CONCLUSION

This study sought to probe the "image of nation-building" prevailing among the elected local leaders of Tamil Nadu with the focus on the municipal councillors of the Coimbatore Municipality. In order to make it a comparative study, attempt was also made to probe the image of nation-building prevailing among the elected councillors of the Usilampatti Panchayat in Tamil Nadu itself, and of the Alwaye and Muvattupuzha Municipalities in Kerala. The final outcome is a comparative analysis of the "image of nation-building" prevailing among the municipal councillors of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the local self-government bodies of Coimbatore, Usilampatti, Alwaye and Muvattupuzha being the samples used for the study.

I. Methodological Issues

While gathering and organising the socio-economic data about the municipal councillors under study, the following fifteen categories were used: (1) Party affiliation; (2) Occupational pattern; (3) Income; (4) Level of education; (5) Sex; (6) Age; (7) Family; (8) Religion; (9) Caste; (10) Media exposure; (11) Travels; (12) Political recruitment; (13) Political experiences; (14) Offices held; and (15) Major political involvements.
Assuming that the "image of nation-building" in question would consist of in the local leaders' perception of the goal of nation-building, the preference for the ideological strategy as well as in their awareness about the importance of their own leadership, these were sought to be probed through a set of structured and unstructured questions. While the structured questions were aimed at eliciting "yes" or "no" answers regarding such issues as: (1) casteism; (2) local industries; (3) land distribution; (4) Community Development Schemes; (5) Linguistic re-organisation of States; (6) measuring "development" through "per capita income"; (7) equality and development; (8) faith in capitalism; (9) profit motive and national economy; (10) money and elections; (11) one's own local influence; (12) one's own influence beyond the local body; (13) Party assistance in emerging as a leader; (14) crisis in party identity; and (15) ambition for becoming a national leader. The unstructured questions sought to elicit the local leaders' comments and suggestions on such matters as: (1) the major challenges to the nation; (2) the meaning of nation-building; (3) the obstacles to national integration; (4) suggestions for solving industrial unrest; and (5) suggestions for solving the language problem.

During the period of about three years that this study was under progress, several visits were made to the local bodies under study, viz., Coimbatore and Usilampatti in Tamil Nadu,
and Alwaye and Muvattupuzha in Kerala, and every one of the councillors was contacted for purposes of this study, although co-operation was not offered to the researcher by all. The researcher carried out lengthy and detailed discussions with each of the local leaders willing to co-operate, and the required data was collected with the aid of the schedule as discussed above. The fact that the researcher was equally fluent in Tamil and Malayalam, the "official" languages of Tamil Nadu and Kerala respectively, was of considerable importance in this study, as was also the fact that the researcher had known all these four local bodies for a number of years prior to the study. Considering the fact that none of the local leaders under study had any publications of their own spelling out partial or full aspects of their "image" of nation-building, and that they were not used to participation in studies of the present nature, personal interviews with the aid of a pre-planned schedule was the only way the researcher could probe their image of nation-building.

II. Socio-economic Background

Among the four towns the local leaders of which have been studied here, Coimbatore is a cosmopolitan one, with a fusion of such linguistic groups of South India as Tamils, Telugus, Malayalees and Kannadigas. The cosmopolitan nature
of this "city of the South Indians" has been reflected also in the composition of the council itself, which is constituted by Telugus (48.5%), Tamils (39.4%), Malayalees (9.1%) and Kannadigas (3%), as shown in Table No. 30. In terms of languages known, all the councillors of Coimbatore claimed to know Tamil, while 60.6% to know Telugu, 33.3% to know Malayalam, 9.1% to know Kannada and 45.5% to know English. But this was not the case in any of the other three towns under study, which proved to be totally homogeneous ones in linguistic composition. While Usilampatti has a council constituted by only members of the Tamil community, both Alwaye and Muvattupuzha have councils made up of only members of the Malayalee community. Hence the uniqueness of the Coimbatore Municipal Council, even from the linguistic point of view alone.

Linguistic considerations apart the socio-economic parameters of: (1) income; (2) age; (3) education; (4) number of children; (5) education of parents; (6) education of children; (7) age when entering politics; (8) years spent in politics; (9) number of offices held; and (10) years taken for the first office too present a wide degree of variation between the councillors of these four towns, as shown in Table No. 43 (p.148).

1. Income

In Coimbatore, the highest income a councillor has is Rs.3000, and the lowest Rs.150. The same in Usilampatti is Rs.600 and Rs.100; in Alwaye Rs.4000 and Rs.50; and in
Muvattupuzha Rs.2000 and Rs.500 - the average income in the four places, respectively, being Rs.361, Rs.322, Rs.817 and Rs.500.

2. **Age**

As for age, the oldest councillor in Coimbatore is 56 years of age, while the youngest is 33 years of age. The same in Usilampatti is 56 and 31, in Alwaye 69 and 37, and in Muvattupuzha 58 and 32. Thus, while the average age of a councillor in these towns appears to be, respectively, as 45, 46, 50, and 45, the oldest councillor of all is 69 years of age, and the youngest of all is 32 years of age, hailing from Alwaye and Muvattupuzha respectively.

3. **Education**

In education, while the highest level among the councillors of Coimbatore is B.A., B.L., there happens to be also one councillor with no formal education whatever. In Usilampatti, the highest is 9th standard, with also councillors with no formal education whatever. Both in Alwaye and Muvattupuzha too, the highest level reached by the councillors happens to be B.A., B.L., while the lowest in both the places too happens to be 2nd standard. Thus a remarkable fact is that in Coimbatore, Alwaye and Muvattupuzha the highest level of
education of the councillors is B.A., B.L., while the lowest, i.e., nil, happens to be found only in Coimbatore and Usilampatti, whereas both in Alwaye and Muvattupuzha even the least educated have at least a formal education up to the 2nd standard.

4. **Number of Children**

In this sphere too, the variation is wide. The highest in Coimbatore is 7, with also councillors with no children. In Usilampatti, the highest number is 10 and the smallest 2; in Alwaye 9 and 2; and in Muvattupuzha 9 and 1. Thus the fact that the highest number of children the councillors have in all the four places happen to be as high as 7 in Coimbatore, 10 in Usilampatti, and 9 each in Alwaye and Muvattupuzha shows that at least a section of the councillors in all these places have either a preference for a large number of children or were not able to control their number.

5. **Education of Parents**

As far as the level of education of the parents of the councillors was concerned, in Coimbatore, the highest was B.A., and the lowest was nil. In Usilampatti it was 6th standard and nil; in Alwaye S.S.L.C. and nil, and in Muvattupuzha too S.S.L.C. and nil. Thus in all the four places there were councillors whose parents had no formal education whatever, while in Coimbatore alone there were councillors whose parents had education up to B.A.
6. **Education of Children**

Since children of below school-age too are involved, here one can speak of only the highest. In Coimbatore it was B.E., in Usilampatti B.A., in Alwaye Ph.D. and in Muvattupuzha B.A. One thing emerging clearly is that in all the four places, there were councillors whose children had education upto graduation, with the special case of Alwaye where one councillor had children with an education even up to Ph.D.

7. **Age When Entering Politics**

In all the four places, there seemed to be variations in this sphere too. In Coimbatore, the highest was 30, while the smallest was 15. In Usilampatti it was 43 and 18; in Alwaye 50 and 14; and in Muvattupuzha 40 and 14. Thus, the "oldest" to be recruited happens to be in Alwaye (50 years) and the youngest in both Alwaye and Muvattupuzha (14 years).

8. **Years Spent in Politics**

While the councillor with the longest experience in politics (40 years) was in Coimbatore, there were councillors with only five years (just as long as their term of councillorship) both in Coimbatore and Usilampatti. In Usilampatti, the longest experience was 31 years, while in Alwaye it was 39 years (shortest, six), and in Muvattupuzha 37 years (shortest, eight).
9. **Number of Offices Held**

One way of assessing the efficacy of the councillors was thought to be the number of offices they held, apart from being councillors, in addition to the total years of experience in politics. While there were councillors who had held as many as fifteen offices during their political career, there were also councillors who had held no offices whatsoever, apart from being councillors.

10. **Years Taken for the First Office**

While some councillors became office-bearers in one capacity or other within one year of their entry in politics, some others had to wait and work as many as 21 years before claiming an "office" for themselves. The longest period so needed (21 years) was in Coimbatore. The longest period of waiting in Alwaye was 17 years, in Muvattupuzha 14 years, and in Usilampatti 5 years.

The 65 councillors who were studied in the present context need to be classified also in terms of sex, religion, caste, and party affiliation. In terms of sex, they were 59 males (Coimbatore - 30; Usilampatti - 8; Muvattupuzha - 13; and Alwaye - 8) and 6 females (Coimbatore - 3; and 1 each in all the other three places). Religion-wise, there were 47 Hindus, 9 Muslims, and 9 Christians.
Caste-wise, the distribution of the councillors is shown in the following Table:

**TABLE NO. 71**

*Caste-wise Distribution of Councillors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Reddiyar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Menon/Nair</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Kammavar Naidu</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Thevanga Chettiyar</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Vellalar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Devendra Kulam</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Gowder</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Thevar</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Kalvar</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Scheduled Caste</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for the most flexible social index, viz., political affiliation, the 65 councillors had given their loyalties at the time of this study to ten political groupings in the
following order, as shown in Table No. 46: Congress (R) - 12; Congress (O) - 10; CPI - 9; CPI(M) - 6; DMK - 15; ADMK - 2; Kerala Congress - 3; Swatantra - 1; Muslim League - 1; and Independents - 6. While Coimbatore was dominated by the DMK (12 seats), followed by Congress-O (8 seats), both of which have no roots in Alwaye or Muvattupuzha, leaving the only exception of a single Congress-O member in Alwaye. While Muvattupuzha is dominated by CPI-M (5 seats), this party is conspicuous by its absence (among the members interviewed) in Coimbatore and Usilampatti. In Alwaye, the CPI, Kerala Congress and Independents, with 2 seats each, appeared to have an equal sharing of power among themselves, in Usilampatti such a sharing appeared to be present between Congress-R and DMK, each having seats in the council.

III. Image of Nation-Building

While probing the local leaders' image of nation-building, in the way discussed at the outset, the following perceptions and preferences appeared to emerge. 92.5% of the local leaders under study displayed an awareness of casteism (Table No. 44); 83.1% supported a policy of more egalitarian land distribution (Table No. 45); 78.5% of the councillors felt that removal of inequality is necessary for the success of the Community Development Schemes (Table No. 48); 63.1% of
them supported the linguistic re-organisation of the States (Table No. 49). In defining the meaning of nation-building, 50.8% of the councillors considered that nation-building consisted in the creation of an emotional unity at the national level (Table No. 54), while 26.2% of them considered it to be the creation of a strong national government and a powerful state (Table No. 54). Thus the local leaders displayed an awareness of and concern for issues of nation-building truly relevant at the national level.

Similarly, in expressing their ideological preferences, a majority of the local leaders tended to be inspired by socialist ideals: 67.7% of them disapproved of measuring "development" by using "per capita income" as a scale (Table No. 61); 87.7% of them considered socio-economic equality as an ingredient of development (Table No. 62); and 84.6% of them felt that capitalism was not capable of removing India's poverty (Table No. 63), while 56.9% of them felt that uncontrolled reign of profit motive in economic enterprise would only increase mass poverty (Table No. 64).

Finally, in the awareness of their own political significance as local leaders, while 30.8% of them felt that they had only local influence (Table No. 67), 50.8% of them considered themselves to be influential beyond their locality (Table No. 67) and 36.9% of them even appeared to have an ambition for becoming leaders at the national level.
Finally, when one puts together the various elements that the local leaders consider as essential to the ideal India that they would like to see emerging, what appears is a picture like the following. While 92.5% of the local leaders would like to see the removal of casteism (Table No. 44), 83.1% of them would like to see greater socio-economic equality introduced through land distribution (Table No. 45). All of them would like to see the setting up of more local industries and also the creation of greater socio-economic equality as a precondition for the ultimate success of the Community Development Schemes (Table No. 48), and 63.1% of them would support the linguistic reorganisation of the States (Table No. 49).

What becomes clear is that, except in the case of linguistic reorganisation (where the majority opinion accepts what has already been accomplished as final, and thus is in favour of a status quo), in all the other four issues (casteism, local industries, land ownership and Community Development Schemes), the majority opinion opts for a change in the situation, in favour of a classless and casteless society which would recognize local industries as an important factor for the progress of the nation.

In a similar way, judging from their problem perception (Table No. 52), they would like to see an India without any problem of unemployment (73.8%), food shortage (56.9%) housing problems (16.5%), socio-economic inequality (16.5%), and
political corruption (13.8%). While nation-building would for them mean (Table No. 54): (a) the forging of an emotional unity as one people (50.8%); (b) establishing greater socio-economic equality (33.8%); and (c) the creation of a powerful nation (26.2%), the obstacles to this task (Table No. 56) consist of: (i) selfish political leaders (55.4%); (ii) casteism (35.4%); and (iii) the existence of a multitude of parties (18.5%).

In solving the problem of industrial unrest (Table No. 58), the local leaders would adopt the strategies of: (a) greater discipline (47.7%); (b) better pay (33.8%); and (c) nationalisation of industries (16.9%). As for solving the language problem (Table No. 60), 43.1% of them would apply the two-language formula of English with the mother-tongue, and 35.4% of them would apply the three-language formula of English, Hindi and the mother-tongue, while only 7.7% of them would advocate a two-language formula of Hindi and the mother-tongue.