CHAPTER - IV

THE TERRITORIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE BASIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN KOTTAR DIOCESES

The theological concept of the Basic Christian communities [BCC] has been emerged from the Biblical theme that all human structures are the parts of Christian body. Each part has to work for the growth of the body or the Church\(^1\). As a result, BCC has a relevant role to realize the purpose of the Church. The Diocese of Kottar introduced the Basic Christian Communities since 1978 and started to function as Anbiyams. They are treated as the fundamental nucleus of the basic cells of the Church. The meaning of the term “Anbiyams” is nothing but an organization based upon “Love”. It is nothing but the interdependence of humanbeings both men and women for both spiritual and temporal purpose. Mutual dependence for sharing and caring is the hall mark of the Anbiyam network. Families of a particular limit are connected first spiritually and then for the realization of the temporal needs\(^2\). In fact Anbiyam is a realistic association of people of same temperament and mentality. I did

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2. Personal Interview with Fr. S. Mariadasan, aged 72, Senior priest, Vettumani, dated 23 March 2012.
not mean that differences are amicably settled because of the Basic idea of human love that is pervading through the physical structure of ‘Anbiyam’. Ever since the formation of Anbiyams in Kottar Diocese, people’s participation is more in constructive direction. It is not ‘I’ but ‘We’ is slogan of the people live in the Anbiyam.

BCCs have been accorded top priority in diocese. The BCCs have come to stay as diocesan way of life, a new Paradigm of the Church. It is the basic for any vertical structure of the Church. It is the micro unit that binds the Church and the people. They are the most wanted forums for both people’s participation and community development programmes. It plays a vital role in the life of women, poor and exploited to hold fair discussions and is related to them. BCCs have been involved in the preparation, motivation and evaluation. It is the bottom unit of the pyramidal structure of the diocese. It is nerve centre of the starting point of the power generation of the laity. Nothing is believed to this unit. Hence, it is the stepping stone for the lay hierarchical power structure. It is a matter of great importance to what extent these Anbiyams contribute for the lay empowerment in ecclesiastical relation, therefore leading to the enjoyment

3. Personal Interview with Fr. M. Peter, aged 65, Vicar Forane of Thirithuvapuram, dated 1 June 2012.
4. Personal Interview with Mr. S. Arulanandam, aged 60, lay catechist from Vavarai and BCC animator for Vavarai Zone, dated 26 June 2012.
of power. Hence, it is an imperative use to unfold success story of the constitution function and powers of elementary unit which enjoy a very strong hold in all sense of the forms. Unfortunately a few numbers in fold could not stand significance.

A. Territorial Divisions

The Catholics of the Diocese of Kottar live in 175 parishes. Sometimes, each parish may have one or two or three sub-stations. There are four vicariate divisions in the Diocese. A Vicariate is the biggest division in the diocese. It is the territorial unit may be comprised of 70 to 100 churches both parishes and sub stations. It is headed by Vicariate Fathers who may be a senior priest with administrative and spiritual experience. All the priests who work in the Vicariate are coming under the direct administration and supervision of the Vicariate Father. As repeatedly said Kottar Diocese is divided into four Vicariates such as Kottar, Colachel, Mulagumoodu and Thirithuvapuram, and each Vicariate is divided into zones. There are 27 zones in Kottar Diocese.

5. Vicariate is a territorial division. Kottar, Colachel, Mulagumoodu and Thirithuvapuram are the Four Vicariates.
6. A Vicariate can be called as a region.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Vicariate</th>
<th>Zones</th>
<th>Parish and Sub-station</th>
<th>No. of BCCs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kottar</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colachel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulagumoodu</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirithuvapuram</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total [Whole Diocese]</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3036</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vicariate Father is the head of the Vicariate Administration. It stands for service, all the Vicariate Pastoral and Administrative directions are in his hands. He is appointed by the Bishop for five years. The entire spiritual domains of the Vicariate belong to him. He is provided with co-pastors on certain areas of work. There is a Co-ordinator for Anbiyams at the regional level. He will appraise of the matters related to the Anbiyams of the Vicariate. As Ambiyams are already escalated to divide into zonal, each zone has pastoral disrupter always prurient entry and treasures. There is anybody elected as office bearer of the Anbiyam Zone that is a genuine force in a Church.

Unit level is the base of grass root level formation of the communities comprising approximately 30 families. The unit is called Anbiyam or Basic Christian Community. From structural and administration point of view, it has Executive Committees comprising for proposing the President, Vice - President, Secretary and Treasurer. This committee has to ensure participation of members based on community meetings, facilitate the dynamics in the meetings, take care of administrative parts of the communities, such as writing the report, take regular attendance etc., and represent the unit in the village forums\textsuperscript{11}. In Parishes and sub-stations there are more than 3036 Anbiyams as active units. It makes the community active, lively and gainful on various aspects of life. The concept of ministries is introduced in the communities. The various ministries are catechism, health, liturgy, culture and communication, women, youth formation and social justice. Those who are in charge of these ministries are called ministers. These ministers are expected to work out the effective functioning of matters respectively\textsuperscript{12}. What is to be discussed in the Anbiyam is to be discussed in the Parish Council. When we give importance to the participatory church\textsuperscript{13}.

\begin{enumerate}
\item Maria David, A., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 140.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p. 141.
\item Vincent, S., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 5.
\end{enumerate}
There is a fixed methodology followed in the weekly meetings of the Basic Christian [BC] Unit. Meetings may be conducted in one separate place. Sometimes weekly meetings will be conducted in one of the members house. Therefore in rotation all the members come to conduct the BC Unit meeting\textsuperscript{14}. The meeting used to start with a prayer. Then the Secretary will read out the previous meeting minutes. There will be a discussion about the well being of the members. If anybody in the BC Unit is sick then they will pray for the sick members. The BC Unit discusses the matter given in the Adithalam bulletin matters of current importance of Anbiyam policies or religious matters usually from the basis for discussion. The members express their firm views.

Then the members of the Anbiyam they will enter into collection for small savings. There are sub-committees in each Anbiyam which will look after the jobs allotted to them\textsuperscript{15}. Normally, the meetings of the Anbiyam may extend from one to two hour depending upon the nature of business. Their programmes include social awareness, rehabilitation, development

\textsuperscript{14} Anbiyam: Mission and methodology, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{15} Personal Interview with Mr. Zadharion, aged 49, Vice - president of Parish Council, Paramanvilai. Dated 24 October 2012.
programme, educational activities and to establish a society based upon human justice\textsuperscript{16}.

There is a Co-ordination Team in the Parish Council representative (executive member and those in charge of different ministries) of different Units of BCCs from among them a Co-ordinator, a Secretary and a Treasurer are elected\textsuperscript{17}. The Church Co-ordination Team will present a collective activities of the BCUs at the church level. In matter pertaining to the Parish especially on welfare measures the Village Co-ordination Team takes initiative to mobilize people. They also act as the contact person between the other parish structures and leaders such as the Parish Council member and the parish priest. The parish BCC Co-ordination Team represents the Zonal Team.

The Zone consists of six or eight churches of one region. The Zonal forum consists of Parish representatives from the Parish Co-ordination Team. In each Church, there are Co-ordinator, President and Treasurer form the members of the Zonal forum\textsuperscript{18}. The Zonal leads Council of a Zonal Co-ordinator who is a priest appointed by the high level committee and a President, Secretary and a Treasurer are elected by the group. This

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Anbiyam File No. 29, Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoi, 2010, p. 7.
forum meets once in a month and revives the growth and achievement of BCCs in the Zone and plans Zonal level programmes and conference. Self -Help Groups are motivated at the Zonal level meetings. All the 27 Zones work for the development of the Parishes since 1996\textsuperscript{19}.

As mentioned earlier the Kottar Diocese comprised of four Vicariates. Out of it, Thirithuvapuram Vicariate consists of eight Zones such as 1) Malepalai 2) Melpuram 3) Vavarai 4) Vencode 5) Kappukadu 6) Marthandam 7) Kulasekharam and 8) Thirithuvapuram. Similarly, Mulagumoodu Vicariate consists of eight zones namely the Adithalam guides to conduct weekly meetings of the BCCs in the district of Kanyakumari and bring out social development programmes. Every week people read Adithalam and discuss the reflections for helping others.


\textsuperscript{19} Adithalam, December 1996.
\textsuperscript{20} Anbiyam File No. 29, Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoi, 2010, p. 7.
There are four Vicariate Co-ordinators such as Rev. Fr. K. Mariadhas, Thirithuvapuram Parish priest for Thirithuvapuram Vicariate, Rev. Fr. A.S. Anand Parish priest of Manalikkuzhivilai for Mulagumoodu Vicariate, Rev. Fr. M. Joseph Justus, Vicar Forane of Colachel Vicariate for Colachel Vicariate and Rev. Fr. L. Antony Alcandar parish priest of Pariyacode for Kottar Vicariate are working. The first Diocesan Executive Committee was headed by a lay man Mr. D. Sathiya Dhas, President of Sahayananger parish Anbiyam Co-ordination in 1988. In 1992 Mr. A.X.F. Fernandex, Rajakkamangalam parish became the President. In 1996 Mr. F. Hentry of Ettamadai parish became the President. In 2000 Mr. A. Chelladurai of Canavoor parish was the President. Since 2003, Mr. S. Raja Titus of Palavilai served as the President.

The Zonal level Co-ordinators, Presidents, Secretaries and Treasures form the Vicariate level forum. The leadership team consists of Vicariate Co-ordinator who is a priest, appointed by the high level committee of the diocese and a President, Secretary and Treasurer who are elected by the forum called the Vicariate Committee. They collect monthly report from the Zonal Co-ordinator about the functioning of BCCs in their

Zones and discuss problems related to the particular Vicariate and make out educative programmes and committees at the Vicariate level\textsuperscript{22}. All the four Vicariate Co-ordination Committees are well established since 1991\textsuperscript{23}. Each Vicariate was asked to identify two parishes as experimental parishes where various programmes of the BCCs could be intensively carried out.

Diocesan Central Committee is a central committee for the whole diocesan planning and directing the movement of BCCs whole Diocese\textsuperscript{24}. It comes under the Presidents, Secretaries and Treasures of the four Vicariates. They gather once in a month to review the performance at various levels based upon the report presented. As the members of the central committee are the lay people. Matters and representations of the establishments of new units are discussed there and full time volunteers are informed and assigned make preparation for the new units and other input programmes at the diocesan level. The annual celebration and conference at the diocese level are discussed in the Diocesan Executive Committees\textsuperscript{25}. In 1990, the committee decided to form a resource team which will get the

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{22} Paul Richard Joseph, R., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 94.
\bibitem{23} Maria David., A., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 141.
\bibitem{24} Anbiyam File, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 68.
\bibitem{25} Maria David., A., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 141.
\end{thebibliography}
parishes to organize training programme. This committee is expected to keep in touch with the government, press and other organizations.  

High level committee consists of the Bishop, the Vicar General of the diocese, the four Vicar Foranes and the diocesan Director of BCC Commission. This is the top most policy making body for the BCCs at the diocese level. The presence of clergy in the diocese high level committee shows the hold of diocesan priest that was the administration. It is the policy making body which makes decisions of BCCs. But it is said that the Executive Committees views are respected to take final decision. It is noted that there is a difference between the diocesan priestly administration and the Martyr Devasahayam Laity Movement. In all the BCC structure, the laity takes decision and do things on their accord. If the decision of BCCs clash with the interest of the clergy then such decision are not allowed to pass. In spite of all, progressed democratic process are enriched in the Anbiyam formation rules and regulation the decision of clergy is final. At sometime, the diocese administration headed by clergy

27. Personal Interview with Fr. S. Mariadasan, aged 72, Senior priest, Vettumani, dated 23 March 2012.  
28. Personal Interview with Fr.M. Peter, aged 65, Vicar Forane of Thiruthuvapuram, dated 1 June 2012.  
29. Martyr Devasahayam Laity Movement was registered on 13 – 03 – 2013.
can pass any assignment rule against the laity are the principle of better administration and catholic regularity.

The second Vatican Council is vociferous about the right of the laity. It is said very strongly in the council decision that without the participation of laity the church can not exist\textsuperscript{30}. It goes without saying that on all decision making the laity involves would be respected, not to be requested. It is the basic continent of the purpose of Anbiyam. The power starts from the root that goes up to the top. But the top level body may be an extra. It is quite contrary to the objective of the basic Christian communities. It appears that the BCC structure looks democratic but in action is arbitrary. It is quite surprising to note that the diocese which proposes the most democratic is autocratic and authoritative. A critic of the BCCs can say that the projected democratic features in a strategy to attract the laity in participating the decision making bodies there will be democratic discussion on positive and negative sides. Finally the clergy very cleverly and logically draw the support of the laity for their own sake. There is a move on the part many laity on thin. Because, most of the lay people who are there in the decision making bodies are at the mercy of the

\textsuperscript{30. Second Vatican Council, op. cit., p. 427.}
clergy. In spite of all these, there is a welcome change as positive direction comes out from the sides of clergy and laity.

B. Various structures of decentralization

Kottar Diocese stands in need of supportive structures administration at various levels such as the Parish, Institutions and Organizations, Vicariates and Diocese. In the past priests monopolized all the administrative offices. Very often it happened that the lay people play in the middle to priests and religious as they have to be at their mercy for obtaining some favours. The argument that is usually postulated in this regard is that priest and religious are better administrators and self less laboures and the lay people may not be able to commit fully to the welfare of the institutions as they are tied up to their family problems and worries but argument no longer holds in spite number of lay people occupy intellectual parts and are involved in the policy making bodies of the government, private companies, industries, media, networks and financial institutions. They work without standing expertise and single minded commitment. Since 1989 onwards, the lay people were given importance in the administrate bodies. They were provided with opportunities to enhance

31. Personal Interview with Dr. T. Sunderaraj, aged 64, President of Martyr Devasahayam Movement, Martandam, dated 14 March 2013.
their capabilities in Parish administration, School management, Commission schemes and Financial management.

The most powerful structure in the parish level is the Parish Council. It is the regulation of the Second Vatican Council which firmly provided the power and structure to Parish level micro administrative setup\textsuperscript{32}. In 1971, Bishop Arokiyaswamy removed the fear of the clergy and changed the history of Kottar Diocese to promote Parish Councils in the Diocese\textsuperscript{33}. At first Rev Fr. M.X. Rajamony started Parish Councils in his parish Kanjampuram in 1975. He was a dynamic priest who fulfills the power to the base levels. He was the Church maker of the decentralization process. He carried out his pastoral action through secular pastoral and social structures which are organically integrated and co-ordinated in the Parish level first\textsuperscript{34}.

The Parish Council is the base of all power structure in the Diocesan administration. It plays a vital role in the administration of the concerned parish. The diocese had summed up all the Parish executives to a conference in 1984. The conference was conducted in the Holy Cross

\textsuperscript{32} Second Vatican Council, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 427.
\textsuperscript{33} Personal Interview with Fr. S. Mariadasan, aged 72, Senior priest, Vettumani, dated 23 March 2012.
\textsuperscript{34} Personal Interview with Fr. M. Peter, aged 65, Vicar Forane of Thiruthuvapuram, dated 1 June 2012.
College, Nagercoil for three days. The executives of the Parish stayed there for three days and deliberated the proceedings of the conference. The draft rules and regulations for the Parish Council and all the structures for the diocese were presented and discussed there by the delegates. It reminded the constitutional assembly of the Indian constitution. The clergy and laity put their heads together and formed rules.

The first regulations were put into practice in 1984 by the degree of Bishop Arokiasamy. But in 1990 and in 1997, during the tenure of Bishop Leon Tharmaraj the regulations were amended by the direction of Bishop, Priests and laity. Again during the time Bishop Peter Remigious in 2009, there were some amendments. The amended constitution came into being from 03rd January 2010. Bishop Peter Remigious wanted to strengthen the gems of clergy through his regulation. He cited the Canon Laws and the second Vatican Council rules to amount the authority of the clergy. At the same time, there are certain provision in Cannon Law and second Vatican Council which have given more powers and authority to the laity. Pope Paul VI said that the act with a new mind in a new way is not much

35. Personal Interview with Fr. V. Robert, aged 70, deliberated the conference in 1984.
important,\textsuperscript{37} wherever the messages to give exception to the code\textsuperscript{38}. St. Paul said that love is the personification of common law\textsuperscript{39}.

At the Parish level, the main stations and sub-stations are taken care of by Parish priest who présided over parish administration through Parish Council, Parish Finance Committee and Parish Associations\textsuperscript{40}. Detailed norms were given for these administration bodies. Hence, this has been framed in consultation with the clergy and the laity in accordance with the Code of Cannon Law\textsuperscript{41}. Several Committees such as Literacy Committee, Education Committee and Peace Committee function under the supervision of the Parish Council.

Pious Association and Movements have their Co-ordination at the Parish level. From 1978 onwards the Pastoral Council was being carried out through BCCs in the Diocese. The BCCs are communities of the people beyond the barriers of caste and creed. All the parish structures have their weekly and monthly meetings regularly. Having been sidelined and kept at the priority of the Church. But now to a certain committed laity

\textsuperscript{37} An Introduction to the code of Cannon Law (Tamil), Trichirapalli, 2011, p. XVII.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39} Holy Bible, Romans, Chapter 2 words 17 – 29.
\textsuperscript{40} There are 21 Pastoral Commissions on the whole.
\textsuperscript{41} Rules and Regulations of Parish Council, 2009, p. 11.
is brought to the centre of activity with their own activity in the work of the Church\textsuperscript{42}.

The Parish Council members are elected from Parish grass root structures especially the BCCs. The organs of lay participation and co-responsibility have been established in all diocesan parishes, in spite of the clear-cut directions of the Cannon law. The lay people who were more once dominated by the clergy, now acted independently in many parishes. They assumed various manifold functions and leadership rules along with parish priest in directing, planning, co-ordinating, moderating or governing the Parish\textsuperscript{43}. Decentralization has become a wide spread movement at present. It is better to view the reason and guidelines for the formation of the Parish Council. At the outset, one may tempt to conclude that the clergy still exercise the hold. Some Parish priests who are previous managers may suppress the feelings of the Parish Council members\textsuperscript{44}.

C. Rules and Regulations of Election of Parish Council

The Second Vatican Council of the opinion that the laity should take a role in the administration of the parish along with the clergy. It also mentioned that the clergy knew pretty well that the laity had a very

\textsuperscript{42} Then Oli, March 1989, p.38.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., January 1990, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{44} Second Vatican Council, document, No. 179.
constructive part in the affairs of the Church\textsuperscript{45}. St. Augustin once said that
the name Bishop was the position he had in the Church. But he cherished
the idea of being a Christian among the ordinary people\textsuperscript{46}. The Council
made one point very clearly that, the clergy is the representative of Christ
on the earth. Hence, the laity had to obey that clergy as a divine
dispensation. Another important decision of the Council was that, all the
worldly positions should be in the hands of the laity and they should be
allowed to function without any interference\textsuperscript{47}. But the Canon Law No.536
S.1 says that the Parish Council is only an advisory body and it had to be
functioned as the direction of the concerned Bishop\textsuperscript{48}.

Provision one of the Part two of the guidelines adopted the name
“Parish Council” to the democratic body of the welfare of the Church\textsuperscript{49}.
The Bishop has given some seventeen objectives for the Parish Council.
Christian people have to be united with love for the constructive
developments and establishment of sub-committees in the Parish Council
for better and specified action goals of the diocese has to be installed in the
minds of the people. To regulate the working of the BCCs in the Parish,
interfaith dialogue which organizes to celebrate common festivals such as

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Ibid.}, No. 30.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, No. 32.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, No. 37.
\item Rules and Regulations of Parish Council, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 8.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p. 9.
\end{enumerate}
Pongal, New Year, DeevaVali, Independence Day, etc. is the most important objectives of Parish Council50.

There are four types of members in the Parish Pastoral Council

1. Ex- Offico member
2. Members to be elected from BCCs
3. Members elected from the religious community and
4. Nominated members

Among the total members, at least 51 percent should be directly elected from the Anbiyams. All the members will be elected by the secret ballot. The tenure of the office members is a period of three years. Among the Parish Council members of executive comprised of four members have to be elected by secret ballot. Since the Parish priest is the President, a Vice-President, Secretary, Joint Secretary and Treasure are to be elected with in the concerned church. Among the executives at least one must be a woman51.

As Parish priest is the President, he will provide the functioning of the Parish Council. As he will do his duty as per the code of Cannon

50. Ibid., p. 9.
51. Ibid., pp. 15 – 22.
Law,\textsuperscript{52} he has to take after the properties of the Church\textsuperscript{53}. The Vice-President will provide the mutiny in the office of the Church. In fact he is the leader of the locality and is the day to day administration of the Church. The proper growth of the Church depended upon the Vice-President. He should be a man of dedication and sincerity. The Secretary of the Parish Council has to prepare the agenda in consultation with the President and Vice-President. He will keep the minutes of the Parish Council. All the matters to be informed to the church members must go through him to the Parish Priest. The Joint-Secretary will look after the works of the secretary in his absence in addition to the co-ordination of all BCCs. The Treasurer has to play a great role in the Parish Council. He or she has to submit the accounts of the Church to the Parish Council and after the approval it has to be announced to the people. The Treasurer has to submit the accounts to the Audit Committee. Every year the account should be submitted to the Vicar Father (Vicar Forane-VF). After audited it by the VF office, seven percent of the total income should be given to the diocese. The Parish Council can be dissolved by the Bishop for proper reasons\textsuperscript{54}.

\textsuperscript{52} Code of Cannon Law, Nos. 1281 and 1288.
\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 32.
Gathering under the President every month, Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) takes authentic decision to maintain properties, parish inventory, register, records, correspondence file, census of the parish and parish diary. A regular parish administrative machinery with parish structures in charge of different organization was to set up. The Parish Priest was known as director and he was the central figure in the Priest administration and controlled all the organization of the parish. He is placed important person as the leader in the name of the parish and they were experts in personal matters. In Kottar Diocese PPCs received many good appreciations from other diocese of Tamilnadu. Through the BCCs the Parish has rediscovered its real identity of administration that helped to improve the standard of living of the Parish people.

D. Vicariate Regional Administration

Kottar Diocese has a well organized decentralized administrative networking system. The Pastoral Parish Council sends its executives to the Vicariate Pastoral Council (VPC). As already indicated that Kottar Dioceses, there are four vicariates, each Vicariate has many parishes and sub-stations under the control of the Vicariate Pastoral Council which is

headed by the Vicariate Father (Vicar Forane). He focuses attention on some significant and important matters indicating the vision and mission of the Diocese where it is given for Vicariate Administration. His services are more effective rendered to a greater number of vicariate structures by caring as a responsible Vicar Forane. Vicar Forane is the head of the Vicariate. He is provided with Co-pastors to share with them some of the Parish responsibilities. They are instructed to function with the help of a six member Vicariate Pastoral Visit Team who comprises of three priests (two elected by the Vicariate priests, one appointed by the Bishop) two lay persons elected by the Vicariate Pastoral Council and one religious.

Vicar Forane is directly appointed by the Bishop to the Vicariate Office for a period of five years. The Vicar Forane with his team studies the parish situation, seeing the files and documents and prepares a ground for Bishop’s Pastoral Visit. The parishes are insisted to maintain the Church laws and the diocesan priorities in fostering Christian life through participatory structure of the faithful in the Diocese. According to the report given by the Vicar Forane, Bishop considers the steady growth and development of the Parish. A team and secretaries of the Vicariate Pastoral

Council is appointed by the Vicar-Forane and the secretaries of the Vicariate Pastoral Commission. In the Vicariate level, several structures are organized with the participation of laity. The Vicariate Laity Commission is organized under Vicar Forane, who prepares Vicariate Pious Associations namely Christian Life Community, Catholic Action, Society of Vincent De- Paul, Legion of Mary, Franciscan Order, Better World Movement, Indian Christian Renewal Movement, Teachers group, Catholic Society and Society of Sacred Heart which are the nervous system of the Vicariate. Vicariate promoted leadership of the laity through this service system\(^60\).

The Diocese will instruct the Vicariate to implement the diocesan programmes. The Vicar Father creates favourable conditions and establishes necessary structures in order to carry them out effectively. It is believed that the Vicariates officially evaluate vicariate pastoral ministry and priest who approaches. The Bishop has been constantly insisting upon the importance of maintaining Vicariate Participatory Structures and of promoting lay leadership\(^61\).

The Vicariate is the middle structure in the diocesan administration. It is in buckle that connects the PPC with DPC (Diocesan Pastoral

\(^{60}\) *Ibid...*, p. 55.

Council). Vicariate for better administration has divided into various zones. The zonal organizations is also rather democratic headed by Priest who is Zonal Director, The net-work seems to be democratic, but patronized and demonstrated by the Priests.

E. Diocesan Administration

Diocesan Pastoral Council was recommended by the Second Vatican Council in view of promoting participatory and representative type of structures in the Church was inaugurated officially on 14\textsuperscript{th} July 1990. Status of governing Diocesan Pastoral Council were also approved in 1990 and since the Diocesan Pastoral Council is functioning effectively. The Bishop is the President and the Vicar General is the Vice- President. The overwhelming majority of the members are lay persons elected by the Parish Pastoral Councils and VPCs democratically. It has more than 216 members in the year 2004 to 2007\textsuperscript{62}.

The Parish Council of each parish has to select one representative to represent as member in the DPC. If a particular parish has a sub-station the representative should be on rotation covering sub-stations such members who represent DPC will remain as member as long as he is the

member of the Parish Council or until the expiry of the present term of the DPC. If the representative is sent from the parish acts against the interest of the Parish Council can be taken action against him by the Bishop\textsuperscript{63}. DPC works directly under the control of the Bishop. As mentioned above, the Bishop is the President and Vicar General is the Vice-President. There will also be a lay Vice-President, Secretary, Joint Secretary and Treasurer elected in the General Body of the Council\textsuperscript{64}. The whole proceedings of the DPC is directed and dominated by the Bishop.

The meetings of the Council will be once in three months duration. A prepared agenda will be sent to members in advance. If members have to ask any questions, they have to send it in advance. Then only the Bishop will answer the question. Sometimes, even the questions sent in advance, it will not be answered. It should be the mood of the Bishop\textsuperscript{65}. Even if the answer of the Bishop does not satisfy the member, he will seldom register his regret. Such is the power of the Bishop when he is in proceedings. The Bishop has a responsibility to the Church under his control, since he is the representative of Christ on the earth. But Bible says one he acts of a leader shall be servant in action, who rules with authority should behave with

\textsuperscript{63} Rules and Regulations of Kottar Diocese, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{64} Pavazhavizha Jubilee Souvenir, \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{65} Personal Interview with Mr. Royal Raj, aged 50, DPC Executive member of Thirithuvapuram V P C, and Parish Pastoral Council member of Chenthari parish dated 16 January 2013.
humility\textsuperscript{66}. On the basis of this, the Bishop has to administer the diocese. Bishop has an authority based upon service though these power are given by the Church. He can pass orders to control those who are under his control. He has the rights to issue directions for the administration of the Diocese under his control\textsuperscript{67}.

The lay executives of the DPC are simply the on lookers of the proceedings. They are not allowed to give reply or participate democratically. There is a Treasurer in the executive. He is a lay person but he did not deal with the finance of the Diocese. The finance of the Diocese is in hands of the Bursar, a clergy and Bishop. Nobody knows the income and expenditure of the diocese\textsuperscript{68}. It is very funny to note the Parish Council of the each church has to submit the accounts to the Vicariate and the Diocese. But in turn, the Diocese has no obligation to submit the accounts in the DPC. Hence, the shepherd who works for the welfare of the people, never reveals the accounts to anybody. Some people in the Diocese feel that this is the undemocratic attitude of the Diocesan Administration.

\textsuperscript{66} Second Vatican Council document, \textit{op. cit.}, No. 7.
\textsuperscript{67} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 130.
\textsuperscript{68} Personal Interview with Dr. T. Sunderaraj, aged 64, President of Martyr Devasahayam Movement, Martandam, dated 14 March 2013.
In short, the Kottar Diocese administration translates the vision of Second Vatican Council into reality. Bishop Arokiasamy and Leon Tharma Raj tried their best to boost the people’s participation in the administration. At present the Diocese is taking a leading part to make the central administration decentralized. There are good number of laity with suitable education and experiences in secular administration of the Church. Let the clergy concentrate the spiritual matters and the temporal affairs should be looked after by the laity. A cen percent de-centralization is possible when the clergy should think that the laity is capable of any types of task. As Vatican document No.37 said that the clergy should hand over the responsibility to the laity with faith and allow them to do the assigned work with freedom and independence.  