based on what Durkheim termed as 'mechanical solidarity'-units-and on the compulsions of tradition. In societies where this type of solidarity is highly developed, the individual does not .......... Individuality is something which the society possess.\(^6\) Besides, social and political changes during the past century including urbanization and the propagation of nationalistic and democratic values have helped to transform social relations towards Durkheim's state of organic solidarity.\(^6\) For our purpose, this describes a system marked by a high order of social and economic differentiation of a kind which weakens solidarity ties within a social group or in the community. At the same time it underwrites a larger social order in which interdependence is more a function of an individual action than of group or a communities tradition. Under conditions of organic solidarity, restraint is placed on the use of repressive force by a legitimate holder of power; instead, modern legal codes and secularized political relationships are developed.\(^6\) Durkheim speaks of the replacement of repressive law by restrictive law. Organic solidarity depends upon the recognition of individual differences. Societal cohesion is just as strong, but as Durkheim wrote,” the yoke that we submit to is less

\(^6\) Emile Durkheim, op.cit, p.130.
\(^6\) Rajani Kothari, op.cit, p.340.
\(^6\) Emile Durkheim, op.cit.p.130
heavy than when society completely controls us, and it leaves much more place open for the free play of our initiative”.

While we deal with the structure, organism, functioning and solidarity of the Syrian Christian community in Kerala, it is understood that, it is a community based on Christian religion. This ‘we’ feeling on the basis of religion is a mechanical solidarity. The Christian religious teaching, its dogmas, morals and faith, prayers, customs and manners etc, are the unifying factors of their community. And this unifying factor manifests their mechanical solidarity.

**Why Politics?**

Politics is the process of interaction between people and groups, leading to decisions which affect them and their environment. It is the way in which we influence our surroundings. Politics is universal. It is not concerned with the practice of ‘politics’ by professed ‘politicians’ working through or in pursuit of ‘office’ within ‘government’. It is concerned with the exercise of power throughout society whether it is through formal structure or not.

The essence of politics is power. The central concern of politics is with the distribution of power and the inter-relation

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66 Emile Durkheim, op.cit, p.130.
between different centers of power. The secondary concern is with the control of power and of those who exercise it, the uses to which power is to put an end to the processes by which decisions are reached and implemented.

The liberal view is based on the moral imperative that all people have an equal right to take part in the process by which decisions that affect their lives are taken. The greatest threat to that right is the concentration of power. Democracy is dependent as much on the dissemination, distribution and control of power as it is upon the ballot.

**Why Community Politics?**

The objective of community politics is not the welfare of communities themselves. Communities are not in themselves an end. The end is the quality of the experience of each individual within the community. The justification for community politics lies in the belief that the key to releasing the potential of each person as a unique individual lies in bringing together all individuals in voluntary, mutual and co-operative enterprise within relevant communities. In community politics our perspective is primarily political. We are concerned with the distribution and control of power within the communities and with the manner in which decisions, attitudes and
priorities emerge from the full range of smaller communities to
govern larger and larger communities. That process of confrontation,
conflict, negotiation, co-operation, change and law-making is the
way in which societies should be run.

The aim of community politics is therefore the creation of a
political system which is highly focused on the interaction of
communities in which groups have the power, the will, and the
knowledge, the technology to influence and affect the making of
decisions in which they have an interest. Even more, we want those
communities to initiate the debate, to formulate their own demands
and priorities and to participate fully in agreeing the rules by which
their relationships are regulated.

The first stage in the creation of community is the emergence
of a community identity, involving and interesting its members.
Sometimes, such an identity will emerge from a particular struggle
and die with it. Sometimes such struggles leave behind a core of
dedicated, disillusioned activities, representing nothing but
themselves. Our role is to maintain communities which have a
function to fulfill but, beyond that it is to create a habit of
participation, binding a community together in a constant
relationship with power and decision making.
Within that broader community, there will be many smaller ones taking a more or less active role as they choose and are interested. The two key factors are, firstly, the habit of participation, linked with the techniques and access to power and, secondly, the framework of community institutions, of greatest or less structure and formality as necessary, through which participation is made relevant and effective. The habit and reality of controlling their own affairs are crucial factors in keeping communities open, vital and active. The nature of community politics thus entails a commitment to the dispersal of centralized power in society and its redistribution to the communities which make it up.

Why Community?

A community is a group of individuals with something in common: nationality, neighbourhood, religion, work, workplace, victimization, hobbies and mutual interest are a few obvious examples. The members of a community have some interest in common: something which enables them to identify, one with another. Each person is likely to belong to many different communities, some important, some unimportant, some with a strong sense of identity, some with very little and some whose identity only appears when it is under threat. Some communities are latent; they are only called into existence-or that their existence is only realized
when they become necessary or useful. It is only in community that mutual and individual responsibility operates. It is an interaction with others, in community with others, that the framework is fashioned and the guarantees freely agreed. The most important and strongly felt communities are usually the smallest and most immediate. Thus, for many people the family is the most powerfully felt community and the quality of its relationships most instrumental in determining feelings of happiness, security and well-being. People establish personal identities in relationship to the communities to which they feel that they belong.

Within them they establish for themselves a role and a status, a level of expectations of behaviour in their own and other people’s eyes which they use as a measure of their own success and worth. Self-esteem is usually based on assessment of one’s role within various communities.

Communities often develop a greater sense of identity if they are under threat, their way of life challenged, their members are victims of discrimination, or their very existence is under attack. Under such circumstances communities may discover a sense of unity and come together to organize themselves collectively. Membership of a community implies some responsibility for other members. Communities have a capacity for mutual care and support.
in distress or when problems arise. They are not simply a way of establishing an identity in the world: Communities look after their own by calling upon reserves of love and duty. Even mutual insurance; providing care now in return for help later has an important role to play.

A basic purpose of our approach is therefore to create and to re-create communities, providing a range of mutual support for their members, opportunities to develop and to establish a personal role and purpose in life and in co-operation and conflict with each other, to provide the diversity and pluralism which is the basis of mature, participatory democracy.

What community politics is not?

Community politics is not a technique for the winning of Local government elections. Community politics is not a technique but it is an ideology, a system of ideas for social transformation. For those ideas to become a reality there is a need for a strategy of political action. For that strategy to be successful it needs to develop effective techniques of political campaigning. Those techniques are a means to an end. If they become an end in themselves, the ideas they were designed to promote would have been lost.
Community politics is not local but it is universal. It is an approach to the collective making of decisions and the co-operative regulation of society that is relevant in any social group, from the family to the world.

Community politics is not government but it is about people. It is about their control of the exercise of power. It is about the distribution of power, the use of power, the dissemination of power and the control of power. It is an approach to the way in which decisions are made. It is not limited to the making of 'political' decisions within the structures of 'Government'.

Community politics is not about elections. Elections are an essential ingredient in the process of community politics, a necessary and vital element in the conduct or social affairs. If elections and the holding of elected become the sole or even the major part of our politics we will have become corrupted by the very system of government and the administration that community politics sets out to challenge. The process will have displaced the motivating ideas; we will have lost our reason for fighting elections at all.

**How do communities retain their identity and plays its role in politics?**

Membership of a community implies some responsibility for other members. Communities have a capacity for mutual care and
support in distress or when problems arise. They are not simply a way of establishing an identity in the world. From this view of community it is understood that it is not an unusual phenomenon in Kerala’s politics about the growth of pressure groups and interest groups based on community. For example in Kerala the AKCC (All Kerala Catholic Congress), the NSS (Nair Service Society), the SNDP (Sree Narayan Sanadhana dharma Paripalana) and the Muslim League.

These are the pressure group and interest group organization of Christians Nairs, Ezhavas and Muslims respectively to bargain for political advantages from the successive governments in favour of their community and thus to retain their identity. By taking advantage from the government each community can retain their communities identity in Kerala society. Through frantic efforts they try to gain acceptance of one of the major political parties and threaten to go it alone otherwise. A hot bed of political and community rivalries that prevail in India as well as in Kerala is no exception to this. When a fresh election is announced the political parties search for a formula that will bring victory to their party and community they support. Usually these election formulas are sought not on the basis of common political ideology and action programme for future, but on the basis of minimum programme and maximum
acceptability among the different community forces in the state in order to attain power. The search for a formula continues even after the election at the time of the formation of the Ministry. The lifespan of a ministry in the state rests upon how effectively it can accommodate the various communities in the state. This is the reason in the history of post independent Kerala there was only one ministry that completed its full term and six months more in office. It is because of the special conditions which exist in Kerala that allows the various communities to bargain at the time of election and ministry formation.

Community focused distribution of population is one of the important reasons for the growth of community politics in Kerala. The different religious communities maintained their identity in politics and competed for seats at the time of elections and in the ministry. At present there are three major communities in Kerala: Hindus (56.16%), Christians (19.02%) and Muslims (24.70 %) and other communities (0.12%). Among the Hindus about 30 percent of them belong to the Ezhava community, and about 5 percent of them belong to Brahmin community and about 8 percent belong to Schedule and Tribal Communities.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{67} According to 2001 Census of India.
The 2001 Census show that the Christians were focused in districts of Trichur (24.21%), Ernakulam (38.78%), Kottayam (44.60%), Alleppy (20.94%), Idukki (42.50%), Pathanamthitta (39.03%) and Wynad (22.48%) the Hindus were focused in the districts of Cannannore (61.47%), Kozhikode (57.97%), Palakkad (68.87%), Trichur (59.24%), Alleppy (69.09%), Quilon (65.18%) and Trivandrum (68.09%); and the Muslims were focused in the districts of Cannannore (34.31%), Kozhikode (37.47%) and Malappuram (68.53%). The distribution of population made an impact among various communities that helped to play a decisive role in Kerala politics. Based on the above mentioned census report the Christian community constituencies are distributed mainly in the districts of Ernakulam, Idukkey, Kottayam, Alleppy and Quilon. The Hindu community constituencies are spread all over Kerala except in the districts of Malappuram, Ernakulam and Idukky where they are numerically less because in these regions the Christians and Muslims are numerically the leading community. The Muslim community constituencies are focused in the Districts of Malappuram and Calicut with one each in Ernakualm and Trivandrum. The Congress party and Kerala Congress a regional party are associated with the Christian community constituencies of former princely states of Travancore and Cochin that is coming under the present districts of

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68 According to 2001 Census of India.
Ernakulam, Idukky, Kottayam, Alleppy and Quilon. CPI (M) with the Hindu communities of Palakkad, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragode. While the Muslims dominate the districts such as Malappuram and Calicut are the vote banks of the Muslim League party. This shows that the numerical strength of a community is directly proportionate to the measures of success of the candidate of that community.  

The distribution of population on geographical basis is one of the major causes for the growth of community politics in Kerala. It is also an influence for the political party as well as for the communities to play their politics in Kerala within the democratic frame work of India. This strengthens the communities; make them vibrant as well as powerful in Kerala politics.

**How the Syrian Christian community became powerful in Kerala politics?**

The distribution of population as mentioned above is one of the major reasons for all the major communities in Kerala such as the Hindus, the Christians and the Muslims to play their own decisive role in Kerala politics. The distribution of population and the adherent nature of the communities unified them as well as

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strengthened them. The Syrian Christian community is an organized community hierarchically under the leadership of the clergy and at the apex of the hierarchy is led by a Bishop. Always there is an intimate relation between the communities and the leaders as well as the leaders and the followers, and within the followers is vital to the strength of a community. Among the Syrian Christians they establish personal identities in relation to the communities to which they feel that they belong. Communities often develop a greater sense of identity if they are under threat, their way of life challenged; their members are victims of discrimination, of their very existence under attack, under such circumstances communities may discover a sense of unity and come together to organize them collectively.

Many occasions throughout the history of Kerala the identity of the Christian community was challenged by the authorities. This witnessed a series of agitation against the discrimination of the King of Travancore. The Travancore memorial was the first agitation of its kind. It was popularly known as Malyali Memorial and was followed by the Ezhava memorial.

These two movements were mainly spearheaded by the Christian, Nair and Ezhava communities. The aim of these political movements led under the leadership of these communities was to get

a free share in the government and the administration of the state. After independence the first Communist government led by E.M.Sankaran Namboodiripad introduced the education bill in view of nationalizing the private schools run by the various communities. The Christian community with tooth and nail opposed the policy of the government. This finally led towards the liberation struggle. It was a mass appraisal of the Christian community against the Communist government. This movement unified the community and strengthened the Christian community of Kerala. From the above explanation it is quite clear that when a community is challenged they will unify themselves against their enemy. The liberation movement helped the Syrian Christian community to retain their identity by challenging the attitude of the government of Kerala. Challenges can build community against the common enemy. All these movements helped to retain the identity of the Syrian Christian community as well as made them a powerful community in Kerala.

**Community is a source of power**

Community is a source of power. Man alone is weak. But men together have powers. If members are able to withdraw from community freely, they have less incentive to stay and fight within the group. Here one could argue that one of the most important
modern twentieth century structures for handling community controversy is withdrawal. But in many instances members of a community are not content to withdraw and in these cases the community must find means to handle controversy. Therefore an important understanding among members of any community concerns how conflict is handled.

The first step must be the recognition of the fact that the conflict situations do, in fact exist. Often some community members are so concerned about projecting the image of togetherness and unity that they suppress, even to themselves, the realities of social interaction. So community is a collective form of togetherness of human beings. According to R. Schermerhorn power within a community is a complex topic that it has dominated community literature in recent years. Community may be equalizing association, in that all members belong. So he says that power has an inherent scarcity.\(^{71}\) Here Nisbert argues that community is a conservative set up. His argument is that community which is demanded as a radical threat to the status quo is a tool of political conservatives.\(^{72}\) Primitive communities were more conservative in its nature because they


\(^{72}\) Ibid, p.383.
function based on their age old customs, manners and traditions. The tribal communities are the best embodiments of such static and conservative functions. While a lot of difference can be seen in modern communities, they are not stable because of mobility. First mobility makes choice possible. Here in a modern community a person can reject one community in favour of another. As a result, modern communities are not stable, enduring collectivities of the past, rooted to a fixed place, and fixed in both composition and direction. Mobility also makes it possible for modern man to belong to several different types of associations at the same time and, possibly to more than one community.  

**What is political participation?**

India is a democratic country. The Indian political system is centered on caste and community. In India communities play an important role in politics. Political parties influence communities to get their vote in order to win the elections. Therefore the communities are becoming prominent in our democratic system.

Here in such a situation political participation refers to the voluntary participation of members of a political system. Political participation varies from one society to another and varies with

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73 John Steinbeck, op.cit, p.156.
particular societies. Therefore, it is an undisputable fact that every form of human society would have some form of politics. These activities typically include voting, seeking information, group discussions, attend meetings, contributing financially and communicating with the elected representatives to the legislative bodies.

The active form of participation include formal involvement in a party, canvassing and registering voters names, speech, writing and special making, working in campaigns and competitions for public and party office. Political participation according to Almond and Powell are those individuals who are oriented to the input structures and processes, and engage or view themselves or politically engaging in, the articulation of demands and the making of decisions. Political participation according to Mcelosky as “those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formulation of public policy.” In a democratic political system, the political participants are aware of their role in the political structure and more

75 Ibid, p.63.
especially in the political input structure consisting of parties and interest groups.

How Communities participate in politics

India is a land of heterogeneous groups where caste, community, language and regional differences play a vital role in shaping political system. In India under the influence of western education, national movement and the advent of adult franchise, the traditional community structure has undergone continuous change and adaptation. Groups based on community may enter into political process in a number of ways. They are the following.

1. Appeals may be made to play politics in favour of Syrian Christian community by various political parties. Network of interpersonal relations are activated both during elections and at other times for mobilizing support along religious line.

2. Community or religious associations such as All Kerala Catholic Congress (A.K.C.C), Kerala Catholic Bishops Conference (K.C.B.C), Nair Service Society (N.S.S) and Sree Narayana Sanadana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP), may seek to articulate their community’s interest in a very systematic and organized way.

77 Rajani, Kothari, op.cit. p.71.
In Kerala, community has been politicized. The politicization of communities may lead to fundamentalism and factionalism. In the long run it is a great danger for the healthy growth of Indian democracy.

**Community in Politics and the Syrian Christians of Kerala-A critical appraisal**

The Kerala Syrian Christian community which is hierarchical, combinative, non-competitive and vertical. As a result individual and group mobility became possible. Thus a new structure was evolved in Kerala society. The new structure that evolved was highly competitive and vertical with clustering and horizontal division.\(^7\)

In the new social system the various socio-religious groups in Kerala society were dominated by community sentiments and feelings. In Kerala every community is supported by religion and its structures. The advent of democracy influenced the economic, social and political order that ultimately created a great mileage that resulted in the formation of a new social structure.\(^9\)

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\(^7\) E.J. Thomas, op.cit, p.5

\(^9\) Ibid, p.53.
So to say this is one of the major reasons for the birth of community politics in Kerala especially after the independence of India. Politicization of a community under severe oppression and suppression organize themselves to fight against the oppressors by using politics as a weapon. This process of a community slowly and steadily attaining political mileage is called the politicization of a community. The politicization of the Syrian Christian community can be seen largely from two perspectives: one, from the perspective of government and two, from the perspective of political parties. In the former case large number of bills that were introduced by the government hurt the feelings of the Syrian Christian community. The first Communist Government in Kerala introduced the "Education Bill" in 1958. This alarmingly shocked the Christian community and turned against the government. In the meantime, the Kerala government introduced the "Agricultural Bill". It was passed by the Kerala Assembly on June 10, 1959. The conflict with the government and communities increased with the introduction of the "Agricultural Bill".

In Kerala generally the political parties are divided into left parties and right parties. In the initial stage there were sharp

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80 E.J. Thomas, op.cit, p.53.
ideological differences between the political parties. Now there is no significant difference between them. Almost all the political parties irrespective of their ideological differences shift their allegiance whenever and wherever it is convenient for them due to community pressure within the political parties. The communities used political parties as a platform to satisfy the communities interest and thus to retain the dominance of their community in Kerala society.

In this regard the Durkheims theory of Organic and Mechanic solidarity is quite relevant, while it is applied to the concept of the term community. When we deal with the Syrian Christians of Kerala, this theory of community based on the principle of organic solidarity and mechanical solidarity, it can be applied to them. Originally it is an organic community because it is a Christian community and following the Christian religious practices.

But this organic structure is becoming weaker because of the influence of education, impact of democracy and the existence of the written constitution. Besides a good number of Syrian Christians are migrating to other parts of India and also abroad. These factors weaken the Organic solidarity of the community and strengthen the Mechanical solidarity of the Syrian Christian community.

We can safely conclude that due to the influence of the structure and functioning of the Syrian Christian community, in matter of religion and its practices, it has only Organic solidarity. While in other matters such as education, way of life, food habits and politics etc, it is turning towards Mechanical solidarity. Therefore it is understood that the Syrian Christians of Kerala through their participation in politics is trying to enhance their communities identity, social and economic status and political power in a politically community oriented Kerala society.